

176th Stated Meeting of the  
Presbytery of Southern New England  
February 9, 2019  
St. Andrew Presbyterian Church  
Groton, CT



Joshua 6:10 — Joshua ordered the people, “Don’t shout. Don’t let your voice be heard. Don’t let a word come out of your mouth until the day I tell you, ‘Shout!’ Then shout!”

**Presbytery of Southern New England  
Report of the Roundtable to Presbytery  
February 9, 2019**

**For Action**

- 1) The Roundtable recommends that the Presbytery authorize the celebration of the Lord's Supper during the upcoming leadership retreat at Stony Point Center.

**For Information**

- 1) Ref. A-1 contains Roundtable minutes from our January 10, 2019 meeting.

**PRESBYTERY OF SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND**  
**REGULAR MEETING OF THE PRESBYTERY ROUNDTABLE**  
**January 10, 2019**

The Roundtable of the Presbytery of Southern New England met in the Smart Room of the Westminster Presbyterian Church in West Hartford, Connecticut. The meeting was called to order with prayer and opening devotions at 9:35 a.m. by the Co-Chair of the Roundtable, Rev. David Van Dyke.

A **QUORUM** was present.

*Present were:* David Van Dyke, co-chair of Roundtable; Chris Tate, Moderator of the Presbytery (via video conference); Ruth Smalt, Vice Moderator of the Presbytery (via video conference); Doug Ray; J. C. Cadwallader; Barbara Riihimaki; Art Riihimaki; Lisa Baker (via video conference); Jenny Davis; Virginia Smanik; Ralph Reynolds; Tom Taylor; Kevin White (via teleconference); Dick Hasbany; and Anne Fuhrmeister.

*Also present were:* Ex-Officio members: the Rev. Shannan Vance-Ocampo, General Presbyter; and the Rev. David Baer, Stated Clerk.

*Excused was:* Julie Emery

The General Presbyter, the Rev. Shannan Vance-Ocampo, presented her report to the Roundtable. Ms. Vance-Ocampo gave an update on the Smart Room at Westminster Presbyterian Church and the move to use Google Drive, which will be available to the Roundtable for posting meeting materials at the next meeting. She also discussed recent changes to tax laws and their impact on churches, including tax implications of parking spaces reserved for clergy. The Board of Pensions is requesting that mid-councils send letters to elected officials in support of removing these provisions.

Following the resignation of the assistant treasurer and given the approaching end of the current treasurer's term, the Presbytery will need to elect both of these officers. We will need to suspend the provision of the bylaws that requires that officer nominees be presented at the March meeting (which no longer takes place) and are to be elected at the May meeting.

Ms. Vance-Ocampo will be undergoing surgery, and this will prevent her attendance at the February Stated Meeting of the Presbytery. She has provided a list of ministers within the Presbytery who can respond to pastoral emergencies, which will be sent out to the Presbytery.

Upon the request of the General Presbyter, the Roundtable **VOTED** to **RECOMMEND** that the Presbytery **AUTHORIZE** the celebration of the Lord's Supper during the upcoming leadership retreat at Stony Point Center.

The Rev. J. C. Cadwallader, co-chair of the Valley Administrative Commission, provided a brief update of the Commission's work with the Valley Presbyterian Church. The church has resumed worship in their sanctuary as of the beginning of December. The air quality in the upper level of the building is safe, though remediation is still ongoing in the lower level. The

Commission is developing a set of criteria for returning jurisdiction over property matters to the church's Session. Ms. Vance-Ocampo reported on the progress of the search for an interim pastor: the Committee on Ministry has just approved the position description. There will be significant costs associated with remediation of the oil spill. Ms. Cadwallader commended the work of the Rev. Johanna Johns Jung in providing care to the congregation, as well as the clerk, Cheryl Freeston, for bearing up as a leader under difficult circumstances.

The Roundtable welcomed, via teleconference, the Rev. Terrlyn Curry-Avery, interim pastor of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Presbyterian Church in Springfield, Massachusetts. The church is requesting a waiver of per capita for the current year. Ms. Curry-Avery reminded members of the Roundtable that her salary is supported by the Presbytery, and that the church, though active in its ministry, is challenged with respect to its finances. Ralph Reynolds, President of the Trustees, estimated that the total amount (including the share designated for the Synod of the Northeast and the General Assembly) would amount to about \$1,400. He proposed as an alternative that a donation be provided to the congregation to allow it to pay its per capita, and certain individuals present expressed a willingness to contribute the necessary funds via personal check.

The Rev. David Baer, the Stated Clerk, presented a draft docket for the Stated Meeting on February 9 and received feedback. Mr. Baer led a discussion of proposed amendments to the Constitution of the PC (U.S.A.). The Presbytery will vote on the amendments at the February Stated Meeting.

The Rev. Jenny Davis gave a report on work of the Personnel Committee. Staff reviews were conducted in October. The Committee is working on a new staffing model for the Presbytery, with the aim of reducing personnel costs, beginning this month. The Committee is also participating in the search for a new Treasurer.

The Roundtable welcomed Dayle Larson, the Presbytery's bookkeeper, via teleconference to join Ralph Reynolds in explaining the process of developing an annual budget for the Presbytery. Each annual budget is based on the previous year's budget, making adjustments as needed. Dayle Larson sends out e-mails to the chairs of committees and boards, asking whether they need a change in their budget. The input of the Personnel Committee is especially critical, as they make changes to the staffing structure.

The Rev. Shannan Vance-Ocampo provided an update on the situation at the Woodbury church in Warwick, following the fire in November. Presbyterian Disaster Assistance has sent representatives and is providing support. A nearby Roman Catholic church is providing worship space, and state and federal investigations into the cause of the fire are ongoing. The pastor, the Rev. T.J. DeMarco, is caring for a congregation that has experienced a significant trauma, and the Committee on Ministry is looking to provide him with opportunities for rest and renewal. Doug Ray provided information on his congregation's efforts, just beginning, toward demolition of the old structure and plans for rebuilding. He also expressed his deep appreciation for Mr. DeMarco's leadership.

Art Riihimaki gave an update on the work of the Nominating Committee. The most pressing need, currently, is for trustees. He expressed the Committee's desire to identify

nominees who are members of churches not currently represented in the Presbytery's leadership and committees.

The Roundtable adjourned at 12:05 p.m., led in closing prayer by the General Presbyter, the Rev. Shannan Vance-Ocampo.

Respectfully submitted,

-signed-

Rev. David A. Baer, Stated Clerk

DRAFT

Ref. B  
Stated Clerk  
February 9, 2019  
Presbytery of Southern New England

**REPORT OF THE STATED CLERK  
TO THE PRESBYTERY OF SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND  
February 9, 2019**

**FOR INFORMATION:**

1. In accordance with *Book of Order* G-3.0109b, which requires that “[a] commission shall keep a full record of its proceedings and shall submit that record to the council or councils for incorporation into its records[,]” and that “[t]he decisions of an administrative commission shall be reported to the clerk of the designating council, who shall report it to the council at its next stated meeting”, the **Administrative Commission for the Valley Presbyterian Church** has transmitted their minutes (attached as **Ref. B-1**).
2. The 223<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly has proposed a number of amendments to the PC (U.S.A.) Constitution, which it has sent out to the presbyteries for their consideration. We will be voting on these proposed amendments at this meeting, and the text of the amendments is provided as **Ref. B-2**. I have also included a brief analysis of the amendments, which I prepared for the Presbytery Roundtable, which is labeled **Ref. B-3**.
3. I extend my thanks to those clerks of session of the following churches that have submitted their **statistical reports for the year 2018** (as of January 28):
  - Ashaway, Babcock\*
  - Barrington, Barrington
  - Cumberland, Calvin\*
  - Fall River, Calvary United\*
  - Groton, St Andrew
  - New Canaan, First

\* - Submitted optional supplemental report

I have requested, in a communication to moderators and clerks of sessions, that churches submit their reports by **Monday, February 11**, but if you need more time please let me know!

**FOR ACTION BY THE PRESBYTERY:**

1. I **RECOMMEND** that the Presbytery **APPROVE** the Minutes of the Stated Meeting of the Presbytery (November 17, 2018), as posted on the “Minutes” section of the Presbytery of Southern New England website.
2. I **RECOMMEND** that the Presbytery **RECEIVE** with regret the resignation of Elder John Succo (Waterford: Crossroads) as Assistant Treasurer and from the Board of Trustees.

**ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSION FOR THE  
VALLEY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
OF BROOKFIELD, CONNECTICUT  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
(DATE: *October 11, 2018*)**

A **QUORUM** was present.

Present were: Revs. Jocelyn Cadwallader, Shannon White, Jimmy McPherson and Elders Sandy Zuvanich and John Winstead

Also present was: Seven members of the Valley Presbyterian Church Session (Cheryl, JoAnne, Bud, Collin, Laurie, Mike and Lynn)

Purpose of the meeting was to debrief on just previous meeting with Valley Session and to discuss/determine immediate next steps of the VAC.

Members of the VAC expressed the value of previous meeting with Valley Session and acknowledged the alignment of the Valley Session and their sincere interest in moving forward in a positive way.

Actions confirmed and to be taken by the VAC:

- JC Cadwallader to talk to Russ (LEP) regarding procedures and appropriate contact persons for communicating the status of the work.
- Jimmy McPherson to confirm air quality in the church so that we can decide whether or not church building should be totally closed to all, including Church secretary and all service vendors
- John Winstead to draft VAC letter to Valley Session, which should include:
  - Recommendation to install new locks at church
  - Letter to neighbors
  - Valley expenditure capacity related to oil remediation
  - Air quality status and minimize entry and use of building
  - New tanks
  - VAC approval of next phase of work by Arcadis (Russ, LEP)
  - Ongoing updates with Valley Session
- Next meeting of VAC will be a conference call on Thursday, October 18 at 4 PM

There being no further business to transact, the meeting was adjourned with prayer by Rev. Shannon White.

Respectfully submitted,

Elder John Winstead, Secretary

**ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSION FOR THE  
VALLEY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
OF BROOKFIELD, CONNECTICUT  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
(DATE: *November 1, 2018*)**

A **QUORUM** was present. (Zoom Con Call)

Present were: Shannon White, Jimmy McPherson and Elders John Winstead and Sandy Zuvanich. Execused was Rev Jocelyn Cadwallader.

Purpose of the meeting was to discuss open actions and new actions.

Shannon White opened with prayer.

The following topics were discussed:

- Selection of the company to install new oil tanks (Superior Plus vs Bantam Wesson) – The VAC decided to award the new oil tank contract to Superior Plus.
  - Bantam Wesson was not responsive to multiple follow-up contacts from VAC
  - Superior Plus offered a warranty on installation as well as 30 years on new tanks
  - Tanks offered by Superior Plus are of a higher quality (i.e., double-walled)
  - Valley B&G rep also preferred Superior Plus
  - Decision made by VAC to go with the Superior Plus option that includes two 275 gallon tanks.
  - During our meeting Shannon called Superior Plus to inform them of our decision and to confirm an immediate installation date. Message was left.
- The two old oil tanks have been removed by Concord Environmental Construction and are now located at Maple Street Extension in Brookfield. Shannon called CEC during the call to confirm that this has been done.
- Air quality ratings of the Valley Church was discussed. Jimmy to contact Russ (LEP) to ask for latest air quality measurements for both upstairs and downstairs. Jimmy also to request a formal report on re-occupancy (i.e., measurements are satisfactory for normal use and occupancy) from Russ (LEP). This must be received before the Church is re-opened.
- Refund of oil pre-payment from Mitchell was also discussed. Recent response from Mitchell was that they wanted to talk with the VAC real-time. Action coming from this was for JC and John to have the call with Mitchell. Subsequent to our meeting (November 2), we were contacted by Mitchell and they informed us that they would be making a refund of \$5,576.93 to Valley Presbyterian Church. The difference between this refund amount and the refund amount that we previously requested (\$6,468.10) is due to approximately 354.2 gallons of oil being used by Valley.

There being no further business to transact, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,  
Elder John Winstead, Secretary

**ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSION FOR THE  
VALLEY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
OF BROOKFIELD, CONNECTICUT  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
(DATE: *November 8, 2018*)**

A **QUORUM** was present. (Zoom Con Call)

Present were: Revs. Shannon White, Jimmy McPherson and JC Cadwallader and Elders John Winstead and Sandy Zuvanich.

Purpose of the meeting was to discuss open actions and new actions.

John Winstead opened with prayer.

The following topics were discussed:

- Superior Plus report-out by Shannon
  - Contract coming tomorrow
  - Tank installation date still forthcoming
- Arcadis Change Order for second air quality test
  - CO from Arcadis for \$3,250 has been received
  - Last air quality test was approx. six weeks ago
  - VAC approved to move forward with this CO and next air quality sampling and analysis
- Letter from Colin (VPC B&G) was received and discussed
  - Letter was critical of the VAC's speed in taking actions
  - John Winstead to draft response which would be sent to VPC Session

There being no further business to transact, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,  
Elder John Winstead, Secretary

**ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSION FOR THE  
VALLEY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
OF BROOKFIELD, CONNECTICUT  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
(DATE: *November 15, 2018*)**

A **QUORUM** was present. (Zoom Con Call)

Present were: Revs. Shannon White, Jimmy McPherson and JC Cadwallader and Elders John Winstead and Sandy Zuvanich.

Purpose of the meeting was to discuss open actions and new actions.

The following topics were discussed:

- Superior Plus report-out
  - Credit application sent to Superior yesterday
  - Down-payment check mailed yesterday
  - Still no update from Superior on tank installation/completion date
  - While on the call, it was reported that VPC credit application had been accepted
  - John Winstead to contact Superior Plus regarding installation date urgency
- Upcoming VPC Congregational Meeting
  - Scheduled for Sunday, November 18
  - VAC update to be prepared by John Winstead and Jimmy McPherson

There being no further business to transact, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,  
Elder John Winstead, Secretary

**ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSION FOR THE  
VALLEY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
OF BROOKFIELD, CONNECTICUT  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
(DATE: *November 15, 2018*)**

A **QUORUM** was present. (Zoom Con Call)

Present were: Revs. Shannon White, Jimmy McPherson and JC Cadwallader and Elders John Winstead and Sandy Zuvanich.

Purpose of the meeting was to discuss open actions and new actions.

The following topics were discussed:

- Superior Plus report-out
  - Credit application sent to Superior yesterday
  - Down-payment check mailed yesterday
  - Still no update from Superior on tank installation/completion date
  - While on the call, it was reported that VPC credit application had been accepted
  - John Winstead to contact Superior Plus regarding installation date urgency
- Upcoming VPC Congregational Meeting
  - Scheduled for Sunday, November 18
  - VAC update to be prepared by John Winstead and Jimmy McPherson

There being no further business to transact, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,  
Elder John Winstead, Secretary

**ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSION FOR THE  
VALLEY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
OF BROOKFIELD, CONNECTICUT  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
(DATE: *November 30, 2018*)**

A **QUORUM** was present. (Zoom Con Call)

Present were: Revs. Shannon White, Jimmy McPherson and JC Cadwallader and Elders John Winstead and Sandy Zuvanich.

Guests present were: Shannan Vance-Ocampo (General Presbyter, PSNE) and David Baer (Stated Clerk, PSNE)

Meeting was opened in prayer by Jimmy McPherson.

Purpose of the meeting was to discuss open actions and new actions.

The following topics were discussed:

- Superior Plus report-out by John Winstead
  - Oil tanks successfully installed and filled with oil on November 19 and 20. On-site were Cheryl Freeston (VPC), Jim Munn (VPC) and John Winstead (VAC)
  - Propane tank was scheduled for installation on November 29. Superior reported that the gas line was too small and that additional pressure regulators were needed. Installation was delayed for a couple of days.
- Re-opening of VPC for worship, funeral or other official functions
  - VAC re-confirmed the decision that the Church should remain closed until the results from Aracadis' second air quality tests were available.
- Rationale for moving away from Mitchell (heating oil supplier)
  - Active insurance investigation warrants the need of separation from current tank/oil supplier
  - Evidence of overlap between VPC business relationship with Mitchell and between Mitchell and individual members of VPC
- VPC questions that were sent to Shannan Vance-Ocampo
  - These questions or concerns from VPC were discussed with the VAC so that SVO has additional background that would be helpful in her ministry at VPC this coming weekend.
- Update from PSNE lawyer by JC
  - PSNE lawyer reported that drill hole was done after the oil had leaked from the tank.
  - Legal/insurance claim work continues

There being no further business to transact, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,  
Elder John Winstead, Secretary

**ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSION FOR THE  
VALLEY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
OF BROOKFIELD, CONNECTICUT  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
(DATE: *December 6, 2018*)**

A **QUORUM** was present. (Zoom Con Call)

Present were: Revs. Shannon White, Jimmy McPherson and JC Cadwallader and Elders John Winstead and Sandy Zuvanich.

Meeting was opened in prayer by Jimmy McPherson.

Purpose of the meeting was to discuss open actions and new actions.

The following topics were discussed:

- Email from VPC regarding six specific questions; below are the VAC planned responses:
  - Q1 regarding “filling in and permanently sealing the ventilation hole in the furnace room – leave this ventilation hole “as is” until things stabilize; there may still need to be a near-term need to access this hole; this temporary situation is not negatively impacting heating of church or operation of furnace/tanks; if VPC is concerned with rising water table under the floor in the furnace room, then VPC should take actions to address, including the consideration of a sump pump.
  - Q2 regarding ongoing oil deliveries – VAC to contact the Citizens Oil Co-op (JC) to ensure that bi-monthly deliveries are scheduled.
  - Q3 regarding boiler/tank maintenance – Yes, Silver Maintenance Plan is in place with Superior; Superior has examined the furnace system, installed the tanks and has confirmed with VAC that this is standard equipment and they have experience servicing this type of system and tanks.
  - Q4 regarding removal of 50 gal. drum in furnace room – VAC (JC) will follow-up with Russ to confirm that this debris is not needed and for Russ to have it removed.
  - Q5 regarding repairs to women’s downstairs bathroom – Yes, VPC can proceed with repairs.
  - Q6 regarding making the current ventilation hole in furnace more permanent – Would defer any work to make this permanent until things further stabilize; consistent with response to Q1; current situation is not negatively impacting current use or operation of furnace or tanks.
  - Subsequent to this VAC Meeting on December 6 and as of the completion of these Minutes, the VAC responses to these questions had been communicated to VPC.
- Report-out on new propane tank installation (John Winstead)
  - VAC (JW) contacted Superior Plus earlier this week to inquire as to why follow-up service to install propane tank has not been completed.

- Superior Plus reported that at the time of the original installation attempt (Nov. 29) they reported that previous set-up was not out of compliance (i.e., piping at 5/8 inch was too small and should be 1 inch to accommodate BTU needs in kitchen and that copper piping was bare and should be insulated to avoid pipe corrosion). Superior further reported on this call that they were told on Nov. 29, not worry about making these changes, as they were going to return to Mitchell for propane service
- VAC (JW) spoke to Cheryl Freeston at VPC with the above information. Cheryl clarified that VPC would go with Superior for the propane and to move forward with re-scheduling Superior for the piping changes and tank installation.
- VAC (JW) re-confirmed with Superior to have the piping work done and the new tank installed. Superior confirmed that they would do the repairs and install on Wednesday (December 12). VAC (JW) communicated this to Cheryl, who confirmed that someone from VPC would be available on December 12 for the installation.
- VAC “jurisdiction” and confirming remaining activities within scope of the VAC
  - Each VAC member to draft a list of activities that we believe fall under the jurisdiction of the VAC and still need to be completed.
  - To be further discussed at next VAC.
- Transition Plan (VAC to VPC)
  - VAC needs to start planning the transition so that the requisite activities can be planned in more detail and openly discussed with VPC and SNE Presbytery
  - Each VAC member to draft a list of points or activities that need to be considered and addressed to ensure a successful and timely transition.
  - To be further discussed at next VAC meeting.
- Regularity of Future VAC Meetings
  - Discussed timing of future, ongoing meetings and possibility of going to bi-weekly or monthly meetings.
  - No decision made until “jurisdiction” and transition plan details are better documented and understood.
- Next VAC Meeting with VPC Session
  - Next meeting needs to be scheduled
  - Likely in January, but not confirmed at this meeting

There being no further business to transact, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,  
Elder John Winstead, Secretary

**ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSION FOR THE  
VALLEY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
OF BROOKFIELD, CONNECTICUT  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
(DATE: *December 13, 2018*)**

A **QUORUM** was present. (Zoom Con Call)

Present were: Revs. Shannon White, Jimmy McPherson and JC Cadwallader and Elders John Winstead and Sandy Zuvanich.

Meeting was opened in prayer by Shannon White.

Purpose of the meeting was to discuss open actions and new actions.

The following topics were discussed:

- Report-out on new propane tank installation (JC Cadwallader, John Winstead)
  - New, to-code, lines and gauge were installed on December 12. JC was on-site for the installation
  - Lines must be inspected by Town of Brookfield prior to installation of the propane tank
  - John Winstead to contact Town of Brookfield to get status of permit and to schedule inspection (Note: as of the writing of these minutes, inspection has been completed and final permit received by VPC)
- Status of Superior Maintenance Plan
  - VPC has still not received the furnace/boiler and tank maintenance plan
  - John Winstead to contact Town of Brookfield to request, again, hard-copy of plan to be sent to VPC
  - John Winstead to send soft-copy of Silver Maintenance Plan to Cheryl Freeston and VAC (Note: as of the writing of these minutes, this has been completed)
- Discussion of VAC “jurisdiction” items (i.e., items/actions to be completed to fulfill original jurisdiction or scope of the VAC)
  - Preliminary list has been drafted
  - Major preliminary areas include:
    - New oil and propane tanks installation and final permits
    - Financial analysis focused on spend to-date, future spend estimates and plan/process for setting up appropriate reserves at the VPC and PSNE levels
    - VPC Building & Grounds Committee – member composition, roles & responsibilities, process for determining membership and reporting accountability, operating protocols and procedures to avoid similar accidents in the future.
    - VAC to VPC Session transition and re-empowerment
    - Arcadis recommended actions, including follow-up with neighbors, access to sampling holes, air quality testing, etc.

- Insurance claim resolution and communications
    - VAC to sit on these preliminary ideas with the intent to finalize in January
- Oil remediation spend to-date
  - Shannon White to contact Dale at PSNE to get full details of spend to-date
  - Sandy Zuvanich to contact Terri Flannagan at VPC to get full details of spend to-date
- Next VAC Meeting scheduled for January 3, 2019

There being no further business to transact, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,  
Elder John Winstead, Secretary

**ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSION FOR THE  
VALLEY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
OF BROOKFIELD, CONNECTICUT  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
(DATE: *January 3, 2019*)**

A **QUORUM** was present. (Zoom Con Call)

Present were: Revs. Shannon White and JC Cadwallader and Elders John Winstead and Sandy Zuvanich. Guests were Shannan Vance-Ocampo (General Presbyter, PSNE) and David Baer (Stated Clerk, PSNE)

Meeting was opened in prayer by JC Cadwallader.

Purpose of the meeting was to discuss open actions and new actions.

The following topics were discussed:

- Detail of expenses related to VPC oil leak remediation paid to-date
  - List of PSNE expenses paid to-date (\$19,824) has been received from Dale Shannon White to redistribute to VAC. As of this date, it was reported that there is an Arcadis invoice for \$6,961.87 that has not been recorded in this list.
  - List of VPC expenses paid as of 11/30/2018 (\$43,146) has been received from Terri Sandy Zuvanich to redistribute to VAC.
  - VAC to review both lists of expense detail.
- Propane tank installation
  - John Winstead received a proposal document and contract for \$1,225.08 from Superior Plus, requesting signature. This work was completed in December 2018, but the expected cost was in the “\$300 to \$400” range per a verbal conversation with Superior installation person.
  - John Winstead to contact Superior to discuss this variance.
- Recent Arcadis testing of VPC neighbors’ wells
  - Two of three well tests came back “clear”, no problem. Results were received on 1/2/2019.
  - One well test came back “over standard”, but cause was “inconclusive”. Arcadis re-tested this well on 1/3/2019, results pending. Both the landlord and current tenant were notified of this test result on 1/2/2019. VAC/PSNE needs the documentation that supports this fact. (This last sentence was added after this meeting by John Winstead.)
  - The test results for these three wells have been shared with Jane (retained attorney for PSNE) and DEEP; after results of re-test of third well are obtained, these results will also be shared with Jane and DEEP.
  - Three of the seven VPC neighbors have never responded to the Arcadis communications about the original oil leak (including permission to test their

wells), after two attempts. VAC to ask Arcadis to engage DEP to have DEP follow-up directly with these three neighbors.

- Future expenses related to VPC oil leak remediation
  - JC Cadwallader to contact Arcadis to get an estimate of 2019 expenses.
  - JC Cadwallader to contact Jane (attorney retained by PSNE) to get an estimate of 2019 expenses.
- Meeting with Arcadis – VAC to request and schedule face-to-face meeting with Arcadis. Target date is January 23 at 3:30 PM, location TBD.
- Meeting with VPC Session – VAC to request and schedule a face-to-face “information sharing” meeting with VPC Session. Target date is January 23 at 6:30 PM, location TBD.
- Next VAC Meeting scheduled for January 10, 2019

There being no further business to transact, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,  
Elder John Winstead, Secretary

**ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSION FOR THE  
VALLEY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
OF BROOKFIELD, CONNECTICUT  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
(DATE: *January 10, 2019*)**

A **QUORUM** was present. (Zoom Con Call)

Present were: Revs. Shannon White, Jimmy McPerson and JC Cadwallader and Elders John Winstead and Sandy Zuvanich.

Meeting was opened in prayer by Jimmy McPherson

Purpose of the meeting was to discuss open actions and new actions.

The following topics were discussed:

- Meeting with Russ/Arcadis and VAC (face-to-face)
  - VAC agreed to move forward with this meeting
  - Date has been set for January 23 at 2 PM at the Arcadis Office in Sandy Hook
  - John Winstead to draft meeting agenda and distribute to VAC for review and edits
- Meeting with VPC Session and VAC (face-to-face)
  - Meeting has been scheduled for January 23 at 6:30 PM at VPC
  - Jimmy and JC to draft agenda and distribute to VAC for review and edits
- Superior Plus Propane Tank and Installation
  - John Winstead went back to Superior to question the \$1,200 bill vs the “\$300 to \$400” that we were expecting
  - Bob Rovinelli said he would review the bill and come back to us
- JC provided an update from the last PSNE Roundtable, as related to VPC
- VPC 2019 Budget preparation
  - Budget is being prepared with a “provisional” budget to be finalized in the next couple of weeks
  - Final 2019 Budget will be prepared by end of March, as this is the standard, normal annual process for VPC
- PSNE expenses related to the oil remediation efforts at VPC
  - JC to request the PSNE to formally document for the VAC that the PSNE has no more funds available to support any 2019 oil remediation costs
  - The VAC agreed that the remaining Superior Plus invoice for the propane tank installation (estimated at \$400 to \$1,200) will be paid by PSNE
- Next VAC Meeting scheduled for January 17, 2019

There being no further business to transact, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,  
Elder John Winstead, Secretary

**ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSION FOR THE  
VALLEY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
OF BROOKFIELD, CONNECTICUT  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
(DATE: *January 17, 2019*)**

A **QUORUM** was present. (Zoom Con Call)

Present were: Revs. Shannon White, Jimmy McPherson and JC Cadwallader and Elders John Winstead and Sandy Zuvanich. Guests were Shannan Vance-Ocampo (General Presbyter, PSNE) and David Baer (Stated Clerk, PSNE)

Meeting was opened in prayer by Jimmy McPherson.

Purpose of the meeting was to discuss open actions and new actions.

The following topics were discussed:

- Shannan Vance-Ocampo reported out on recent meeting with Jim Fennimore
- Summary of Oil-related Expenditures
  - Total expenditures to-date, net of Mitchell refund is \$71K.
  - John Winstead to update Financials document with projected expenses for 2019 and beyond.
  - Detail and summary of oil-related expenditures will be presented to VPC Session on January 23.
- Discussed and finalized agenda for meeting scheduled on January 23 with Arcadis (LEP, Russ)
- Discussed and revised draft of agenda for meeting scheduled for January 23 with VPC Session
  - JC and Jimmy to finalize agenda over the next week.
  - Plan is for VAC to meet to finalize, after meeting with Arcadis on 1/23/2019, but prior to Session Meeting on same date.
- Next VAC Meeting scheduled for January 23, 2019

There being no further business to transact, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,  
Elder John Winstead, Secretary

# Proposed Amendments to the Constitution

## Proposed Amendments to the *Book of Order*

Approved by the 223rd General Assembly (2018) and  
recommended to the presbyteries for their vote.



Including: Note from the Stated Clerk, a list of the proposed amendments  
with advice from the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, and an index.

**NOTE FROM THE STATED CLERK**

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) approved and recommended to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes proposed changes in the language of the *Book of Order* that, if approved, will amend the Constitution.

With each proposed amendment, reference is made to an item number that indicates the General Assembly Committee report and action related to each proposed amendment. These item numbers also indicate where to find other background information from various entities that was available electronically to the General Assembly commissioners. This information may be accessed through PC-Biz at <https://www.pc-biz.org>. The item number references will also be found in the *Minutes of the 223rd General Assembly (2018)*, which are expected to be available to the presbyteries by the time they consider the amendments. The full advice of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC) and other advisory entities can be found immediately following the item in the *Minutes* for which the advice is given.

Unless otherwise indicated, new language to be added to the *Book of Order* is in italics and any language to be stricken will have a line through it. In providing rationale and advice for each item, direct quotations from the various groups that presented or commented on these items before the General Assembly is used whenever possible.

Presbyteries must report to the Office of the General Assembly a separate vote on each proposed amendment. A presbytery may vote on the amendments in a consent agenda or omnibus motion, as long as each proposed amendment is identified separately. Presbyteries are required to report their votes by June 23, 2019. However, in order to make the changes and publish the 2019–2021 *Book of Order* in a timely manner, receipt of votes prior to this deadline would be appreciated (by May 10, 2019, if possible).

Thank you for your careful and prayerful consideration of these proposed amendments.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "J. Herbert Nelson, II".

The Reverend Dr. J. Herbert Nelson, II  
Stated Clerk of the General Assembly

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## PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

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## 18-A. Election of Ruling Elders and Deacons On Amending G-2.0401 (Item 06-11)

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) directed the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

**Shall G-2.0401 of the Form of Government be amended as follows? [Text to be deleted is shown with strike through; text to be added or inserted is shown in italic.]**

### **“G-2.0401 Election of Ruling Elders and Deacons**

**“Ruling elders and deacons are men and women elected by the congregation from among its members. The nomination and election of ruling elders and deacons shall express the rich diversity of the congregation’s membership and shall guarantee participation and inclusiveness (F-1.0403). Ruling elders and deacons shall be nominated by a committee elected by the congregation, drawn from and representative of its membership. ~~Congregations may provide by their own rule for a congregational nominating committee, provided that the committee shall consist of at least three active members of the congregation, and shall include at least one ruling elder who is currently serving on the session.~~ *Congregations may provide by their own rule for a congregational nominating committee. The rule shall meet the following criteria: (1) the minimum size of the committee as specified in the rule shall be at least three persons; (2) at least one member of the committee shall be an elder currently serving on session; and (3) a majority of those persons on the committee who are eligible to vote shall consist of persons not currently serving on session. The pastor shall serve ex officio and without vote. When elections are held, full opportunity shall always be given to the congregation for nomination from the floor of the congregational meeting by any active member of the congregation. A majority of all the active members present and voting shall be required to elect.*”**

### Rationale

This proposed amendment originates from the Presbytery of Grace as Item 06-11. The Presbyteries of Grand Canyon, Muskingum Valley, Huntington, and de Cristo concurred. The Presbytery of Grace provided the following rationale [edited].

This proposed amendment clarifies the somewhat ambiguous language regarding the nominating committee membership.

The proposed changes set the minimum size of the nominating committee at three members, not including the pastor. This is ideal for small congregations yet also provides flexibility for churches to add more from this minimum.

The goal is to provide clarity while preserving the overall permission-giving nature of the Form of Government.

### **Advice from the Advisory Committee on the Constitution**

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advised the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to approve Item 06-11 as amended providing the following advice [edited]:

The Presbytery of Grace presents proposed language to clarify the minimum size of a congregational nominating committee and the requirement that a majority of the voting members of a congregational nominating committee be members-at-large of the congregation.

The proposed amendment provides helpful clarification to G-2.0401. The minimum size of a congregational nominating committee shall be three members, at least one member of which must be a ruling elder in active service on

the session. The minimum size of three is appropriate for smaller congregations. There is no maximum size for a congregational nominating committee.

The proposed amendment adds clarity and is consistent with past practice. The majority of a congregational nominating committee should be members-at-large of the congregation, not ruling elders currently serving on the session.

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The Assembly Committee on Church Polity and Ordered Ministry (06) voted to approve the proposed amendment as amended 54/0. The 223rd General Assembly (2018) approved the committee's recommendation with amendment 478/3. (See *Minutes*, 2018, Part I, pp. 69, 72, 592.)

For the full report of Item 06-11, go to <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/committee/3000008/business>

## 18-B. Renunciation of Jurisdiction

### Background

These two proposed amendments, 18-B.1 and 18-B.2, (Item 06-09, Recommendations 1. and 2.) come out of the intent to clarify congregational prohibition and individual jurisdiction when a PC(USA) minister of Word and Sacrament renounces jurisdiction while in the midst of disciplinary proceedings and then wants to rejoin the PC(USA). [Editor’s Note: The General Assembly approved the combination of two proposed amendments in one item. The advice on each of these proposed amendments come from the separate items, (Items 06-09 and 06-07) not on the combined items. In addition, the General Assembly asked that a third item similar be referred to the Rules of Discipline Task Force (Item 06-09, Recommendation 3.).]

### 18-B.1.

#### On Amending G-2.0509 (Item 06-09)

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) directed the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendments to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

**Shall G-2.0509 be amended by striking the fourth paragraph and adding two new paragraphs to read as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added is shown as italic.]**

~~“Whenever a former minister of the Word and Sacrament has renounced jurisdiction in the midst of a disciplinary proceeding as the accused, that former minister of the Word and Sacrament shall not be permitted to perform any work, paid or volunteer, in any congregation or entity under the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) unless and until the person rejoins the church, comes forward and resubmits to the disciplinary process.”~~

*“No congregation or entity under the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall be permitted to employ, for pay or as a volunteer, a former minister of the Word and Sacrament (teaching elder) who has renounced jurisdiction in the midst of a disciplinary proceeding as the accused.”*

*“Any former minister of the Word and Sacrament (teaching elder) who has renounced jurisdiction and later wants to be restored to office can be restored only through application to the presbytery in which he or she renounced jurisdiction for restoration to office, in which case the provisions of D-10.0401d and D-12.0200 shall apply.”*

### Rationale

The proposed amendment 18-B.1 originated from the Presbytery of Central Florida as Item 06-09 and proposed amendment 18-B.2 originated from the Presbytery of The Twin Cities Area as Item 06-07 Recommendation 2 and added to Item 06-09 by the General Assembly. The Presbyteries of Albany, Grand Canyon, Muskingum Valley, Newton, North Alabama, Tropical Florida, Wabash Valley and de Cristo concurred with Item 06-09 and the Presbyteries of Albany, Denver, Grand Canyon, Missouri River Valley, Wabash Valley and de Cristo concurred with former Item 06-07 including Item 06-07 recommendation 2. The Presbytery of Central Florida provided the following rationale for Item 06-09 [edited].

The [former] amendments to G-2.0509, while intended to protect the church and its entities from ministers who have left the church without submitting to the constitutional process for establishing guilt or innocence and providing for repentance when repentance is needed, have instead created a situation in which the administration of justice, as defined

by the amendment, is impossible to carry out. By definition of the section itself, a person who has renounced jurisdiction no longer holds membership in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The preamble to the Rules of Discipline defines the limits of church discipline as follows:

... The purpose of discipline is to honor God by making clear the significance of membership in the body of Christ; to preserve the purity of the church by nourishing the *individual within the life of the believing community*; to achieve justice and compassion for all participants involved; to correct or restrain wrongdoing in order to bring *members* to repentance and restoration; to uphold the dignity of those who have been harmed by disciplinary offenses; to restore the unity of the church by removing the causes of discord and division; and to secure the just, speedy, and economical determination of proceedings. ... (D-1.0101, emphasis added)

Since church discipline exists for the welfare of the believing community and applies to members of that community, a former minister of the Word and Sacrament (teaching elder) who has renounced jurisdiction is no longer a member by action of the presbytery that removes his or her name from its rolls. In any complaint, the Rules of Discipline would apply to the congregation or other entity which employed that former minister. Should a former minister of the Word and Sacrament who has renounced jurisdiction wish to be restored to the ordered ministry of minister of the Word and Sacrament (teaching elder), the process for restoration is spelled out in the Rules of Discipline, D-12.0200.

### **Advice from the Advisory Committee on the Constitution**

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advised the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to answer Item 06-09 with action on Item 06-07 providing the following advice [edited]. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advised the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to answer Item 06-07 recommendation #1 with disapproval and refer recommendation #2 to the Rules of Discipline Task Force. They provided the following advice [edited].

Both Items 06-07 and 06-09 would amend G-2.0509 on renunciation of jurisdiction. Each proposes correcting a perceived flaw in the language of the last paragraph of G-2.0509. The approaches are different and do not achieve the same end. There is a comprehensive description of the issues related to renunciation of jurisdiction in the advice on Item 06-07 that will provide helpful background for consideration of this overture as well.

There are particular issues inherent in Item 06-09 [18-B.1]. The first sentence of Item 06-09 addresses the actions of a congregation. The second sentence of Item 06-09 [18-B.1], addresses actions of a former minister. Each part is discussed separately below.

... The Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that the first paragraph would place requirements on the congregation or entity under the jurisdiction of the PC(USA), rather than on a former minister who has renounced the jurisdiction of this church and, therefore, is no longer subject to its jurisdiction and discipline. Section G-2.0509 is about ministers of the Word and Sacrament and their actions in renouncing jurisdiction. Insertion of requirements for a congregation or entity under the jurisdiction of the PC(USA) interrupts the flow and sense of this section.

... The Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that the second paragraph presents some matters of concern.

- Having struck the requirement for rejoining the church in the existing text of G-2.0509, if approved, the new language would eliminate any requirement for membership before “application” for restoration.
- It would require “application” to the presbytery. “Application” is not defined, nor are there any criteria for considering such an “application.”
- Most significantly, it assumes that renunciation of jurisdiction is equivalent to removal from ordered ministry in judicial process. A person who seeks to be restored after the censure of removal (D-12.0201) has subjected him or herself to the discipline of the church and satisfied the requirements for restoration. A person who has renounced jurisdiction of this church in the midst of a disciplinary proceeding has avoided the discipline of this church. A 1989 authoritative interpretation specifies that one who renounces jurisdiction and seeks to return to ministry of the Word and Sacrament “should first come again under the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) as a member of a particular church and then initiate the process and procedures found in G-2.06, Preparation for Ministry (formerly G-14.0300, Preparation for the Office of Minister of the Word and Sacrament).” The proposed language of Item 06-09 conflicts with this and would not require membership in the church.

[Editor's note: As noted in their advice above, the ACC provided advice on Item 06-07, which also applies to Item 6-09 since they recommended answering Item 06-09 with Item 06-07. The applicable advice is as follows.]

*Return to Ordered Ministry*

When a former minister renounced jurisdiction while a disciplinary case against him or her was pending, and now desires to return to ordered ministry in the PC(USA), additional process is required. Renunciation is not the removal of a person's status in ordered ministry, but a voluntary abandonment of it. A minister of the Word and Sacrament who renounced jurisdiction may not be *restored* to ordered ministry and the office of minister of Word and Sacrament because the person voluntarily acted in a manner to negate that status. This is particularly true where the minister renounced while a disciplinary case was pending against him or her and thus refused to be subject to church discipline.

1. A person who has renounced jurisdiction while subject to a disciplinary process and who is a minister in good standing of another denomination may seek to have those credentials recognized under G-2.0505.
2. A person who has renounced jurisdiction while subject to a disciplinary process and who is not a minister in good standing in another denomination or whose credentials are not recognized by the PC(USA), must do so as a member of a congregation through the process of G-2.06, Preparation for Ministry.

**18-B.2.**

**On Amending D-10.0401d (Item 06-09)**

**Shall D-10.0401d be amended to read as follows? [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]**

**~~“For instances where a former minister of the Word and Sacrament comes forward in self-accusation to undergo a disciplinary process to regain permission to perform work under the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (G-2.0509) who renounced jurisdiction while being accused in a disciplinary case rejoins the church, no time limit from the time of the commission of the alleged offense to the filing of charges shall apply. Charges based on all accusations that had been made by the time that the former minister of the Word and Sacrament had renounced jurisdiction may be brought regardless of the date on which any such offense is alleged to have occurred.”~~**

**Rationale**

The proposed amendment 18-B.1 originates from the Presbytery of Central Florida as Item 06-09 and proposed amendment 18-B.2 from the Presbytery of The Twin Cities Area as Item 06-07 Recommendation 2. The Presbyteries of Albany, Grand Canyon, Muskingum Valley, Newton, North Alabama, Tropical Florida, Wabash Valley, and de Cristo concurred with Item 06-09 and the Presbyteries of Albany, Denver, Grand Canyon, Missouri River Valley, Wabash Valley and de Cristo concurred with former Item 06-07 including Item 06-07 Recommendation 2. The Presbytery of Central Florida provided the following rationale for Item 06-09 [edited].

*How the Book of Order's Currently Mandated Disciplinary Process in G-2.0509 and D-10.0401d Is Inconsistent with the Preamble of the Rules of Discipline*

Recently adopted language in the *Book of Order* may seem to be merely a compassionate response to former ministers of the Word and Sacrament who renounced jurisdiction while being accused in a disciplinary case, who may have done so because of pressing family or medical reasons, for example. The current process allows former teaching elders to rejoin the church, but does not require them to face accusations until sometime in the future when they themselves choose to come forward, in self-accusation, to resume the disciplinary process. However, requiring the disciplinary process to resume only when the accused chooses to come forward in self-accusation is inconsistent with

five out of seven of the purposes of discipline stated in the Preamble of the Rules of Discipline (D-1.0101), because such a process (1) tramples on victim's rights, (2) is not likely to remove causes of suspicion, and (3) is not likely to bring perpetrators of offenses to repentance, especially if many years pass between when the accused renounces jurisdiction and when the accused chooses to resume the disciplinary process.

The Preamble of the Rules of Discipline state that three of the purposes of discipline are:

- “to achieve justice and compassion for all participants involved;”
- “to uphold the dignity of those who have been harmed by disciplinary offenses;”
- “to secure the just, speedy, and economical determination of proceedings.” (D-1.0101)

When an accusation is made, victims have a right to see a fair and impartial investigation go forward with all deliberate speed (up to and including a trial, if necessary), so that, whatever the outcome of the disciplinary process<sup>2</sup>, victims feel free to put memories of painful events in the past, and move on with their lives. However, under the current process in the *Book of Order*, victims (and perhaps their families or friends) may feel compelled to have to constantly prepare to testify about abusive events, just in case they ever receive notice from a new investigating committee that the accused wants to resume the disciplinary process, which could be at any time in the future of the accused's choosing. It is cruel, inhumane, and anything but “speedy,” to expect victims to keep hanging on to evidence of abuse and to relive painful memories for months, years, or even decades in the future, on the perhaps slim chance that the accused might rejoin the church and choose to resubmit to the disciplinary process. In the words of a theological seminary advisory delegate to the 2016 General Assembly (2016), the process in G-2.0509 and D-10.0401d as now written “punishes victims.”

### **Advice from the Advisory Committee on the Constitution**

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advised the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to answer Item 06-09 with action on Item 06-07 providing the following advice [edited]. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advised the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to answer Item 06-07 recommendation #1 with disapproval and refer recommendation #2 to the Rules of Discipline Task Force. They provided the following advice [edited].

#### *Part 2*

Recommendation 2 of Item 06-07 would amend D-10.0401d to add words to make clear the section applies only to a former minister of the Word and Sacrament who renounced jurisdiction of the PC(US.) while a disciplinary proceeding was proceeding against him or her as the accused. There is a task force working on a revision to the Rules of Discipline. The amendment to D-10.0401d (Recommendation 2 of Item 06-7) should be referred to it.

### **Advice from the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns**

The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns advised the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to approve Item 06-09 for its greater clarity of language in amending the *Book of Order*, G-2.0509 and approve Item 06-07 Recommendation 2.

*While ACWC supports the above changes, they are inadequate.* Unless victims have the right to a fair and impartial investigation with all deliberate speed, they will never feel free to put memories of painful events in the past and move on with their lives. Under the current ruling, however, former teaching elders are allowed to rejoin the church but are not required to face accusations and resume the disciplinary process until a time in the future of their own choosing. Thus, a predator can deliberately wait until after key witnesses have moved on with their lives, perhaps even died, or *the original* evidence is no longer available.

### **Advice from the Office of the General Assembly**

The Office of the General Assembly advised the 223rd General Assembly (2018) advises that all items, including Items 06-09 and 06-07, amending the Rules of Discipline, be referred to the Rules of Discipline Task Force, which is

currently revising the Rules of Discipline as a whole and will report with suggested changes to the 224th General Assembly (2020).

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The Assembly Committee on Church Polity and Ordered Ministry (06) voted to approve the proposed amendment as amended 54/3. The 223rd General Assembly (2018) approved the committee's recommendation with amendment 466/7. (See *Minutes*, 2018, Part I, pp. 71–72, 588.)

For the full report of Item 06-09, go to <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/committee/3000008/business>

## 18-C. Officers

### On Amending G-3.0104 (Item 06-16)

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) directed the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

**Shall G-3.0104 of the Form of Government be amended by adding the following statement as the last paragraph to read as follows? [Text to be added is shown as italic.]**

***“No congregation, session, presbytery, synod, or national office of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), nor any individual acting on behalf of or in an official capacity for the above institutions, shall publicly endorse or oppose, or otherwise encourage or discourage others to vote for or against an individual running for public office.”***

### Rationale

The proposed amendment originates from the Presbytery of Western North Carolina as Item 06-16. The Presbytery of de Cristo concurred. The Presbytery of Western North Carolina provided the following rationale for Item 06-16 [edited].

Since 1954, the Johnson Amendment has been a provision in the United States tax code prohibiting charitable organizations, including churches, from endorsing or opposing political candidates. This allows for charitable organizations to qualify for tax exemption and qualifies donations to these organizations as tax-exempt. In recent years, there has been discussion regarding the repeal of this amendment; those in favor of repeal claim that the amendment infringes on the first amendment rights of clergy and other leaders of religious and charitable organizations while those in favor of maintaining the statute fear that a repeal would lead to religious and charitable organizations becoming safe-havens for tax-exempt and un-reported political contributions.

While full repeal of the Johnson Amendment has not yet come to fruition, action has been taken to loosen the interpretation and implementation of the statute when churches and secular charitable organizations are found to be in violation.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has long supported the notion of the separation of church and state. We can see this throughout our Foundations of Presbyterian Polity. Section F-3.0101a and b affirms that “God alone is Lord of the conscience,” and that “We do not even wish to see any religious constitution aided by the civil power, further than may be necessary for protection and security, and at the same time, be equal and common to all others.”

While it is clear that the principles of this overture are present in abundance throughout the *Book of Order* and *Book of Confessions*, there is no explicit guidance offered to governing bodies or to those in leadership positions regarding endorsing or opposing candidates running for political office. This amendment to the *Book of Order* precludes such activity while still allowing for churches and leaders to actively engage with secular issues that touch on the life of faith, to work towards bringing God’s reign of justice and peace ever closer to reality.

### **Advice from the Advisory Committee on the Constitution**

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advised the 223rd General Assembly (2018) disapprove Item 06-16 providing the following advice [edited].

The Presbytery of Western North Carolina summarizes the history of the “Johnson Amendment,” and anticipates change to that statute. Because the Johnson Amendment has not yet been revoked or altered, it is premature for the assembly to address anticipated statutory change. The overture would reverse long-standing foundational principles of our denomination and have long-reaching effects on the church,

#### *Individual Discernment and Diversity of Religious Belief*

Presbyterians begin with a firm and fundamental belief in the private discernment of religious belief. Section F-3.0101 sets forth and affirms the historic principle that “God alone is Lord of the conscience” and that “in all matters that

respect religion” “we consider the rights of private judgment ... as universal and inalienable.” Holy Scriptures are the only rule of faith, and church power in matters of religious belief is limited as explained in F-3.0107. This first historic principle of church order (F-3.0101) was affirmed and explained in the policy statement, “God Alone Is Lord of the Conscience.”<sup>1</sup> The principle that God alone is Lord of the conscience both reflects and underlies many other foundational<sup>2</sup> and confessional<sup>3</sup> statements in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

“Religious bodies and people of faith hold to a wide variety of convictions, ideas, and values that make important contributions to the shape and strength of public life. That life has been shaped by individuals and groups that have sought to create new forms, sustain traditional ones, challenge existing ideologies and reform or resist unjust institutions. Participation is thus viewed by the government sometimes as a blessing and at other times as a threat” (*God Alone*, p. 48; see also F-1.404). Because the individual is the bearer of conscience, it does not matter whether others of the same faith make the same conscientious claim. *God Alone*, p. 19. “Religious tolerance and pluralism are our political and societal norm. We do not perfectly achieve that norm and intolerance has not been eliminated....” (*God Alone*, p. 7).

#### *Formation of Conscience in Community*

While Presbyterians emphasize individual belief, we also recognize the importance of community and our shared expression of belief. Discourse and expressions of diversity within the church are important to formation of religious conscience. As Presbyterians, we recognize that “The formation of conscience occurs in community, but its exercise is very often finally an individual matter” (*God Alone*, p. 19). It is a fundamental principle for our church and our country that “The individual’s right to believe cannot be divorced from the right to exercise that belief in the company and community of others. For nearly every human being, the right to practice religion only as a solitary individual is virtually no right at all” (*God Alone*, p. 12). “The exercise of individual and corporate conscience must be affirmed as an integral aspect of religious liberty.”<sup>4</sup>

#### *Separation of Church and State*

The freedom to express religious views in public is as important as the freedom to determine religious beliefs for oneself. For Reformed Christians, “faith demands engagement in the secular order and involvement in the political realm” (*God Alone*, p. 48). The so-called “separation between church and state” is “particularly misleading when used to advocate the separation of religion from politics or from any other dimension of the public order. The First Amendment has never meant separation of religion from community or separation of the church from public life. On their face, the religion clauses [of the U.S. Constitution] constitute an absolute prohibition on government participation in religious life; there is no hint that that barrier was even thought to isolate religion from the life of the republic” (*God Alone*, pp. 47–48).

#### *Responsibility for Involvement in Public Life*

The freedom and responsibility to express religious and moral views in public is an important part of our denominational principles and history. The Gospel demands that we share our faith and that we seek to be a community of faith witnessing to God’s good news and Christ’s teachings to the world in words and deeds. According to the Reformed tradition and standards of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), “it is a limitation and denial of faith not to seek its expression in both a personal and public manner, in such ways as will not only influence, but transform the public order and involvement in the political realm” (*God Alone*, p. 48). This principle reflects our foundational statements (F-1.0301, F-1.0304, F-1.0404), other parts of the *Book of Order* (e.g., W-5.0304), and our long-standing and important history of social witness to world.

#### *Endorsement or Opposition to Political Candidates*

“For these reasons, limitations upon the freedom of religious bodies to participate in public life are illegitimate and unconstitutional. The church is bound to reject any regulation limiting church advocacy or particular legislation or endorsement of candidates, or establishing religious qualifications for office holders” (*God Alone*, p. 50). Over the centuries, Presbyterians have stood up and spoken out against those who would silence the church and the faithful.

Internal Revenue Code provisions that limit tax-exempt religious organization from devoting “substantial” activity to attempts to influence legislation or participate or intervene in political campaigns on behalf of any candidate for public office, as well as recent public debate, heighten concerns about religious discourse about public life. There is a difference between discussion of issues and candidates, on one hand, and intervention in campaigns on behalf of specific candidates on the other” (*God Alone*, p. 50).

The 200th General Assembly (1988) specifically affirmed that: “We recognize that speaking out on issues will sometimes constitute implicit support or opposition to particular candidates or parties, where policy and platform differences are clearly drawn. Since such differences are the vital core of the political process, church participation should not be curtailed on that account; but we believe that it is generally unwise and imprudent for the church explicitly to support or oppose specific candidates, except in unusual circumstances” (*God Alone*, p. 50).

Each council should be mindful of these foundational principles and historical practice. “It is easy to step from advocating our vision to seeking to enforce it, from protecting religious liberty to requiring ‘right’ belief and action. The church must advocate its positions on public issues, but it should not seek to exercise political authority in its own right” (*God Alone*, p. 50).

#### Endnotes

1. *God Alone Is Lord of the Conscience* is a policy statement of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) adopted by the 200th General Assembly (1988), and affirmed or cited by numerous subsequent General Assemblies and entities of the church. Hereafter “God Alone.”
2. Section F-1.0301 states the “Calling of the Church” is to be a community of faith, a community of hope, a community of love, and a community of witness. “The Great Ends of the Church” (F-1.0304) include “the promotion of social righteousness; and the exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the world.” Section F-1.0404 explains the “Church seeks a new openness to God’s mission in the world.”
3. See, e.g., the Theological Declaration of Barmen and the Confession of 1967, which can be found in the *Book of Confessions*.
4. “The church is always obliged to respect claims of conscience lest it frustrate efforts to obey the will of God. We need not agree with the specific dictates of another’s conscience to respect and support the right to exercise that conscience. Paul told Christians that they were freed from Jewish dietary laws, but if the conscience of another is offended by eating certain foods, ‘for conscience sake—I mean his conscience, not yours—do not eat it’ (1 Corinthians 10:28–29). The obligation to respect the exercise of conscience is not only a dynamic of life within the church; it is both a demand and a dilemma of the First Amendment’s protection of religious freedom” (*God Alone*, p. 18).

### **Advice from the Advisory Committee for Social Witness Policy**

The Advisory Committee for Social Witness Policy advised the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to approve 06-16 with suggested amendment providing the following advice [edited].

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises approval as amended below: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through and with brackets; text to be added or inserted is shown with an underline and with brackets.]

“~~No~~ [Except in cases of extreme danger to the common good, and even then with cautions against extreme partisanship, no] congregation, session, presbytery, synod, or national office of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), nor any individual acting on behalf of or in an official capacity for the above institutions, shall publicly endorse or oppose, or otherwise encourage or discourage others to vote for or against an individual running for public office.”

The substantial and generally fine General Assembly social witness policy on church/state relations, *God Alone Is Lord of the Conscience* (1988; <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/1-god-alone-is-lord-1988.pdf>) refuses to limit prophetic religious speech, but also recognizes the wisdom of our predominant practice. “The church is bound to reject any regulation limiting church advocacy or particular legislation or endorsement of candidates, or establishing religious qualifications for office holders.” But then, “There is a difference between discussion of issues and candidates, on one hand, and intervention in campaigns on behalf of specific candidates on the other.” And further, “... we believe that it is generally unwise and imprudent for the church explicitly to support or oppose specific candidates, except in unusual circumstances” (all three quotes from page 50).

The General Assembly spoke to the issues involved in the Tax Justice policy of 2014, reaffirming the principles behind the current 501.c.3 category, and further addressing the abuse of the 501.c.4 category of “social welfare institutions” for political purposes and personal enrichment:

Rules governing tax-exempt “social welfare organizations” (501(c)(4)s) should exclude or strictly limit the eligibility of donations for partisan political purposes, parties and candidates, and the individual and corporate donors to or through such organizations should be made public due to their influence on the political process ([http://www.pcusa.org/site\\_media/media/uploads/acswp/pdf/acswp\\_tax\\_justice\\_42.pdf](http://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/acswp/pdf/acswp_tax_justice_42.pdf), p. 4).

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) addressed this matter even more directly, responding to Supreme Court decisions in the Citizens United and Voting Rights Act cases, which intensified the role of money in politics:

[The Assembly:] Endorses the continuing prohibition of partisan political endorsements by religious organizations or their leadership and other measures to respect both religious liberty and the separation of church and state. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) strongly supports the freedom of religious organizations to speak on matters of policy, but personal endorsements and partisan ties may present the appearance of or opportunity for collusion, special treatment, and the violation of nonprofit tax status. <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/Election-Protection-and-Integrity-in-Campaign-Finance-2016-ACSWP.pdf>, pp. 2–3)

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The Assembly Committee on Church Polity and Ordered Ministry (06) voted to approve the proposed amendment as amended 31/24. The 223rd General Assembly (2018) approved the committee’s recommendation with amendment 370/99. (See *Minutes*, 2018, Part I, pp. 73, 611.)

For the full report of Item 06-16, go to <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/committee/3000008/business>

**18-D. Membership of Presbytery**  
**On Amending G-3.0306 (Item 06-05)**

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) directed the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

**Shall the fourth paragraph of G-3.0306 of the Form of Government be amended by adding the following statement as follows? [Text to be added is shown as italic.]**

***“Every minister of the Word and Sacrament shall ordinarily be a member of the presbytery where his or her work is situated or of the presbytery where she or he resides. The presbytery may grant a minister permission to engage in work validated ministry that is outside its geographic bounds or which is not under its jurisdiction, but no presbytery shall permit a minister to engage in work that is within the geographic bounds of another presbytery and which is properly within the responsibility of another presbytery without consent of that presbytery. Such permission shall be obtained from both presbyteries and shall be reviewed and renewed annually.”***

**Rationale**

This proposed amendment originates from the Presbytery of Tropical Florida as Item 06-11. The Presbyteries of Central Florida, Greater Atlanta, Huntington, Wabash Valley and de Cristo concurred. The Presbytery of Tropical Florida provided the following rationale [edited].

The current Form of Government lacks clarity with regard to the seeking of and granting of permission for a minister member of a presbytery to labor beyond the geographic boundaries of the presbytery of membership. This overture provides clarity to the seeking of permission to labor within the geographic bounds of a presbytery beyond that of the minister of Word and Sacrament’s membership.

As “the presbytery is the council serving as a corporate expression of the church within a certain district” (G-3.0301), the presbytery needs to have knowledge of and oversight for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) witness within its geographic district. Without the Form of Government making it clear that permission must be granted by the presbytery for all validated ministry taking place within its bounds, the particular corporate witness of a presbytery within a certain district may lack unity of strategy for mission under the Word. The addition of this paragraph to the Form of Government enhances the presbytery’s capacity for unity in its corporate witness as strategy for mission under the Word.

**Advice from the Advisory Committee on the Constitution**

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advised the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to approve Item 06-05 as amended providing the following advice [edited]:

Item 06-05 seeks to return to the *Book of Order* the mechanism for seeking permission to labor beyond the geographic bounds of membership of the minister of the Word and Sacrament. The ... text ... is based on the language that was in the 2009–2011 edition of the *Book of Order*.

The Form of Government (G-3.0306) establishes that each presbytery determines the ministers who are its members and validates the ministries in which they are to be engaged, following the criteria of G-2.0503a(1)–(5) and the policy developed by the presbytery for validating the ministries of its members.

The Assembly Committee on Church Polity and Ordered Ministry (06) voted to approve the proposed amendment as amended 52/1. The 223rd General Assembly (2018) approved the committee’s recommendation with amendment 442/13. (See *Minutes*, 2018, Part I, pp. 71, 571.)

For the full report of Item 06-05, go to <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/committee/3000008/business>.

## 18-E. Pastor, Counselor, and Advisor to Its Pastors and Congregations

### On Amending G-3.0307 (Item 06-02)

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) directed the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall G-3.0307 of the Form of Government be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

**“G-3.0307 Pastor, Counselor, and Advisor to Its ~~Pastors~~ *Ministers of the Word and Sacrament and Congregations***

**“Presbyteries shall be open at all times to communication regarding the life and ministry of their congregations.**

**“Each presbytery shall develop and maintain mechanisms and processes to serve as pastor and counselor to its ~~pastors, both ministers of the Word and Sacrament, and ruling elders commissioned to pastoral service (also called commissioned pastors (also known as commissioned ruling elders)), as well as the~~ *and certified Christian educators of the presbytery; to facilitate the relations between the presbytery and its congregations, ~~pastors ministers of the Word and Sacrament, commissioned pastors,~~ and certified Christian educators; and to settle difficulties on behalf of the presbytery where possible and expedient.”***

#### Rationale

The proposed amendment originates from the Presbytery of Santa Fe as Item 06-02. The Presbyteries of Grand Canyon, Muskingum Valley, Sierra Blanca, Southeastern Illinois, and de Cristo, concurred with Item 06-02. The Presbytery of Santa Fe provided the following rationale for Item 06-002 [edited].

The Presbytery of Santa Fe was one of the concurring presbyteries on the 2016 overture that became Amendment 16-C, Recommendations C.1 through C.8, ratified by a majority of the presbyteries. We are mindful of the valid criticism of Recommendation 16-C.6 (G-3.0307) raised by the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, as well as other concerns about repetitive wording. We believe this can be easily remedied by our proposed amendment.

#### **Advice from the Advisory Committee on the Constitution**

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advised the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to approve Item 06-02 as amended providing the following advice [edited]:

The rationale for Item 06-02 focuses on the issue of repetitive wording in this section, but there is a more important issue that is corrected by this amendment.

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) approved Item 06-08 on amending the *Book of Order* to clarify titles to Ordered Ministry. Item 06-08 (2016) was a large amendment with seven recommendations, most which dealt with switching the default term for the ordered ministry of “teaching elder” to “minister of the Word and Sacrament.” In the process of approval, the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approved an amendment to G-3.0307 (sixth recommendation) to strike out the term “teaching elder” and insert not “minister of the Word and Sacrament,” but “pastor.”

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution called the attention of the assembly to an unintended consequence of this amendment, that by inserting the word “pastor” into the action defining who had access to the committee on ministry or its equivalent, the amendment was cutting off all ministers of the Word and Sacrament not serving as installed or temporary pastors from access to this committee or entity. Item 06-08 (2016) was approved and referred to the presbyteries without addressing this concern.

Item 06-02, if approved, will restore constitutional access to the committee on ministry or its equivalent to all minister members of the presbytery. It also deals with the issue of repetitive wording in this section with language that is clear and concise.

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The Assembly Committee on Church Polity and Ordered Ministry (06) voted to approve the proposed amendment as amended 52/0. The 223rd General Assembly (2018) approved the committee's recommendation with amendment 464/3. (See *Minutes*, 2018, Part I, pp. 70, 565–66.)

For the full report of Item 06-02, go to <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/committee/3000008/business>

**18-F. Welcoming to the Table**  
**On Amending W-4.0202 (Item 14-03)**

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) directed the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall W-4.0202 be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

**“W-4.0202 Welcoming to the Table**

**“In cases where baptized children who have not yet begun to participate in the Lord’s Supper express a desire to receive the Sacrament, ~~the session should provide an occasion to welcome them~~ *they shall be welcomed to the table in public worship. Their introduction to the Lord’s Supper should include and the session should ensure they receive ongoing instruction or formation in the meaning and mystery of the Sacraments.*”**

**Rationale**

This proposed amendment originates from the Presbytery of Grace as Item 14-03. The Presbyteries of de Cristo, Grand Canyon, Huntingdon, Newton, and Palo Duro concurred. The Presbytery of Grace provided the following rationale [edited].

The current language “provide an occasion to welcome them” could be interpreted as the need to provide a “first communion” service for baptized children. If taken this way, the language could develop a mindset that baptized children must wait until a certain age or complete certain educational requirements before belonging at the table. This mindset would violate our understanding that the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are linked (W-3.0408 “Welcome”) and that “all who come to the table are to be offered the bread and cup regardless of their age or understanding,” (W-3.0409 “The Theology of the Lord’s Supper”).

Striking this phrase simplifies the wording while maintaining the intent—to welcome the baptized and provide them with ongoing instruction. The responsibility for instruction in baptismal identity and worship education and participation is addressed in W-4.0201 “Nurturing the Baptized,” W-2.0303 “Ruling Elders,” and W-2.0305 “Shared Responsibility and Accountability.” The issue of welcome to those not baptized is addressed in W-3.0409 “The Theology of the Lord’s Supper.”

**Advice from the Advisory Committee on the Constitution**

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advised the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to approve Item 14-03 providing the following advice [edited]:

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to approve Item 14-03.

This amendment seeks to clarify that when children receive the Lord’s Supper for the first time, the Directory for Worship is not suggesting a service such as “first communion.”

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that the overture has identified a possible contradiction between W-3.0409 and the current language of W-4.0202 and has provided an amendment to W-4.0202 that would resolve that contradiction. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that the proposed language is clear and consistent with the stated intent of the overture.

The Assembly Committee on Theological & Church Growth Issues and Institutions (14) voted to approve the proposed amendment with comment 50/1. The 223rd General Assembly (2018) approved the committee’s recommendation with a voice vote. (See *Minutes*, 2018, Part I, pp. 17, 1205.)

For the full report of Item 14-03, go to <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/committee/3000016/business>.

## **18-G. Disciplinary Offense**

### **On Amending D-2.0203b (Item 06-04)**

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) directed the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

**Shall D-2.0203b of the Form of Government be amended as follows? [Text to be deleted is shown with strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]**

**“b. An offense is any act or omission by a member or a person in an ordered ministry of the church that is contrary to the Scriptures or the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). *Sexual abuse as defined in Section D-10.0401c shall be considered contrary to the Scriptures or Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and therefore an offense for purposes of these rules.*”**

#### **Rationale**

This proposed amendment originates from the Presbytery of North Alabama as Item 06-04. The Presbyteries of Albany, Boise, Grand Canyon, Huntington, and de Cristo concurred. The Presbytery of North Alabama provided the following rationale [edited].

A recent ruling by a synod permanent judicial commission effectively indicated that actions in violation of a council’s sexual misconduct policy are not under the jurisdiction of the Rules of Discipline unless those actions are explicitly specified as contrary to the Scriptures or the Constitution. The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) requires “all councils shall adopt and implement a sexual misconduct policy and a child and youth protection policy” (*Book of Order*, G-3.0106). In order to meet this requirement, actions or omissions in violation of these policies must have the capacity to be addressed through our disciplinary process; otherwise the policies are unenforceable. Furthermore, it should be implicit that actions that violate constitutionally required policies are by their very nature contrary to the Scriptures or the Constitution. Decisions in prior disciplinary cases have supported this concept.

The members and congregations of the Presbytery of North Alabama wish to stringently affirm that sexual misconduct is sin. We believe past failure to confront this behavior has led to injustice and discord within the church, and scrutiny and litigation from without. We humbly ask the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to take an unequivocal stand for justice by equating this sin as an implicit violation of scriptural norms and constitutional ordination vows.

#### **Advice from the Advisory Committee on the Constitution**

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advised the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to disapprove Item 06-04 with comment. They provided the following advice [edited].

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to disapprove Item 06-04 with the following comment.

“While sexual misconduct is not condoned by Scriptures or the Constitution of the PC(USA), adding this language to the *Book of Order* is unnecessary. All councils and judicial commissions are admonished to consider sexual misconduct as contrary to the Scriptures and the Constitution of the PC(USA).”

Scriptures and the Constitution do not condone sexual misconduct or the abuse and endangerment of children and youth. Many acts involve impermissible sexual overtures, force, and misconduct. The assembly is reminded that the Constitution is not an enumeration of specific permitted or prohibited conduct, but rather a guide for all councils in administering their mission. Each council should be mindful that any act of sexual misconduct or child abuse is in violation of the Constitution. By singling out a particular violation of a particular policy, an inference might be made that violations of other policies are not contrary to the Scriptures and the Constitution.

Councils have the authority to establish and enforce their policies. Not all violations of a particular policy may be found to be contrary to Scripture or the Constitution. Violation of a council's sexual misconduct and/or child and youth protection policy may be procedural and may not rise to the level of a constitutional offense. The Rules of Discipline set forth the process for determining proof of an alleged offense, including sexual misconduct.

The assembly may consider admonishing all councils and judicial commissions that sexual misconduct is contrary to the Scriptures and the Constitution and that all councils are required to adopt and implement a sexual misconduct policy and/or child/youth protection policy (G-3.0106).

Alternatively, the assembly may consider referral of this item to the Task Force on the Rules of Discipline for report to the 224th General Assembly (2020).

### **Advice from the Advocacy Committee on Women's Concerns**

The Advocacy Committee on Women's Concerns advised the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve Item 06-04 providing the following advice [edited].

The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC) agrees that any act or omission prohibited by the council of authority's duly adopted sexual misconduct policy and/or child and youth protection policy should be considered contrary to the Scriptures or Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and therefore an offense for purposes of these rules. ACWC agrees with this overture that past failure to confront sexual misconduct has led to injustice and discord within the church, and scrutiny and litigation from without.

Because all sexual abuse is, at the core, an abuse of power, certain populations are more vulnerable to such abuse. For instance, children and youth, developmentally disabled adults, and immigrant night shift workers are often the targets of sexual misconduct. Gender inequities rooted in theological misunderstandings based in patriarchy leave women within the church particularly vulnerable to sexual misconduct, not only from other clergy, but also to sexual harassment from male members of their congregations. It is essential that the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) take an unequivocal stand for justice by equating sexual misconduct to be an implicit violation of scriptural norms and constitutional ordination vows.

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The Assembly Committee on Church Polity and Ordered Ministry (06) voted to approve the proposed amendment as amended 53/0. The 223rd General Assembly (2018) approved the committee's recommendation with amendment 416/13. (See *Minutes*, 2018, Part I, pp. 70, 570.)

For the full report of Item 06-04, go to <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/committee/3000008/business>.

## 18-H. Time Limit

### On Amending D-10.0401 (Item 06-24)

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) directed the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

#### 18-H.1.

**Shall D-10.0401b of the Form of Government be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]**

**“b. For instances of sexual abuse of another person, the five-year time limit shall not apply. *There is also no time limit for charging that a person who knew or reasonably should have known of the reasonable risk of sexual abuse of another as defined in D-10.0401c(1) or (2) failed to take reasonable steps to minimize the risk. Both charges may be brought regardless of the date on which an offense is alleged to have occurred.*”**

#### 18-H.2.

**Shall D-10.0401c(1) of the Form of Government be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]**

**“(1) any person under the age of eighteen years or anyone ~~over the age of eighteen years~~ without the ~~mental~~ capacity to consent; or”**

### Rationale

This proposed amendment originates from the Advisory Committee on the Constitution comment on a referral from the 222nd (2016) General Assembly to the Office of the General Assembly. The original item before the 222nd (2016) General Assembly originated from the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.

#### **Advice from the Advisory Committee on the Constitution**

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advised the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to refer Item 06-24 to the Rules of Discipline Task Force or approve as amended. They provided the following advice [edited].

[b.] The ACWC proposed and ACC recommended languages both impose a level of responsibility on persons that is not currently part of the Rules of Discipline. The ACC recommendation imposes a negligence standard for failure to respond to situations involving a reasonable risk of sexual misconduct, including the failure to report appropriately.

[c.1)] This language recognizes that minor persons cannot consent. The second clause clarifies that sexual abuse includes persons who lack of the capacity to consent for any reason whatsoever.

The Assembly Committee on Church Polity and Ordered Ministry (06) voted to approve the proposed amendment as amended 47/1. The 223rd General Assembly (2018) approved the committee’s recommendation with amendment 455/16. (See *Minutes*, 2018, Part I, pp. 73–74, 631–32.)

For the full report of Item 06-24, go to <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/committee/3000008/business>

## LIST OF PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

<b>18-A. Election of Ruling Elders and Deacons—</b>	1
<b>On Amending G-2.0401</b> .....	1
<b>18-B. Renunciation of Jurisdiction</b> .....	3
<b>18-B.1. On Amending G-2.0509</b> .....	3
<b>18-B.2. On Amending D-10.0401d</b> .....	5
<b>18-C. Officers - On Amending G-3.0104</b> .....	8
<b>18-D. Membership of Presbytery - On Amending G-3.0306</b> .....	12
<b>18-E. Pastor, Counselor, and Advisor—</b>	13
<b>On Amending G-3.0307</b> .....	13
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<b>18-H. Time Limit</b> .....	18
<b>18-H.1. On Amending D-10.0401b</b> .....	18
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**Presbytery of Southern New England**

**Presbytery Roundtable – Stated Meeting – January 10, 2019**

**Report of the Stated Clerk**

The Office of the General Assembly has published the **amendments to the PC(U.S.A.) Constitution** proposed by the General Assembly for ratification by the presbyteries at the following web address:

[http://oga.pcusa.org/site\\_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/ga223\\_proposed\\_amendments\\_to\\_the\\_constitution2018.pdf](http://oga.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/ga223_proposed_amendments_to_the_constitution2018.pdf)

(I am also including a copy of this document with the materials for our January Roundtable meeting.)

In advance of our consideration of these proposed amendments at the February Stated Meeting of the Presbytery, I have prepared the following summary:

18-A. This proposed amendment would require that a **majority of the members of a congregational nominating committee** consist of members of the congregation who are **not currently in active service on the session**. (This requirement was in place prior to the adoption of the New Form of Government in 2010.)

18-B. These are two proposed amendments (18-B.1 & 18-B.2) which address the circumstances where a **PC(U.S.A.) minister has renounced the jurisdiction of the church and now wishes to return to ordered ministry**. A process is provided whereby the former minister may face any disciplinary accusations that were pending at the time of renunciation, with the usual time limits waived, and—should the outcome of the disciplinary process permit it—be restored to ministry in the PC(U.S.A.).

Among the concerns raised as these amendments were considered at General Assembly was the distinction between *removal* from ordered ministry through disciplinary process, and *abandonment* of ordered ministry through the minister's renunciation of the jurisdiction of the church. This amendment allows for treating these situations in a similar way. Should someone who has *avoided* discipline for

some time be given the same treatment as someone who remained within the church and *submitted* to discipline?

- 18-C. This proposed amendment is an attempt to **codify in our polity** an element of civil law that the authors of this amendment feel is under threat. The **Johnson Amendment** prohibits charitable organizations, including churches, from advocating for or against the election of candidates for public office. This proposed amendment to the Book of Order goes somewhat further than this, not only forbidding statements for or against specific candidates, but also acts that “otherwise encourage or discourage others to vote for or against an individual running for public office.”

One’s view of the merits of this amendment may hinge on how broadly these words might be interpreted in particular cases. If an avowed white supremacist were running in a political race, could a pastor who speaks from a Christian perspective in opposition to the ideology of white supremacy, without mentioning the candidate, be subject to discipline under this rule?

Another factor is one’s assessment of the likelihood of the repeal of the Johnson Amendment—there is currently no legislation under consideration to do this.

- 18-D. This proposed amendment seeks to restore to the current Book of Order language that was present in the old Form of Government (prior to 2010) addressing the **granting of permission to ministers to labor outside the bounds** of their presbyteries of membership, and within the bounds of another presbytery.
- 18-E. This proposed amendment clarifies the role of the Presbytery as a **“Pastor, Counselor, and Advisor” to all of its Ministers of Word and Sacrament** (G-3.0307). The current language is simply “pastors,” but nearly every presbytery includes ministers who do not serve as pastors.
- 18-F. This proposed amendment seeks to clarify that **children are to be welcomed to the Table** for the celebration of the Lord’s Supper, and that this welcome does not need to be a formal ceremony, such as a “First Communion.” This section of the Book of

Order will continue to include language strongly encouraging that the session provide ongoing instruction in the meaning of the Sacraments to children.

18-G. This proposed amendment **explicitly defines sexual abuse as an offense** under the Rules of Discipline, for which church members and officers can be censured. (It should be noted that the original text of the overture to the General Assembly sought to define *any violation of a council's sexual misconduct or child protection policy* as an offense. This overture was prompted by the ruling of a synod permanent judicial commission, which held that violating a sexual misconduct policy is not an offense, unless the conduct is also an act or omission prohibited by Scripture or the Constitution of the church, in accordance with D-2.0203b.) The amendment refers to the definition of sexual abuse set forth in D-10.0401c.

18-H. These are two proposed amendments to the Rules of Discipline that involve sexual abuse.

18-H.1. The Rules of Discipline provide a period of five years from the time of an alleged offense in which someone may be charged, but they also waive the time limit in cases of sexual abuse. **This proposed amendment would also waive the time limit in cases where the accused is alleged to have known about sexual abuse**, or the risk of sexual abuse, and failed to act.

18-H.2. This proposed amendment **clarifies language in the definition of sexual abuse** regarding the capacity to consent to sexual conduct.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. David A. Baer, Stated Clerk

**Treasurer's Report  
as of 12/31/2018**

<b>Presbytery of Southern New England - Statement of Financial Position</b>			
	<b>Balance as of 12/31/2017</b>	<b>Balance as of 12/31/2018</b>	<b>Difference</b>
<b>Assets:</b>			
<i>Cash</i>			
Checking Account for Operating Cash	864,978.36	126,827.72	<b>A</b> (738,150.64)
Ministerial Relief Cash	19,843.63	26,429.17	6,585.54
Simsbury NCD - ING Savings Account	76,986.10	77,263.95	<b>B</b> 277.85
<i>Investments</i>			
Fidelity Investments	-	650,287.58	<b>C</b> 650,287.58
Merrill Lynch	281,329.03	281,869.45	540.42
Accounts Receivable	263,419.70	239,419.70	<b>D</b> (24,000.00)
Fixed Assets	6,406.72	5,776.69	(630.03)
Accumulated Depreciation	(4,575.30)	(4,875.38)	(300.08)
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>1,508,388.24</b>	<b>1,402,998.88</b>	<b>(105,389.36)</b>
<b>Liabilities:</b>			
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	-	-	-
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>1,508,388.24</b>	<b>1,402,998.88</b>	<b>E</b> (105,389.36)
<b>Total Liabilities &amp; Net Assets</b>	<b>1,508,388.24</b>	<b>1,402,998.88</b>	<b>(105,389.36)</b>
<b>A) Of the balance in the Checking Account the amount shown in the Dedicated Accounts Report for "Total Operating Cash Dedicated Accts." is restricted.</b>			
<b>B) Simsbury dismissal agreement settlement designated for New Church Development.</b>			
<b>C) New investment brokerage account set up with Fidelity Investments.</b>			
<b>D) Balance at 12-31-18 includes Dismissal Agreement Balances of PCOG, Enfield: Calvary, and Newport: First and Springfield: Christ.</b>			
<b>E) Does not include the value of Church properties or charges against them.</b>			

**Treasurer's Report  
as of 12/31/2018**

Ref. C-1

<b>Presbytery of Southern New England - Statement of Activities</b>						
<b>OPERATIONS</b>	<b>Mission/Ministry</b>	<b>Admin.</b>	<b>Annual Budget</b>	<b>Year to Date Actual</b>	<b>Annual Budget Bal.</b>	<b>YTD 100%</b>
<b>Income</b>						
General Mission	75,000.00		75,000.00	55,406.20	19,593.80	74%
General Mission - prior year			0.00	0.00	0.00	
Interest on Operating Cash		450.00	450.00	3,159.49	(2,709.49)	702%
Presbytery Per Capita		245,548.00	245,548.00	215,735.05	29,812.95	88%
Donations			0.00	8,409.10	(8,409.10)	
Merrill Lynch dividends minus fees			0.00	1,364.05	(1,364.05)	
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>75,000.00</b>	<b>245,998.00</b>	<b>320,998.00</b>	<b>284,073.89</b>	<b>36,924.11</b>	<b>88%</b>
<b>Expense</b>						
<b>Committees:</b>						
Committee on Ministry	2,400.00	4,200.00	6,600.00	7,341.20	(741.20)	111%
Committee on Preparation	3,000.00	2,000.00	5,000.00	2,862.30	2,137.70	57%
Nominations	220.00		220.00	111.53	108.47	51%
Nurturing & Creating Relationships	59,720.00		59,720.00	42,346.60	17,373.40	71%
Personnel		500.00	500.00	204.45	295.55	41%
Honorariums			0.00	400.00	(400.00)	
Roundtable		7,747.00	7,747.00	3,889.40	3,857.60	50%
Pastor to Pastor	3,600.00		3,600.00	2,706.34	893.66	75%
Trustees	500.00	7,500.00	8,000.00	9,077.20	(1,077.20)	113%
Office Operations		10,187.00	10,187.00	8,252.71	1,934.29	81%
Salaries & Benefits	5,560.00	244,704.00	250,264.00	248,460.87	1,803.13	99%
Travel		13,100.00	13,100.00	12,699.36	400.64	97%
Bldg. Maint/Equip. Replacement		2,000.00	2,000.00	2,500.00	(500.00)	125%
GA Travel		1,500.00	1,500.00	289.21	1,210.79	19%
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>75,000.00</b>	<b>293,438.00</b>	<b>368,438.00</b>	<b>341,141.17</b>	<b>27,296.83</b>	<b>93%</b>
<b>Net Income/Expense</b>			<b>(47,440.00)</b>	<b>(57,067.28)</b>		
<b>PER CAPITA PASS-THRU</b>						
<b>Designated Income:</b>						
GA Per Capita				49,834.18		
Synod Per Capita				26,382.40		
<b>Total Designated Income</b>				<b>76,216.58</b>		
<b>Designated Expense:</b>						
GA Per Capita				55,816.99		
Synod Per Capita				32,782.24		
<b>Total Designated Expense</b>				<b>88,599.23</b>		
<b>Net Per Capita Pass-Thru</b>				<b>(12,382.65)</b>		
<b>MISSION PASS-THRU</b>						
GA General Mission	23,630.66		Total Revenues for the year		<b>438,695.05</b>	
Synod General Mission	6,417.03					
GA Special Mission	47,568.60		Total Expenditures for the year		<b>508,144.98</b>	
Synod Special Mission	788.29					
<b>Total Mission Pass-thru</b>	<b>78,404.58</b>		<b>Net Gain/Loss</b>		<b>(69,449.93)</b>	

**DEDICATED ACCOUNTS  
AS OF 12/31/2018**

Ref. C-2

<b>OPERATING CASH DEDICATED ACCOUNTS:</b>	<b>Balance 12/31/2017</b>	<b>Year to Date Receipts</b>	<b>Year to Date Expenses</b>	<b>Balance 12/31/2018</b>
<b>Committee on Ministry</b>				
Leadership Training	750.00	-	-	750.00
Coaching	4,226.52	-	-	4,226.52
<b>Total Committee on Ministry</b>	<b>4,976.52</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>4,976.52</b>
<b>Grants/Donations</b>				
Brookfield Grant - Tornado	-	5,000.00	3,108.47	1,891.53
Grant - MLK Church	-	75,000.00	61,835.19	13,164.81
Transformation Grant	-	30,000.00	18,586.53	11,413.47
Tri-Presbytery Consultant	1,288.68	-	-	1,288.68
<b>Total Grants</b>	<b>1,288.68</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,288.68</b>
<b>Social Justice:</b>				
Peacemaking Donations	4,591.86	1,313.51	1,404.00	4,501.37
<b>Total Social Justice</b>	<b>4,591.86</b>	<b>1,313.51</b>	<b>1,404.00</b>	<b>4,501.37</b>
Presbytery Immigrant Ministry	23,090.93	54,396.00	73,513.69	3,973.24
PIM - Presbytery Women Grant	4,001.84	-	-	4,001.84
<b>Total PY Immigrant Ministry</b>	<b>27,092.77</b>	<b>54,396.00</b>	<b>73,513.69</b>	<b>7,975.08</b>
<b>Total Operating Cash Dedicated Accts.</b>	<b>37,949.83</b>	<b>55,709.51</b>	<b>74,917.69</b>	<b>18,741.65</b>
<b>Cranston: Faith Closing</b>	<b>152,960.73</b>	<b>400,000.00</b>	<b>25,000.00</b>	<b>527,960.73</b>
<b>Dismissal Agreement Income</b>	<b>119,999.90</b>	<b>25,662.40</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>145,662.30</b>
<b>ING Savings Account</b>				
<b>Simsbury /NCD Reserve</b>	<b>76,986.10</b>	<b>307.75</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>77,293.85</b>
<b>TOTAL DEDICATED ACCOUNTS</b>	<b>387,896.56</b>	<b>481,679.66</b>	<b>99,917.69</b>	<b>769,658.53</b>

Presbytery of Southern New England Investment Summary as of 12/31/2018							
		December 2017 Balance	Fees	Transfers In	Transfers Out	Unrealized Gain(Loss)	12/31/2018 Balance
Fidelity Investments		-		650,000.00		287.58	650,287.58
Merrill Lynch - Cash Account		277,005.05	80.00	-		1,363.63	278,448.68
Equities		4,323.98	-	-	-	(743.21)	3,580.77
Simsbury NCD-ING Savings Account		76,986.10		-	-	277.85	77,263.95
<b>Totals</b>		<b>358,315.13</b>	<b>80.00</b>	<b>650,000.00</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,185.85</b>	<b>1,009,580.98</b>
<b>Restricted Investment Funds:</b>							
Simsbury NCD-ING Savings Account	77,263.95						
<b>Total Restricted Funds</b>	<b>77,263.95</b>						
<b>Unrestricted Investment Funds:</b>							
Fidelity Investments	650,287.58						
Merrill Lynch	282,029.45						
<b>Total Unrestricted Funds</b>	<b>932,317.03</b>						

CHURCH GIVING AS OF 12/31/2018						
		PRESBYTERY	PRESBYTERY	PRESBYTERY	PRESBYTERY	PRESBYTERY
		GENERAL MISSION	GENERAL MISSION	PER CAPITA DUE	PER CAPITA	PER CAPITA
PIN#	CHURCH	YEARLY PLEDGE	RECEIVED TO DATE	MONTHLY	DUE TO DATE	RECEIVED TO DATE
4620	Ashaway: Babcock	\$ -	\$ 564.00	\$ 183.71	\$ 2,204.52	\$ 2,204.52
1274	Barrington	\$ -	\$ 2,560.00	\$ 237.40	\$ 2,848.80	\$ 2,848.80
10562	Brookfield: Valley	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 327.85	\$ 3,934.20	\$ 3,934.20
10027	Cumberland: Calvin	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 508.72	\$ 4,578.48	\$ 705.96
4581	Darien: Noroton	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 4,465.38	\$ 53,584.56	\$ 53,584.56
4574	Fairfield: First	\$ -	\$ 1,050.00	\$ 1,048.52	\$ 12,582.24	\$ 12,582.24
1779	Fall River: Calvary	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 90.45	\$ 1,085.40	\$ 1,085.40
4578	Granby: First	\$ -	\$ 1,050.00	\$ 96.10	\$ 1,153.20	\$ 1,153.20
4576	Greenwich: First	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,099.86	\$ 25,198.32	\$ 25,198.32
3716	Groton: St. Andrews	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 457.85	\$ 5,494.20	\$ 5,494.20
10645	Hamden: Korean	\$ -	\$ 7,700.00	\$ 859.17	\$ 10,310.04	\$ 10,310.04
4577	Hartford: First	\$ -	\$ 1,750.00	\$ 370.23	\$ 4,442.76	\$ 4,442.76
4579	Milford: United	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 214.80	\$ 2,577.60	\$ 761.94
3719	New Canaan: First	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,656.15	\$ 19,873.80	\$ 19,873.80
10985	New Haven: Korean	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 175.23	\$ 2,102.76	\$ 2,102.76
4580	New Haven: First	\$ -	\$ 6,075.00	\$ 582.20	\$ 6,986.40	\$ 6,986.40
10939	Providence	\$ -	\$ 2,100.00	\$ 361.76	\$ 4,341.12	\$ 4,341.12
10530	Springfield: MLK	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 155.45	\$ 1,865.40	\$ 1,865.40
4583	Stamford: First	\$ -	\$ 19,176.00	\$ 1,260.48	\$ 15,125.76	\$ 15,125.76
4586	Stamford: TOR	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 141.31	\$ 1,695.72	\$ 1,695.72
4609	Warwick: Greenwood	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 910.04	\$ 10,920.48	\$ 2,003.89
4607	Warwick: Woodbury	\$ -	\$ 2,520.00	\$ 310.89	\$ 3,730.68	\$ 3,730.68
9427	Waterford: Crsrsds	\$ -	\$ 8,761.20	\$ 228.93	\$ 2,747.16	\$ 2,747.16
4585	West Htfd: West	\$ -	\$ 700.00	\$ 853.51	\$ 10,242.12	\$ 10,242.12
4618	Westerly: Dunns	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 907.21	\$ 10,886.52	\$ 10,886.52
960	Wilton	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 850.69	\$ 10,208.28	\$ 10,208.28
					\$	\$
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 54,006.20</b>	<b>\$ 19,353.89</b>	<b>\$ 230,720.52</b>	<b>\$ 216,115.75</b>

*As always, ministry in the Presbytery has been filled with the sense that God is with us in the journey we are taking together. It has been a relatively short time since our November Stated Meeting, and the holidays in-between. Some highlights of areas I have been engaged in during that time:*

### **Valley Presbyterian Church**

I have been supporting the Administrative Commission (AC) in their work, the congregation and the COM. It has been a team process and I am very grateful for those who have come alongside to serve in many capacities. Let us continue to hold the AC, the congregation and those who are working with it in our prayers.

### **Woodbury Union Church (Warwick, RI)**

As many of you know, the Woodbury Church suffered a devastating fire the night before Thanksgiving. I have been supporting this congregation in resourcing for the long-term recovery that is before them. Presbyterian Disaster Assistance has sent a team and will be accompanying the congregation and our Presbytery as we rebuild. Many of you have reached out with tangible gifts of support - thank you. Let us continue to hold this congregation in our prayers during this time of grief and looking to their future.

### **Committee on Ministry**

We have been in a season of learning and growth. At our December meeting we spent most of our time learning about updates to the call process in the larger denomination. As we begin 2019, we are looking forward to connections with the Pneumatrix learning process, time with the Presbyterian Foundation, learning about changes to interim ministry and deepening our skill levels around accompanying congregations in their ministry. We continue to wrestle with issues surrounding benefits and compensation within the Presbytery, a conversation we expect to be multi-year. COM leadership will be offering an Open Space at this Presbytery meeting to continue that conversation.

### **Nominating**

As we heard at our November meeting, there is a deep need in the Presbytery to continue to look at the nominating process and how we expand and open it up to new voices within the Presbytery. This is the nominating "season" in PSNE and so

one of my key tasks in this time will be to support the Nominating Committee in its important work on behalf of the Presbytery.

### **Search for a new Presbytery Treasurer**

We are looking to nominate a new Treasurer for the Presbytery at our May Annual Meeting. This position description will have slightly expanded responsibilities and deeper integration with the virtual office of the Presbytery. If you have interest in this position and would like to have a conversation about it, or names to suggest, please let myself or the Nominating Committee know.

### **Crossroads Training**

During the first week of March members of the Roundtable, COM, CPM and Mission/Vision team will gather at Stony Point Center for 2 full days of training with the Rev. Jessica Vasquez-Torres from Crossroads. You have begun hearing some of the voices of members of the Presbytery in *Getting Connected* who have already been part of one of these trainings. The goals of the retreat are to create shared language, definitions, and competencies among key areas of leadership in the Presbytery that most closely relate to on-the-ground ministries that we share. Our next steps after the retreat will be to create greater integration of this holy work throughout the Presbytery. The Mission/Vision Team will be leading an Open Space at this Presbytery meeting around these conversations. Stay tuned!

### **Grants**

The Presbytery is currently receiving two grants to support specific areas of ministry support. Through a Transformation Grant from the PCUSA we are supporting the work of Pneumatrix, which is working with the following congregations in our Presbytery on adaptive change and 21st century ministry: Wilton, First Hartford, Groton, MLK and the COM. We also have a grant from the Synod of the Northeast that is supporting the revitalization work at the MLK Church, and the leadership of the Rev. Terrlyn Curry-Avery.

*As we turn the page into a New Year together, much is going on in the life of PSNE. I am grateful to each of you and for the ministries that you support and are part of!*

Blessings,



**THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY**

February 9, 2019

**FOR PRESBYTERY ACTION:**

- 1. Move that the Presbytery APPROVE the transfer of The Rev. Thomas Groome III, Interim Pastor, First Presbyterian Church, Fairfield, CT from the Presbytery of Transylvania to the Presbytery of Southern New England effective February 9, 2019. His Statement of Faith is Ref. H-1.**
- 2. Move that the Presbytery APPROVE the transfer of The Rev. Dr. Laurie McKnight, Member at Large, from the Presbytery of Transylvania to the Presbytery of Southern New England effective February 9, 2019. Her Statement of Faith is Ref. H-2.**

*A celebratory prayer will be offered*

**FOR PRESBYTERY INFORMATION**

1. Sent a letter from the Committee on Ministry to Rev. Jenny Davis, Chair of Personnel Committee regarding the position of Pastor to Pastors.
2. Approved The Rev. Pamela Spence Bakker to work outside the bounds of the Presbytery of Southern New England as Interim Pastor, Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church, So. Easton, MA retroactive to November 12, 2018.
3. Approved the move of the Rev. Susan Olson from Specialized Clergy to Member at Large status effective December 30, 2018.
4. Dismissed The Rev. Christine Delmar to the Presbytery of Seattle effective December 12, 2018.
5. Approved The Rev. Dr. Heather Wright as Specialized Clergy Serving Another Denomination as Pastor of Care and Connection, Stanwich Congregational Church, Greenwich, CT, effective Jan. 15, 2019. (NOTE: This is a job change for Ms. Wright.)
6. Appointed The Rev. Carleton Giles as Stated Supply for the United Presbyterian Church, Milford, CT, for six months effective January 1, 2019.
7. Approved the Interim Pastor position description and proposed terms of call for Valley Presbyterian Church, Brookfield, CT.
8. Continued to work on the wording of the Policy on Parental Leave that was referred back to the committee by the Presbytery of Southern New England.

9. Continued to support the sessions and congregations of First Presbyterian Church – Hartford, Valley Presbyterian Church, Woodbury Union Presbyterian Church, First Presbyterian Church – New Canaan, Milford United Presbyterian Church, and Providence Presbyterian Church.
10. Conducted training for the Committee on the process of “Searching for an Interim Pastor/Pastor”.
11. Met with Rev. Allison Seed, Board of Pensions Representative, to hear about benefits available through the Board of Pensions and changes to benefits for 2019.
12. Documented the roles and responsibilities of Committee on Ministry members.

Statement of Faith  
Rev. Dr. Thomas Groome III

I believe in the One Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The Father is Creator/Rule of the universe. God created all that is out of nothing making this world and us to glorify God and calling creation good. We are created in God's image intended to know and love God and neighbor. We have chosen not to glorify God and instead have rebelled by turning away from God's grace while seeking our own way of living. Our sin has separated us from God's intended relationship with us and one another. While God's holiness cannot bear our sin, God's love for us cannot bear that separation. God is ultimately moved to act on our behalf for our reconciliation.

God sent Jesus Christ fully divine/fully human; the Word of God made flesh, Emmanuel. He entered the world experiencing and sharing our needs, sorrows, joys and temptations, calling us to turn from our sin to the right relationship with God. He was without sin yet stood beside us in our sin and was crucified for us. Because of Christ's crucifixion and resurrection we are viewed by God as righteous and are justified. By grace through faith we receive forgiveness of sins, resurrection of the body, and life everlasting.

The Holy Spirit bears witness to the Triune God, proclaims God's forgiveness in Christ, move persons to respond in faith, repentance and obedience, initiates new life in Christ, reconciles us to each other and teaches the church to worship and obey God, empowers us to pray for the world, to share the Gospel in both word and deed.

The Bible is the authoritative and inspired witness to the character of God; the one witness that has no parallel and serves as our rule for faith and life. Through prayer and study the Holy Spirit illumines our hearts and minds to hear God's voice spoken to and through the community of faith.

Christians are called to respond to God's grace in community with others who profess faith in Jesus Christ. This faith community is the Church. Its mission is given form by God's activity in the world as revealed in Scripture and understood by faith. The Church is a means of God's grace by promoting stewardship of all God's gifts in creation, ministering to the needs of the poor, the sick, the lonely, the powerless, and engaging in the struggle to free people from sin, fear, oppression, hunger, and injustice.

Sacraments are the visible outward signs of God's grace, instituted by God and commended by Christ. God seals us in redemption, renews our identity as God's people and marks us for service in the world. Baptism is the sign/seal of our incorporation into Christ: a visible sign that we have entered a new covenant relationship and promise to live in continual faithfulness and discipleship. The Lord's Supper is a sign/seal of our communion with Christ crucified and resurrected. We join in communion with God one with all believers past present and future celebrating the real spiritual presence of Christ, remembering his death, proclaiming his resurrection.

Statement of Faith  
Rev. Dr. Laurie McKnight

I believe in God, our Lord and creator, the Being who existed before life and time and space, who took a formless void and formed life and time and space, and was pleased to create people and breathe life into us for worship and work, stewardship and relationship.

I believe in Jesus Christ, our Lord and redeemer, the Son of God and the Son of Man. Jesus was fully human and lived at a specific time in history, yet he is fully divine and lives with us still and reigns in heaven and advocates on our behalf. His human body died, yet he was resurrected and he lives in glory. He has gone on before us and he is preparing a place for us in his kingdom, a kingdom which shall have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the breath that enlivens and strengthens our faith, that moves us and feeds us and facilitates the experiencing of the seemingly impossible. The Holy Spirit moves as wind around us, freeing tongues to speak and enabling ears to hear, making possible understanding and forgiveness and sacrifice and sacredness. The Holy Spirit descended like a dove upon Jesus at his baptism, providing blessing and seal. The Holy Spirit blesses us still and provides a living seal of the covenant God established with humanity.

I believe that Scripture is God's word to us, today, tomorrow, and through the ages. Divinely inspired, yet written by human hands, it is a living document that reveals hidden mysteries and multiple meanings as both scholars and laity study and interpret it. Scripture spoke to the Jews and Christians of the early church; it speaks to us still.

I believe that the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper are celebrations of the community life of Christ's followers. Through one we join with the community of believers in Christ. We become new people in Christ, we become members of a larger body. We become the church. Through the other we are reminded of Christ's presence, life, ministry, and death; and we commune with all the saints, living and dead, and we remember Christ until he comes again in glory.

I believe that the church is a body of people, not a building. All members of the church play a part and are important to the whole body. Christ is the head of the church, leading and directing. Church members are Christ's hands and arms and legs on earth, serving Christ according to his will and example. We were created to live with one another in community being helpmates to one another, supporting one another and bearing one another's burdens. We are called to worship the Lord, and to care for each other.

**Nominations Committee**

February 9, 2019

For action:

**None**

For Information:

1. The Committee will be working with the Personnel Committee to find a nominee for Treasurer.
2. At our annual meeting in May, we will have nominees for officers, committee chairs, and committee members. We would appreciate any suggestions that you may have. Committees that we need new members on are Trustees and COM in particular. Thanks in advance for your help.
3. The committee is seeking ways to involve members of congregations that do not have anyone serving in Presbytery. We are contacting these churches for suggestions of potential nominees.
4. The committee will work with the Committee on Representation to make our leadership more diverse and more representative of the Presbytery.

Members of the Nominating Committee:

Art Riihimaki (<mailto:artsdomain2@me.com>);

Tom Taylor (<mailto:twtay37@gmail.com>);

Pat Wales ([patwales@att.net](mailto:patwales@att.net));

Rev. Anne Fuhrmeister (<mailto:pastor.crossroads@att.net>)