

**REPORT OF THE PRESBYTERY ROUNDTABLE
November 13, 2021**

FOR INFORMATION:

The Presbytery Roundtable met on October 28, 2021. The minutes of this meeting are available as Ref. A-1. At this meeting, the Presbytery Roundtable:

1. Voted to approve a contract proposal from Crossroads Antiracism and Training, to provide training during 2022 and 2023. The training will be led by Jessica Vazquez-Torres, who has served for the last two years as our antiracism consultant to the Presbytery.
2. Heard a report from the General Presbyter about her recent visit with the Igreja Presbiteriana Brasileira de Hyannis.
3. Established a schedule of meetings for 2021:
 - Presbytery Stated Meetings: Wednesday, February 16, at 5:30 p.m. (Zoom); Wednesday, May 18, at 5:30 p.m. (hybrid: host TBD); Saturday, September 17, at 10:00 a.m. (hybrid: host TBD); Wednesday, November 16, at 5:30 p.m. (hybrid: host TBD)
 - Roundtable: Thursday, January 13 (9:30-12); others: TBD.

The Presbytery is reminded that, in accordance with the PSNE Bylaws, “The Roundtable shall have the authority to set the particular times and places of stated meetings, subject to amendment by the Presbytery” (3.5).

4. Voted to elect the Rev. Christopher Tate to serve as Acting Co-Chair of Roundtable, due to a temporary vacancy in the role.
5. Voted to present for a **FIRST READING** the proposed revisions to the Presbytery Bylaws attached to this report. At this meeting, questions and feedback are in order. The revisions will be presented for final approval at the first Stated Meeting of the Presbytery in 2022.

Background and rationale: The Rev. David Baer, the Stated Clerk, serves on the Synod’s New Jersey Missional Communities Administrative Commission, which was created to facilitate the reorganization of the New Jersey presbyteries. In helping one of the new presbyteries to create

new bylaws, the Commission was advised by the Office of Constitutional Services that it is *not*

Presbytery of Southern New England

permissible for ordinary committees to exercise delegated authority on behalf of the council that created them, unless they are constituted as administrative commissions under Book of Order G-3.0109(b). At the time, Mr. Baer noted that PSNE delegates powers to both its Committee on Ministry and Committee on Preparation for Ministry. In order to continue doing this, and to avoid, say, holding up the transfer of ministers between presbytery meetings, or the enrollment of inquirers, we will need to amend our bylaws. The Roundtable is proposing revisions to Sections 8 & 9 of the Bylaws (see attached). A few additional powers, in line with common practice in other presbyteries.

Proposed Revisions to PSNE Bylaws

Text to be inserted is shown in *italics*. Text to be removed is ~~struck through~~.

Section 8 – The ~~Committee~~ *Commission* on Ministry

- 8.1. The ~~Committee~~ *Commission* on Ministry shall carry out the work of the Presbytery as Pastor, Counselor, and Advisor to the Presbytery's ministers and congregations (G-3.0307). It shall be composed of two co-chairpersons and sixteen other members, divided as evenly as possible between ministers and ruling elders.
- 8.2. The ~~Committee~~ *Commission* on Ministry shall have the authority and the responsibility:
 - A. To develop and maintain mechanisms and processes to serve as pastor and counselor to its ministers of the Word and Sacrament commissioned pastors [also known as commissioned ruling elders]), and certified Christian educators of the presbytery; to facilitate the relations between the presbytery and its congregations, 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 (G-3.0307).
 - B. To make recommendations to the Presbytery regarding:
 1. the Standards for Ministerial Compensation.
 - ~~2. approval of terms of call for all installed pastors;~~
 - ~~3. annual validation of the ministries of those minister members serving in ministries beyond the PC(U.S.A.)~~
 - C. To provide counseling resources for professionals in the parishes and specialized ministries as the need may arise;
 - D. To provide for the spiritual and emotional development of all clergy;
 - ~~E. To appoint a moderator of a session where the pulpit is declared vacant;~~
 - F. To counsel with a member church if the various constituencies of the congregation are not fairly represented on the session;

Presbytery of Southern New England

- ~~G. To appoint a commission for the ordination and/or installation of a minister who has received a properly approved call to labor within the bounds of Presbytery;~~
- ~~H. To dismiss ministers, in good standing, who are without pastoral charge, in the intervals between stated meetings of Presbytery;~~
- ~~I. To dissolve pastoral relationships and dismiss ministers in good standing to a calling Presbytery, in the interval between stated meetings of Presbytery, when requested by both the congregation and the minister;~~
- J. *To present for examination by the Presbytery candidates for ordination to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament who have received a call, or who have undertaken a ministry eligible for validation within the bounds of the Presbytery.*

8.3. The Commission on Ministry shall have the ~~Presbytery's authority to dissolve the pastoral relationship in cases where the congregation and pastor concur, to grant permission to labor within or outside the bounds of the Presbytery, and to dismiss members to other presbyteries, provided that all such actions be reported at the next stated meeting of the Presbytery~~ authority to act on behalf of the Presbytery:

- A. *To dissolve the pastoral relationship in cases where the congregation and pastor concur.*
- B. *To grant permission to labor within or outside the bounds of the Presbytery.*
- C. *To dismiss members to other presbyteries.*
- D. *To appoint moderators of sessions where there is no installed pastor, or where the installed pastor is unable to serve as moderator.*
- E. *To approve terms of call for installed pastors, provided that such terms meet or exceed the minimum standards approved by the Presbytery.*
- F. *To create and dissolve temporary pastoral relationships.*
- G. *To validate annually the ministries of those minister members serving in ministries beyond the PC(U.S.A.).*
- H. *To appoint a commission for the ordination and/or installation of a minister who has received a properly approved call to labor within the bounds of Presbytery.*
- I. *To dismiss ministers, in good standing, who are without pastoral charge.*
- J. *To dissolve pastoral relationships and dismiss ministers in good standing to a calling Presbytery, in the interval between stated meetings of Presbytery, when requested by both the congregation and the minister.*
- K. *To examine and receive minister members from other presbyteries, making suitable provision for such ministers to be presented and welcomed at a subsequent meeting of the Presbytery.*

Presbytery of Southern New England

- L. *To examine and receive ministers of other denominations seeking temporary membership during their term of service at one of the congregations of the Presbytery, making suitable provision for such ministers to be presented and welcomed at a subsequent meeting of the Presbytery.*
- M. *To confer upon minister members the status of Honorably Retired, making suitable provision, as appropriate, for the recognition of these ministers at a subsequent meeting of the Presbytery.*

All such actions shall be reported at the next stated meeting of the Presbytery, at which time the Presbytery may, if it chooses, rescind or amend these actions.

Section 9 – The ~~Committee~~ *Commission* on Preparation for Ministry

- 9.1. The ~~Committee~~ *Commission* on Preparation for Ministry shall be composed of a chairperson or two co-chairpersons, and sufficient members to constitute a total membership of nine. The members of this committee shall be ministers or elders, and their numbers shall be as nearly equal as possible.
- 9.2. The ~~Committee~~ *Commission* on Preparation for Ministry shall have the following responsibilities:
 - A. To adhere to the provisions of the *Book of Order* G-2.06 and all other constitutional provisions regarding the selection, care, and supervision of candidates for professional ministry;
 - B. To see to the observance of all such provisions of the *Book of Order* by each candidate under care of the Presbytery and by each prospective candidate;
 - ~~C. To enroll inquirers on behalf of the Presbytery, provided that the action shall be reported at the next stated meeting of the Presbytery;~~
 - D. To fulfill such other related functions as may be properly assigned to the committee by the Presbytery or the Roundtable.
- 9.3. *The Commission on Preparation for Ministry shall have the authority to act on behalf of the Presbytery:*
 - A. *To enroll inquirers;*
 - B. *To receive candidates for the Ministry of Word and Sacrament;*
 - C. *To grant candidates permission to negotiate for service;*
 - D. *To certify candidates ready to receive a call (G-2.0607);*
 - E. *To transfer the covenant relationship of inquirers or candidates, with the approval of the sessions and the other presbytery involved (G-2.0608);*
 - F. *To remove candidates or inquirers from the roll, for sufficient reasons, and after affording the candidate or inquirer an opportunity to be heard (G-2.0609).*

All such actions shall be reported at the next stated meeting of the Presbytery, at which time the Presbytery may, if it chooses, rescind or amend these actions.