



# THE PRESBYTERY OF SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND

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April 3, 2024

Session, % Elder D. Elaine Magyar, Clerk  
Greenwood Community Presbyterian Church  
805 Main Avenue  
Warwick, Rhode Island

Dear Elders,

Grace and peace to you in the name of our Risen Lord! Your Session and congregation remain in our prayers in this time of transition for your church. We particularly hold you in prayer as you grieve the loss of your Pastor, and as you seek pastoral leadership going forward.

We want to affirm the Session's responsibility for the spiritual leadership of the congregation and to reiterate the Presbytery's commitment to supporting your work during this time. I'm writing in particular concern about worship leadership, and about disrespect shown toward women in leadership by some church staff and members.

Gender parity is an important value and non-negotiable practice in Presbyterian polity. The Book of Order (F-1.0403) reminds us,

As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:27-29).

The unity of believers in Christ is reflected in the rich diversity of the Church's membership. In Christ, by the power of the Spirit, God unites persons through baptism regardless of race, ethnicity, age, sex, disability, geography, or theological conviction. There is therefore no place in the life of the Church for discrimination against any person. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall guarantee full participation and representation in its worship, governance, and emerging life to all persons or groups within its membership. No member shall be denied participation or representation for any reason other than those stated in this Constitution.

We are grateful to hear that some of you have also preached from time to time. If male elders are invited into preaching and other worship leadership roles, women must be as well.

Until a Bridge Pastor is in place, the supply preachers need to be PC(USA) (or Formula of Agreement) ministers; rare exceptions must be vetted by your COM liaison. Among other things, this will allow consistent access to the Sacraments. PSNE keeps a supply list available for this purpose. Preference shall not be given to men.

Please don't hesitate to contact the Rev. Pamela Spence-Bakker, your COM liaison, the Rev. Shannan Vance-Ocampo, General Presbyter, or me as Stated Clerk.

In Christ's peace,

Rev. Kate Carlisle, Stated Clerk  
on behalf of the Commission on Ministry