

PRESBYTERY OF SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND
STATED MEETING OF THE PRESBYTERY ROUNDTABLE
October 28, 2021

The Roundtable of the Presbytery of Southern New England met via Zoom teleconference. The meeting came to order at 9:35 a.m. The General Presbyter, the Rev. Shannan Vance-Ocampo. She announced that the Rev. Julie Emery, co-chair, is taking a leave of absence, and is unavailable. Upon a motion properly made and seconded, the Roundtable **VOTED** to **APPOINT** the Rev. Chris Tate acting co-chair, to serve with Elder Mildred McNeill. Ms. McNeill and Mr. Tate led the Roundtable in its opening devotions.

A **QUORUM** was present.

Present were: Mildred McNeill (co-chair), Chris Tate (acting co-chair), Nicole Aronson, Lisa Baker, J. C. Cadwallader, Andre Castillo, Rachelle Lee, Kirk Louis, John Merz, Deborah Packard, and Jenny Peek.

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

The agenda for the meeting, distributed in advance of the meeting by the chair, was **APPROVED**, with additions. The minutes of the August Roundtable meeting were **APPROVED** as distributed by the clerk. Members of the Roundtable introduced themselves to one another.

The co-chairs of the Anti-Racism Task Force, Jenny Peek and Kirk Louis, presented a contract proposal from Crossroads Anti-Racism (attached). Following discussion, and a motion properly made and seconded, the Roundtable **VOTED** to **APPROVE** the proposal.

The Rev. David Baer, the Stated Clerk, gave his report. During his service on the Synod's New Jersey Missional Communities Administrative Commission, the Office of the General Assembly advised that if presbyteries wish to delegate authority to standing committees, it must constitute them administrative commissions. Mr. Baer noted that the Committee on Ministry and the Committee on Preparation for Ministry both exercise delegated authority under the PSNE bylaws, although they are not properly constituted as administrative commissions. He has prepared suggested amendments (attached) to the PSNE bylaws to align them with this interpretation of the PCUSA Constitution, with the addition of a number of delegated powers common in other presbyteries. Upon a motion properly made and seconded, the Roundtable **VOTED** to **PRESENT** these amendments to the Presbytery for a first reading at the November Stated Meeting.

Mr. Baer presented a proposed schedule of Presbytery meetings for the year 2022. Following discussion, and upon a motion properly made and seconded, the Roundtable **VOTED** to **ADOPT** the following schedule of stated meetings:

- Wednesday, February 16, at 9:30 a.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)

Members of the Roundtable expressed the hope that, in view of the delegation of much routine business to standing commissions, one of these meetings might be devoted to community building or

strategic work.

Mr. Baer also presented a proposed schedule of Roundtable meetings for 2022. It was the sense of the members that the Roundtable ought to continue its practice of meeting on Thursday mornings, though these meeting times could be adjusted to accommodate new elected members of the Roundtable, if necessary. Upon a motion properly made and seconded, the Roundtable **VOTED** to **APPROVE** a meeting on January 13, 2022. The co-chairs and the staff will work together to propose other dates, alongside other planned workshops and retreats with Crossroads Antiracism.

Mr. Baer presented a proposed docket for the November stated meeting. By consent, the Roundtable authorized the clerk to work with the Moderator and Vice Moderator to prepare a final draft docket for the meeting.

The General Presbyter offered her report, in which she noted the absence of Committee on Ministry chairs. On behalf of the COM, she advised the Roundtable about some matters that are likely to come before this committee. Two congregations are ready to call their new pastors, who will be presented at the November meeting of the Presbytery.

Ms. Vance-Ocampo reported on her visits this year with the Igreja Presbiteriana Brasileira in Hyannis. This fellowship is ministering to 50-70 refugee families who have arrived in the last two months on Cape Cod. Some of them are wearing ankle monitors, with asylum proceedings pending, and this group includes refugees from Haiti. The fellowship is without a building at the moment, with their lease having been terminated by the church where they had been meeting. This has been a particular challenge for them. Ms. Vance-Ocampo has been in touch with the national church offices in Louisville about providing resources to the fellowship. The pastor, the Rev. Alonso Dacunha, and his wife, Katia, will be making a presentation at the November stated meeting about their ministry.

The General Presbyter informed the Roundtable about a letter from Presbyterian Immigrant Ministry (PIM), regarding the funding of this ministry. The funds as present through the end of the year. Ms. Vance-Ocampo and the Personnel Committee will continue to be in touch with PIM and their chaplains.

Ms. McNeill asked members of the Roundtable to share feedback regarding worship strategy, anti-racism strategy, and exhaustion and organizational requirements.

The Rev. John Merz, the chair of the Personnel Committee, noted the increased burden on the Presbytery staff, due to the absence of leadership in key positions, and the stresses experienced by all of our volunteers during the pandemic. The committee will be working with the staff to lighten these burdens, and will keep the Roundtable apprised of its plans. He also advised the Roundtable that when PSNE congregations invite Presbytery staff to visit, the Personnel Committee would support the staff in inquiring about masking and other safety practices, and in requesting virtual meetings or a postponement of in-person meetings if they feel unsafe.

The meeting adjourned with prayer 12:05 Chris Tate. The next meeting of the Roundtable will take place at 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, January 13, 2022.

Respectfully submitted,

-signed-

Rev. David A. Baer, Stated Clerk



**(DRAFT 3) 1.5-Years Engagement with the Presbytery of Southern New England
Prepared by Jessica Vazquez Torres
October 23, 2021**

Request for Services

The Rev. Shannan Vance-Ocampo, Executive Presbyter, and the Rev. Jenny Peek and Elder Kirk Louis, Co-Chairs of the Anti-Racism and Equity Committee, of the Presbytery of Southern New England asked Crossroads National Program Director Jessica Vazquez Torres to conceive of what a yearlong + engagement that will continue to deepen and expand the antiracism work that began in the Presbytery in 2019.

Purpose and Outcomes

Central to the collaboration between the Presbytery of Southern New England and Crossroads is capacity building. The last two years of engagement with Crossroads have revealed the depth of the Presbytery's "clubbiness" (Stage 2 in Crossroads Continuum), the powerful impact white supremacy culture and its values have on the life of the presbytery, and the real need to build the fitness of strategic leaders to engage fully and navigate nimbly the changes a deep commitment to antiracism requires. Thus, this proposal seeks the following outcomes:

1. Continue the work of infusing the presbytery with shared theological language and frameworks that facilitate the conversation about and organizing around the Presbytery's antiracism commitments
2. Increase the fitness of strategically identified Presbytery leaders (both leaders of color and white leaders) to animate the work of antiracism in the presbytery
3. Provide thought partnership to Presbytery leadership as they work to build a critical mass within and navigate the terrain that creates a deeper engagement in and commitment to antiracism work in the Presbytery

Scope of Work

Crossroads will provide the following services to the Presbytery of Southern New England beginning in January 2022 to May 2023. Central to this collaboration is preparing the Presbytery to begin and complete a Racism Audit between the fall of 2023 and the end of 2024. This proposal covers the preparation for the audit but not the audit itself.

Leadership Coaching (Proposed Timeframe: January 2022 to May 2023)

The aim of leadership coaching sessions is to continue sharpening antiracist leadership skills and practices, offer strategic thought partnership as the Executive Presbyter and the Stated Clerk navigate the path toward stage 4 in the continuum, and provide feedback that allows

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these two leaders to learn from their efforts. The agendas for these sessions will be collaboratively constructed to ensure they remain centered in the most relevant issues the leaders are facing.

The sessions will be facilitated by two Crossroads staff. Beginning in January 2022, Crossroads staff will gather with the Presbytery leaders every 6 weeks for a total of 13 sessions. Each session will last 90 minutes.

These sessions will be charged hourly at \$105 per hour per facilitator.

Visioning & Aims Virtual Conversations (Proposed Timeframe: January 15 to February 15, 2022)

Building on the insights gleaned by the Antiracism Equity Committee's fall of one-to-one conversations with key presbytery leaders, this daylong retreat seeks to gather key leadership – Roundtable, Antiracism Equity Committee, Presbytery Staff, and any other key stakeholders collectively identified – to discern a shared vision for what an antiracist PSNE might be like and feel like, as well, as establish aims that will inform the Presbytery's antiracism strategy for a yet to be established timeframe.

The proposed format for this element of the contract is four 2-hour zoom conversations that will take place between January 15 and February 15. The conversations will be facilitated by two Crossroads staff. Two weeks ahead of the series starting Crossroads' facilitators will meet with select representatives from each group to ensure we are clear on the path ahead. These sessions will be charged hourly at \$105 per hour per facilitator.

1.5 Days In-Person Capacity Building with Presbytery Staff, Antiracism Equity Committee, and Round Table (Proposed Timeframe: March 25 –26, 2022)

The aim of this retreat is to strengthen the leadership of the PSNE's Roundtable, Antiracism Equity Committee, and Presbytery Staff to function as collaborators in moving the presbytery from Stage 2 to Stage 3 / Stage 4 in the continuum. While Roundtable and the Antiracism Equity Committee have distinct roles to play in the collaboration - Roundtable holds the strategy while the Antiracism Equity Committee holds the programmatic and organizing work – it is critically important the two entities as well as staff are aligned in grasping and determining how to intervene in: the determining the intersectional barriers to the shared vision, strategizing around barriers, theological articulation, articulating an action plan that accounts for the intersectional realities (gender, class, sexuality, immigrant status, etc.) of the Presbytery. This retreat also seeks to engage participants in energizing and purpose-filled conversations that awaken their imagination and strategic thinking of presbytery leaders. The retreat will be facilitated by two Crossroads staff.

Caveat: It is hard to determine in October 2021 at what stage in the pandemic we will be in March. Crossroads reserves the right to shift this element of the contract to a virtual format. Crossroads also will require the gathering be held in a space where appropriate distance can be maintained between participants that has appropriate ventilation. Crossroads will also

require all participants be vaccinated and/or provide evidence of a negative COVID-19 test taken 48-hours before the gathering (laboratory administered, not rapid).

Strategic Coaching (2022-2023)

Roundtable.

Once Roundtable’s 12-hours of capacity building are completed, the table will have access to 18-hours of strategic coaching and support from Crossroads. These hours can be used for evaluative conversation, thought partnership, feedback, and strategic design. These sessions can be pre-scheduled at regular intervals or scheduled as needed with 3-weeks’ notice. These sessions will be charged hourly at \$105 per hour per facilitator.

Antiracism & Equity Committee

A Crossroads facilitator will continue to offer up to 18 hours of strategic support - evaluative conversation, thought partnership, feedback of design and program ideas, and strategic coaching - to conveners of the Antiracism & Equity Committee. These sessions will be charged hourly at \$105 per hour per facilitator.

Additionally, two Crossroads facilitators will provide 6 hours of direct capacity building to the Antiracism & Equity Committee. These hours can be lumped together for form 1 day workshop or 2-half day workshops. These can also be used singly. The aim of these hours is to ensure the Antiracism & Equity Committee has the skills it needs to implement strategies set by the Presbytery’s Roundtable. These sessions will be charged as a workshop.

Presbytery-Wide Capacity Building

Given the need to continue to widen the pool of leaders to engage in this work, Crossroads will facilitate three learning series aimed introducing shared language and shared frameworks. The series will be conducted in collaboration with the Presbyteries Antiracism & Equity Committee.

Series 1: What is antiracism and what does it require of us? (May & June, 2022)

The aim of this series is to engage and bring along the wider membership of the presbytery. It will be comprised of four-2 hours webinars (15 minutes of centering, 75 minutes of content, 30 minutes of Q&A). Each session will center a question:

- What is antiracism and what theological values does it require of Christians?
- Why having a complex framework of racism and how is it linked to white supremacy is crucial to antiracism work?
- Why must antiracism work be intersectional?
- How racism and white supremacy generate covert barriers to antiracism work?

The proposed timeframe and delivery methods for this series is as follows:

- Session 1 will take place virtually during the May 2022 Presbytery meeting
- Sessions 2 to 4 will take place bi-weekly on a day and time to be determined

Commented [GU1]: This is in addition to our monthly meetings and the visioning & aims and capacity building retreat? Sounds good, just want to clarify

Commented [JVT2R1]: Yes. This was in the last version and it is in a way of ensuring the Antiracism and Equity Committee continues to developed especially if new members are added. It can be eliminated if you feel the capacity laid out above is sufficient.

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We will collaborate with the Presbytery to offer language interpenetration. This series can be recorded and leased by the Presbytery for up to a year.

Series 2: Becoming a White Co-Conspirator (Proposed Timeframe: September 2022 to May 2023)

The aim of this series is to engage and challenge a strategically identified cohort of 25-white leaders (made up of at least 40% cisgender men and 40% cisgender women) to engage in a 9-month community of practice. The objectives of this cohort are:

- Engaging participants in a joyful community of resistance where all are challenged and energized for the sacred for repairing community
- Cultivating individual and collective stakes in dismantling white supremacy and racism
- Exploring the intersections of race and gender, class, sexuality, and ability paying particular attention to the ways these impact the ways white people engage antiracism work
- Building capacity for white individuals to “own” the work of antiracism in the Presbytery theologically
- Engaging practices that enable them as white people to exercise their leadership in this work in accountability to people of color

The series will be comprised of:

- Five - 2 hours learning and exploration sessions to be held monthly
- Four – 2 hours check-in sessions

Participation in series 1 is a pre-requisite to be considered for this cohort.

Series 3: Building a People of Color Community of Solidarity (Proposed Timeframe: September 2022 to May 2023)

The aim of this series is to engage, cultivate, and nurture a cadre of 20 to 25 strategically selected leaders of color to conspire and collaborate with the Presbytery’s Antiracism & Equity Committee and Roundtable leadership in moving forward the work of antiracist transformation. The objectives of this cohort are:

- Engaging participants in a joyful community of resistance where all are challenged and energized for the sacred for repairing community
- Cultivating individual and collective stake in dismantling white supremacy and racism within the presbytery
- Exploring the intersections of race and gender, class, sexuality, and legal status paying particular attention to the ways these impact the ways people of color engage antiracism work
- Building capacity of people of color to “own” the work of antiracism in the Presbytery theologically
- Engaging practices that enable people of color to exercise their leadership powerfully and in solidarity with each other

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The series will be comprised of:

- Five – 2-hours learning and exploration sessions to be held monthly
- Four – 2-hours check-in sessions

Participation in series 1 is a pre-requisite to be considered for this cohort.

Financial Implications

The fee for the services outlined above is \$46,368. A 15% administrative fee has been added to this projected fee.

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;
- 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.*
- 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

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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.