

194th Stated Meeting
of the Presbytery of Southern New England
First Presbyterian Church, New Canaan, Connecticut / Zoom Teleconference
September 20, 2023

The Presbytery of Southern New England of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) held a Stated Meeting at the First Presbyterian Church in New Canaan on September 20, 2023. As authorized by the PSNE Bylaws, Section 17, “Electronic Meetings,” a number of members and commissioners participated via simultaneous Zoom teleconference.

The Presbytery was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by the Rev. Kevin White, Moderator, who led the assembly in prayer.

QUORUM

A **QUORUM** was present. The roll for this meeting was formed through online pre-registration for the meeting, Zoom attendance data, and the sign-in sheets at the registration desk.

ATTENDANCE	Ministers-	43
	<u>Elders-</u>	<u>27</u>
	Total-	70

MINISTERS PRESENT

As established by pre-registration, Zoom attendance, and on-site registration, the following minister members were present:

George Blakesley	Nancy D’Ippolito	Scott Herr
Virginia Brooks	Greg Doll	Byeta Hoover-Mulvany
JC Cadwallader	Shelley Donaldson	Gregory Keosaian
Andre Castillo	Eileen Epperson	Erin Keys
Christine Caton	Christine Foster	Do Hoon Kim
Stephen Clark	Bill Goettler	Iktae Kim
Terrlyn Curry Avery	Dale Green	Maria LaSala

Dean Lindsay	Gregory Penza	David Van Dyke
Peggy Lindsay	Mark Porizky	Charles C. Via
rachel mastin	Joan Priest	Jeffrey Weenink
John Merz	Jinny Smanik	Kevin White
Laura Opsahl	Christopher Tate	Shannon White
Deb Packard	Mary Thies	Heather Wright
Jenny Peek	Susan Trucksess	

MINISTERS EXCUSED

The following minister members were excused: Tracy Mehr-Muska, Patrick Notley.

ELDER COMMISSIONERS

The following Elders represented the Churches of the Presbytery (23):

Ashaway: Babcock	
Barrington	
Brookfield: Valley	John Sutor
Cumberland	Peter Cameron, Jackie Eckhardt
Darien: Noroton	Peter Riordan, Thomas Taylor
Farifield: First	Clare Schimpf
Fall River: Calvary	
Granby: Pioneer Valley	
Greenwich: First	
Groton: St. Andrew	Joe Jackson, Diane Snider
Hamden: New Haven Korean	
Hartford: First	Susan Labins, Keith Rhoden, Jr.
Milford: United	
New Canaan: First	Cynthia Graziano, Bob Spangler, Jen Van de Graff, Stephan Von Jena
New Haven: Connecticut Korean	
New Haven: First	Nancy Woodington, Mary Webber, Pat Wales
Providence	
Springfield: Martin Luther King	Joyce Davis, Debra Nicholson Franklin
Stamford: First	Stephen Hart

Warwick: Greenwood

M. Barry Baxter, Dennis Charpentier

Warwick: Woodbury

Waterford: Crossroads

West Hartford: Westminster

Ann Osoba

Westerly: Dunn's Corners

Wilton

PRESBYTERY ROUNDTABLE

The following Elder members and officers from the Presbytery Roundtable were present: Nicole Aronson Champagne (West Hartford: Westminster), Cindy Kozak Buckley (West Hartford: Westminster), Rachele Lee (Springfield: MLK), and Mildred McNeill (Hartford: First).

COMMISSIONED RULING ELDERS

Elder April Saber-Assad (Fall River: Calvary United) was present.

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Katie Grosh, the Presbytery Communicator, was present.

VISITORS

Eight (8) visitors registered for the meeting.

CHURCHES WITHOUT REPRESENTATION

Thirteen (13) Churches were without Elder Commissioner representation.

ELECTRONIC MEETING ORIENTATION

Katie Grosh provided an orientation for those who were attending via Zoom teleconference.

WELCOME AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The pastor of the host church, the Rev. Dr. R. Scott Herr, welcomed members of the assembly to the church and acknowledged the original inhabitants of the land.

ENROLLMENT AND INTRODUCTIONS

First-time commissioners introduced themselves to the assembly.

ADOPTION OF THE DOCKET

The Presbytery **VOTED** to adopt the docket as distributed with the meeting materials.

CONSENT MOTION

The Rev. Kate Carlisle, Stated Clerk, who was absent due to Mid-Council Leader Orientation in Louisville, has prepared items for a consent motion. The Moderator presented the consent motion. The Presbytery **VOTED**:

Actions related to the conduct of this assembly:

1. That the Rev. Shannan Vance-Ocampo serve as Clerk *pro tem* for the duration of this meeting.
2. That the Presbytery grant excuses from attendance at the 194th Stated Meeting to those needing the same, but that the Presbytery suspend the reading of their names.
3. That the Presbytery grant excuses for early departures from the 194th Stated Meeting for those requesting the same by **notifying the clerk in a timely manner by any means practicable**, but that the Presbytery suspend the reading of their names.
4. That the Presbytery seat as Corresponding Members those ministers for whom a request is made at the beginning of the meeting.

Recommendation from the Stated Clerk:

5. That the Presbytery accept the resignation of Rev. Shannon White from the Commission on Ministry, with thanks for her service (action item #1 in the Clerk's Report).

Recording of materials provided by the Treasurer:

6. That the Presbytery spread upon the minutes the report of the Treasurer as provided in the meeting materials.

WORSHIP

The assembly worshiped God. The lessons were Psalm 146 and 2 Corinthians 5:14-21. Worship leaders included ministers, elders, and the music director from FPC New Canaan. The Rev. Dr. R. Scott Herr, Senior Pastor, shared a homily titled “The Love of Christ...”. The Necrology was shared in prayer, including Ministers of Word and Sacrament, Elders, and Deacons who have completed their baptisms in death since the May 2022 Presbytery meeting.

The Moderator offered a blessing for the meal and the assembly recessed for dinner.

REPORT OF THE GENERAL PRESBYTER

The Presbytery reconvened, and the General Presbyter invited the Rev. Dr. Terrlyn Curry Avery shared an invitation to an upcoming Zoom information meeting about the *Writing the River* Pilgrimage to Israel and Palestine.

The General Presbyter shared a presentation covering several changes to the *Book of Order* effective July 9, 2023, especially those that affect Sessions and congregations. Topics included polity changes and resources related to electronic meetings policies; Roberts Rules requirements; family leave policy changes; child and youth protection policies; sexual misconduct policies; harassment policies; anti-racism policies. Additional resources, especially related to the drafting and implementation of anti-racism policies, will be shared in the coming months. Planning for boundary training in early 2024 is also in progress.

Rev. Vance-Ocampo also shared the dates of upcoming opportunities for lunch and fellowship with the General Presbyter and the Stated Clerk in various regions of the Presbytery.

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON MINISTRY

The Rev. Susan Trucksess offered a Memorial Moment for the Rev. Robert B. Allen and the Rev. M. Allen Line. The Rev. Anne Weirich offered a Memorial Moment for the Rev. Ron Minor. The Rev. Dale Green offered a Memorial Moment for the Rev. Anne Fuhrmeister.

For information: At the September Meeting of the Commission took the following actions:

- 1. Approved** the minutes of the June 14, 2023 meeting of COM.

2. **Ratified** the email vote on July 26, 2023 to grant early retirement to the Rev. Lin Grace Rohr, effective at a date to be determined.
3. **Approved, if the way be clear**, the transfer of the Rev. Tiffany Nicely Holleck to North Central California Presbytery, effective October 1, 2023. Tiffany has accepted a call to serve at St. Andrew Presbyterian Church in Yuba City, CA.
4. **Approved** the transfer of the Rev. Thomas Cyrus (“Cy”) Varland, Jr., HR, to Genesee Valley Presbytery.
5. **Approved** the change in status of the Rev. Ed Sackett from member-at-large to validated ministry. Ed has taken a position with Trinity Health as a chaplain resident as of August 14.
6. **Granted permission** to the Rev. Kate Carlisle, minister member of the Presbytery of Boston, to labor within the bounds of PSNE, including celebration of the sacraments as appropriate, effective May 30, 2023, for the length of their term. Kate was installed as Stated Clerk at the May 30 Special Joint Meeting, and began work on June 15.
7. **Approved** the Terms of Call for the Revs. Jessica Jones, Mark Montgomery, and Christ Tate at Wilton Presbyterian Church.
8. **Appointed** an Administrative Commission of the COM to install the Rev. T.J. DeMarco as Pastor of Providence Presbyterian Church, on October 1, 2023. The members of the AC are:
 - Elder Peter Cameron, Calvin Presbyterian Church
 - Elder Gina Bae, Providence Presbyterian Church
 - Elder Matt Harrison, Providence Presbyterian Church
 - Rev. Kevin White, Calvin Presbyterian Church
 - Rev. Shannan Vance-Ocampo, General Presbyter
 - Rev. John Sweet, corresponding member, Presbytery of Boston
9. **Appointed, if the way be clear**, an Administrative Commission of the COM to install the Rev. Gary Morello as Associate Pastor of Noroton Presbyterian Church, on October 29, 2023. The members of the AC will be:
 - Elder Sue Labins, First Presbyterian Church, Hartford, Conn.
 - Elder Stephen Hart, First Presbyterian Church, Stamford, Conn.
 - Elder Mindy Houck, Noroton Presbyterian Church
 - Rev. Kevin White, Calvin Presbyterian Church
 - Rev. Shannan Vance-Ocampo, General Presbyter
 - Rev. Scott Herr, First Presbyterian Church, New Canaan, Conn.
 - Rev. Greg Doll, Noroton Presbyterian Church
 - Rev. Carter Via, Specialized Ministry
 - Rev. Greg Penza, First Presbyterian Church, Fairfield, Conn.

The Rev. John Merz, COM co-chair, brought the following **MOTION** from COM: *That the COM recommends to the Presbytery to call the Rev. Gary Morello as Associate Pastor at Noroton Presbyterian Church under the provisions of G-o2.0505 effective October 29, 2023. And to waive ordination examination requirements as the Rev. Morello has been ordained longer than five years in a partner denomination. He has taken PCUSA polity and engaged in study of reformed theology under a curriculum designed and implemented by the COM in the summer of 2023.*

Upon recommendation of the Commission, the Presbytery examined the Rev. Gary Morello. The Rev. Shannan Vance-Ocampo, General Presbyter, and the Rev. Dr. R. Scott Herr, COM co-chair spoke to the motion and to Rev. Morello's ministry. Rev. Morello entered this examination as a minister in good standing in the United Church of Christ; our full communion UCC colleagues are aware of and in support of this process. Several members of the Noroton Presbyterian Church were present in support. Rev. Morello introduced himself, and responded to questions from the assembly.

The examination was arrested without objection, and Rev. Morello was excused from the assembly.

The Presbytery **VOTED** to **APPROVE** the motion, with four voting no.

Upon the recommendation of the Commission, the Presbytery **VOTED** to **APPROVE** the Gracious Separation Policy, which was brought for a first reading at the May 13 Stated Meeting.

Upon the recommendation of the Commission, the Presbytery **VOTED** to **APPROVE** the 2024 Pastoral Compensation Policy, with one abstention.

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES

The Rev. Andre Castillo presented the report of the Board of Trustees.

Upon recommendation of the Trustees, the Presbytery **VOTED** to **APPROVE** the co-signature of the PILP loan application with Calvin Presbyterian Church in Cumberland, RI for an amount not to exceed \$150,000.

Upon recommendation of the Trustees, the Presbytery **VOTED** to **APPROVE** the 2024 draft budget as presented, with major changes to be reported at subsequent PSNE meetings as needed, and with gratitude to the Budget Team.

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY

The Rev. Joan Priest presented the report the Commission on Preparation for Ministry for information:

1. The Commission met with Candidate Yejee (Rachel) Park (New Haven Korean: Hamden CT) and voted her Certified Ready to Receive a Call.
2. The Commission held an Annual Consultation for Candidate Ryan Joslin (First: New Haven, CT).
3. The Commission interviewed and approved Inquirer Heather Gordon (Noroton: Darien, CT) to be enrolled as a Candidate.
4. Currently under care of the Presbytery: 7 Candidates and 3 Candidates Certified Ready to Receive a Call.
5. The Commission's next meeting is in October 2023.

The assembly welcomed Candidate Heather Gordon, and the Moderator welcomed the new Candidate with a litany, questions, charge, and prayer.

Upon recommendation of the Commission, the Presbytery **VOTED** to **APPROVE** the Preparation for Ministry Policy Manual, which was brought for a first reading at the May Stated Meeting, and which also incorporates changes reflecting constitutional changes, with one no vote.

REPORT OF THE PRESBYTERY ROUNDTABLE

Elder Mildred McNeill presented the report of the Presbytery Roundtable.

Upon recommendation of the Roundtable, the Presbytery **VOTED** to **RATIFY** the Roundtable's vote to elect Elder Ralph Jones as an ordination exam reader.

Elder McNeill commended the written report, which includes the following items for information:

The Presbytery Roundtable held meetings on September 5 and September 12. At these meetings the Roundtable:

September 5

- Approved Elder Ralph Jones, First New Haven, as ordination exam reader.
- Heard reports from the General Presbyter and the Stated Clerk
- Reviewed a proposed docket for the September Presbytery meeting. Put off final approval until the Roundtable's September 12 meeting

- Discussed possible dates for Presbytery meetings in 2024 and will revisit them at the October Roundtable meeting
- Discussed the Book of Order amendments that the General Presbyter will walk through at the September Presbytery meeting. Each session will need to put anti-racism and harassment policies in place at the congregational level.
- Heard a report from the Administrative Commission to the Igreja Presbiteriana Brasileira Hyannis. Suggested that a report to Presbytery be considered for the November meeting.

September 12

- Completed review of the docket for the September 20 Presbytery meeting
- Reviewed the in-process draft budget that will go before Presbytery at the September meeting
- Formed a sub-committee to review the Presbytery meeting months and times and the pluses/minuses of hybrid or solely in-person meetings.
- Set the next Roundtable meeting for October 17

REPORT OF NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Elder Nicole Aronson Champagne presented the Report of the Nominating Committee. Upon nomination from the Committee, the Presbytery **VOTED** to **ELECT** the Rev. John Merz and the Rev. Scott Herr as co-chairs of the Commission on Ministry, with one voting no.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to transact, Presbytery **VOTED** to **ADJOURN**, and was led in a closing prayer by the Moderator, Rev. Kevin White, at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Kate Carlisle, Stated Clerk