

Ref. B - SUPPLEMENTAL
Stated Clerk
November 16, 2019
Presbytery of Southern New England

**REPORT OF THE STATED CLERK
TO THE PRESBYTERY OF SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND**

- SUPPLEMENTAL -

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FOR INFORMATION:

In accordance with the Book of Order, D-10.0103, I am providing notice that on Friday, November 8, I received a written statement of an alleged disciplinary offense on the part of a minister member of the Presbytery. An investigating committee formed in accordance with the Rules of Discipline and the Bylaws of this Presbytery will investigate this allegation (D-10.0200), and will make a determination as to whether to file formal charges. In the mean time, I invite your prayers for all persons involved in this matter.

FOR ACTION BY THE PRESBYTERY:

1. I recommend that the Presbytery **ACCEPT** the resignation of the Rev. Shannon White from the Board of Trustees with regret and with gratitude for her service.
2. I recommend that, at the request of the Session of the First Presbyterian Church of Greenwich, Presbytery **ASSUME ORIGINAL JURISDICTION** of the Session for the *sole, specific, and limited purpose* of performing the functions of the Session required under the Rules of Discipline (**D-10.0000 – Chapter X – Disciplinary Cases**).

Background and rationale: In accordance with **Book of Order D-10.0101**, at a Special Meeting of the Session of the First Presbyterian Church of Greenwich held on November 14, 2019, the Clerk of Session reported that she had received a written statement of an alleged offense on the part of a Church member.

While the *Session* normally has jurisdiction in a disciplinary case in which a Church member is the accused, under the present circumstances the substance of this allegation is sensitive and potentially divisive of the congregation. Additionally, the facts of the case are widely known by the members of the Session, who would ordinarily sit as the trial court in a disciplinary case involving a member of the Church.

Accordingly, the Session, upon the recommendation of the Clerk of Session, **VOTED** to request that the Presbytery of Southern New England assume original jurisdiction of the Session for the *sole, specific, and limited purpose* of performing the functions of the Session required under the Rules of Discipline (**D-10.0000 – Chapter X – Disciplinary**

Cases).

The Manager for Judicial Process in the Office of the General Assembly has advised this course of action—that is, that the Presbytery *administratively* assume jurisdiction in this limited way and proceed to appoint an investigating committee and, should charges be filed, to try the case through its Permanent Judicial Commission. She further advises that the request from the Session satisfies the requirement under G-3.0303e that “full opportunity to be heard [be] accorded to the Session...” before the Presbytery assumes original jurisdiction.

Effect of granting the request: The Session understands that the effect of this request will be to change the “venue” of this matter, and to entrust the *Presbytery* with the responsibility and the authority to see the matter through from its inception to its conclusion, that is to say, from the initial investigation *through* to the conclusion of the trial (should a trial become necessary).

The Session further understands that should the matter ultimately go before the Permanent Judicial Commission (PJC) of the Presbytery of Southern New England for trial, the Presbytery’s PJC shall submit a copy of its judgment to the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery, who shall then read it aloud, and spread it upon the Minutes, of the next Stated Meeting; *and* that a copy of the judgment shall also be submitted to the Clerk of Session of the First Presbyterian Church of Greenwich, who shall read it aloud, and spread it upon the Minutes, of the next Meeting of the Session.

(In presenting this request, the Stated Clerk is hereby providing notice, in case the Presbytery votes to assume original jurisdiction, of the receipt of the accusation and its referral to an investigating committee, as required by D-10.0103.)