

**PRESBYTERY OF SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND
STATED MEETING OF THE PRESBYTERY ROUNDTABLE
October 29, 2020**

The Roundtable of the Presbytery of Southern New England met via Zoom teleconference. The meeting came to order at 9:40 a.m., with opening devotions offered by the Rev. Deborah Packard.

A **QUORUM** was present.

Present were: Julie Emery, Lisa Baker, J. C. Cadwallader, Stephen Hart, Kirk Louis, John Merz, Anne Marie Meyerhoffer, Deborah Packard, Jenny Peek, Chris Tate, Candace Whitman.

Also present were: *ex-officio* members Shannan Vance-Ocampo, General Presbyter; David Baer, Stated Clerk.

Excused was: Dick Hasbany.

Absent were: Joan Priest, Nate Taylor, and Phillip Phiri, Treasurer.

The agenda for the meeting was **APPROVED** as distributed by the chair.

The Roundtable heard a report on the meeting of Synod Assembly held on October 23 and 24, from the Presbytery's commissioners, Lisa Baker and Chris Tate. Ms. Baker spoke about the pre-assembly gathering, which was led by the Rev. Traci D. Blackmon, focused on the theme "Stories Matter," using Isaiah 58:1-12. Ms. Blackmon also led the assembly in its opening and closing worship. In the discussion of the Synod budget during the assembly, Chris Tate noted that more than half of expenditures are devoted to administrative costs, and upon his motion, properly seconded, the assembly amended the budget resolution to add a statement urging that adjustments be made in order to lower these costs. (The motion was subsequently amended further to direct that the assembly be recalled to approve changes to the budget exceeding \$100,000.)

Mr. Tate further reported that the Synod Assembly approved a program of interest-free loans to presbyteries, though he noted the questions about the relationship between debt, power, and trust that such a program raises.

Ms. Baker reported on three commissioner resolutions that the assembly passed, related to anti-racism, becoming a Matthew 25 synod, and a confession of faith entitled "For Such a Time As This." As one of the makers of the Matthew 25 resolution, she expressed the hope that at least a quarter of the synod's presbyteries would become Matthew 25 presbyteries.

The Roundtable reviewed a proposed docket for the upcoming Stated Meeting of the Presbytery on November 18.

The General Presbyter gave her report. She noted the large number of ministers who have begun working among us, and encouraged members of the Roundtable to reach out to these new colleagues. She raised a prayer concern regarding the Rev. Jim Mahan, the former pastor of the Turn of River Church in Stamford, who has had an exposure to a family member with COVID-19. Ms. Vance-Ocampo discussed the possibility of communicating a pastoral message to the Presbytery following the upcoming national election on November 3.

Ms. Vance-Ocampo informed the Roundtable about anticipated leadership changes in the Presbyteries of Boston and Northern New England. She and the Stated Clerk, the Rev. David Baer, will work with the Rev. T. J. DeMarco, the Stated Clerk of Boston Presbytery and Northern New England Presbytery, to explore possibilities for closer ties, particularly in the area of ministry.

Ms. Vance-Ocampo reported having received guidance from the Office of the General Assembly regarding a bankruptcy proceeding involving the Boy Scouts of America. In many states, statutes of limitations for claims related to sexual abuse have been waived, and the BSA is seeking bankruptcy protection, due to a large number of civil claims against them. This raises the possibility that congregations that sponsored or hosted Boy Scouts, even many years in the past, could be liable. There is a deadline of November 16 for congregations to file a claim with the court in the bankruptcy proceeding. Ms. Vance-Ocampo and Mr. Baer are forwarding the guidance they have received to PSNE's congregations today.

The minutes of the Roundtable meeting held on September 3 were **APPROVED** as presented by the Stated Clerk.

In his report, the Stated Clerk presented a draft docket for the upcoming Stated Meeting of the Presbytery on November 18. The members of the Roundtable engaged in discussion regarding the focus of worship and the community conversations.

The following schedule of meetings was adopted by consent:

Stated Meetings for 2021: Saturday, February 6 (9:30-12:00); Wednesday, May 12 (5:30-8); Wednesday, September 22 (5:30-8); Saturday, November 13 (9:30-12).

Roundtable: Thursday, January 14 (9:30-12); Thursday, April 15 (9:30-12); Thursday, June 10 (9:30-12); Thursday, August 26 (9:30-12); Thursday, October 28 (9:30-12).

Upon a motion properly made by the Rev. Chris Tate and seconded, the Roundtable **VOTED** to **NOMINATE** Elder A. Douglas Ray (Warwick: Woodbury Union) for election to the Nominating Committee.

Mr. Tate reminded the Roundtable of a previously-discussed proposal to combine the Nominating Committee and the Committee on Representation. The Roundtable will revisit this proposal at the next Roundtable meeting in January.

The Roundtable also heard brief updates on the work of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry and the Committee on Ministry.

The Roundtable adjourned with a prayer offered by the Rev. Julie Emery at 12:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

-signed-

Rev. David A. Baer, Stated Clerk