

**198th Stated Meeting  
of the Presbytery of Southern New England  
Wednesday, October 23, 2024**

**Online Meeting via Zoom**

The Presbytery of Southern New England of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) held a Stated Meeting on Zoom on October 23, 2024, as authorized by the PSNE Bylaws, Section 17, “Electronic Meetings.” Prior to the meeting, discussions of the documentary *Bad Faith* were held at First, New Haven; First, Hartford; and Calvin, Cumberland. Some of those who attended these discussions were gathered in person and logged into Zoom together.

**Call to Order**

The Presbytery was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by the Rev. Dallas Bradel, Moderator, who led the assembly in prayer.

A **quorum** was electronically present. The roll for this meeting was formed through Zoom participation data.

<b>ATTENDANCE</b>	Ministers- 35
	<u>Elders- 18</u>
	Total- 53

Attendance was established with Zoom attendance data and registration at cluster gatherings.

**MINISTERS PRESENT**

The following minister members were present:

Nancy Baseel	David Esterline	Deb Packard
Sophie Beal	Jane Esterline	Jenny Peek
George Blakesley	Jamie Faile	Susan Pfeil
Dallas Bradel	Dale Green	Joan Priest
Gin Courtney	Jan Hawkins	Rich Reifsnyder
Terrlyn Curry Avery	Thomas Hawkins	Jinny Smanik
Nancy D’Ippolito	Jessica Jones	Stacy Smith
Alonso Dacunha	Gregory Keosaian	Christopher Tate
Jenny Davis	Dean Lindsay	Shannan Vance-Ocampo
Stephen Davis	Peggy Lindsay	Anne Weirich
Pablo Diaz	John Merz	Kevin White
Julie Emery	Mark Montgomery	

## **MINISTERS EXCUSED**

The following minister members were excused: Gregory Doll, Brandi Drake, Scott Herr, Bea Hoover-Mulvaney, Gary Morello, David Van Dyke, Mieke Vandersall, Heather Wright

## **ELDER COMMISSIONERS**

The following Elders represented the Churches of the Presbytery (13):

Ashaway: Babcock	
Barrington	
Brookfield: Valley	
Cumberland	Lilie Koney
Darien: Noroton	
Farfield: First	
Fall River: Calvary	
Granby: Pioneer Valley	
Greenwich: First	
Groton: St. Andrew	Diane Snider
Hamden: New Haven Korean	
Hartford: First	Susan Labins, Keith Rhoden, Jr.
Milford: United	
New Canaan: First	
New Haven: Connecticut Korean	
New Haven: First	Jane Hindenlang, Beth Aura Miller
Providence	
Springfield: Martin Luther King	
Stamford: First	Stephen Hart, Nancy Winter
Warwick: Greenwood	Jean Greco, Elaine Magyar
Warwick: Woodbury	
Waterford: Crossroads	
West Hartford: Westminster	Arthur Riihmaki
Westerly: Dunn's Corners	Cathy Kellers
Wilton	Irla Landry

## **PRESBYTERY ROUNDTABLE**

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

## **COMMISSIONED RULING ELDERS**

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

## **CORRESPONDING MEMBERS**

Kate Carlisle, PSNE Stated Clerk, Presbytery of Boston

## **ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF**

Jenelle Hopkins, the Presbytery Communications Manager

## **CANDIDATES AND INQUIRERS**

Ryan Joslin

Elaine Song

## **VISITORS**

Four (4) visitors were registered and present for the meeting: Margaret Das Valley, Katia Dacunha, Harold Haugeto, Angela Johnson

## **CHURCHES WITHOUT REPRESENTATION**

Fifteen (15) Churches were without Elder Commissioner representation.

### **Welcome and Land Acknowledgment**

The Moderator welcomed the assembly. The Rev. Kate Carlisle, Stated Clerk, introduced and welcomed Jenelle Hopkins, the new Communications Manager.

The Rev. Dr. Shannan Vance-Ocampo, General Presbyter, shared a land acknowledgment. We have been sharing land acknowledgments since 2018, on the guidance of GA. Before the pandemic, land acknowledgments were an opportunity for host churches to learn more about the indigenous history of the land where their churches sit. Shannan shared an excerpt from the book *Theologies of Land*, which several Trustees and COM members read in preparation for a retreat in early September.

### **Electronic Meeting Orientation**

Ms. Hopkins gave some reminders for the use of Zoom.

Rev. Carlisle gave an orientation to a new voting system using Mentimeter.

### **Adoption of the Docket and Consent Motion**

The presbytery approved the docket as amended.

Several first time elder commissioners were introduced and welcomed. The Rev. Dr. Pablo Diaz and the Rev. Gin Courtney, new members of presbytery, were welcomed.

The presbytery **approved** the consent motion:

1. That the Presbytery grant excuses from attendance at the 198<sup>th</sup> Stated Meeting to those needing the same, but that the Presbytery suspend the reading of their names.
2. That the Presbytery grant excuses for early departures from the 198<sup>th</sup> 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.
3. That the Presbytery seat as Corresponding Members those ministers for whom a request is made at the beginning of the meeting.
4. That the Presbytery spread upon the minutes the Financial Reports as provided in the meeting materials.

## **Worship**

The presbytery worshiped God. The Rev. Dallas Bradel, Moderator, preached on the Scripture reading, selections from Matthew 21 and 22.

## **Report of the Antiracism and Equity Team**

The Rev. Nancy Baseel reported. The antiracism and equity team has distributed a written report with the following items for information:

- The Team continues to plan for the first of the yearly Presbytery-wide Antiracism Trainings, per the requirement of PSNE Antiracism Policy. The date has been set for **Saturday, March 1 2025**, hosted by New Haven Korean Presbyterian Church. The Team is excited to say that **the keynote speaker for this training will be Dr. William Yoo** (Associate Professor of American Religious and Cultural History and Director of the Mdiv Program at Columbia Theological Seminary, and author of *What Kind of Christianity: A History of Slaver and Anti-Black Racism in the Presbyterian Church*)
- The Team coordinated opportunities for PSNE-wide discussions of Christian Nationalism through times of watching and discussing the documentary *Bad Faith: Christian Nationalism's Unholy War on Democracy* at several locations around the Presbytery immediately preceding this Presbytery meeting.
- The Team is working on how to best be of service and a resource to the Presbytery, and how to continue growing and deepening relationships in this work. This includes developing an ongoing suggested resource list, and opportunities to be a resource for churches developing their own antiracism policies and engaging in this work in their particular contexts.

Rev. Baseel highlighted the upcoming event in March with Dr. Yoo.

### **Report of the Administrative Commission for St. Andrew, Groton**

Elder Beth Aura Miller reported. Harold Haugeto shared some history and reflections celebrating the ministry of St. Andrew Presbyterian Church in Groton, Conn., which held its final service on August 25. The AC shared a slide show. The AC is continuing its work related to transferring members and stewardship of and selling the building. Elder Miller offered a prayer.

### **Report of the General Presbyter**

The Rev. Dr. Shannan Vance-Ocampo, General Presbyter, reported. She expressed gratitude for PSNE's sabbatical policy and has shared a Sabbatical Letter with the presbytery.

### **Report of the Stated Clerk**

The Rev. Kate Carlisle, Stated Clerk, reported. They have distributed a written report with the following items for information:

1. In accordance with the Book of Order, D-7.0501, I am providing notice that on October 7, 2024, I received a written statement of an alleged disciplinary offense on the part of a minister member of the Presbytery. An investigating committee is being formed in accordance with Church Discipline and the Bylaws of this Presbytery. The committee will investigate this allegation, and will make a determination as to whether to file formal charges. In the meantime, I invite your prayers for all persons involved in this matter.
2. According to 2.2 in the PSNE bylaws, the Stated Clerk addresses any imbalance between ruling and teaching elders eligible to vote at Presbytery by inviting Sessions to designate an additional elder commissioner. There are substantially more minister members than elder commissioners allocated by the bylaws, and attendance at Presbytery meetings tends to be higher among ministers than elders. At least some Sessions have been in the habit of sending that third elder commissioner already. *Therefore, I will invite and encourage **all** PSNE Sessions to designate **three** ruling elder commissioners for Presbytery meetings in 2025.*
3. The 226th General Assembly has sent 13 items to the presbyteries for their vote: twelve proposed amendments to the Book of Order and the Episcopal-Presbyterian Agreement on Local Sharing of Ministries. These items are compiled in a PDF included in the meeting materials. Presbytery must act on all of these items before July 2025. I recommend that, rather than handling all items

at once, we take a few at a time; to that end, I have included items 24-B, 24-D, 24-E, 24-F, 24-G, 24-H, 24-J, and 24-L in today's docket. I recommend that presbytery act on items E and G together, as they concern the same topic (both would prohibit non-disclosure agreements). I also recommend that presbytery act on items D, F, H, and L as a group, as all make relatively minor amendments to the Book of Order. These groupings are reflected in the proposed docket.

4. The PSNE compensation policy, including the moderator/pulpit supply compensation policy and the 2025 compensation worksheet, have been distributed to all churches by email and are available on the PSNE website. Please return the completed worksheet to me by email no later February 15, 2024.
5. The Commission on Ministry and I have a number of items forthcoming, including a survey to check-in with ministers in validated/specialized ministry, on the at large role, and retired ministers; and scheduling a date for a gathering of Clerks of Session with minutes review. Please keep an eye out for those important communications.

## **Report of the Roundtable**

Elder Mildred McNeill, co-chair of Roundtable, reported. A written report has been distributed with the following items for information:

Roundtable met on Oct. 2, 2024, in person at Westminster Church in West Hartford. Mildred McNeill and Barbara Riihmaki (co-chairs) presided. The committee took the following actions:

- Heard from nominating committee chair Nicole Aronson-Champagne that Peter Cameron, a ruling elder at Calvin, Cumberland has agreed to be presented to the Presbytery as Vice Moderator and Rev. Jane Esterline, retired, has agreed to be voted on as a member of the Permanent Judicial Council.
- Heard a presentation via Zoom by the Vandersall Collective that is working with Trustees and three congregations on a project to help Trustees, the Presbytery, and congregations make future property decisions based on our core values.
- Heard a report from Rev. Nancy Baseel on the Antiracism and Equity Committee gatherings at 4 churches immediately prior to the Oct. 23 Presbytery meeting to view and discuss the documentary *Bad Faith*, followed by discussion. The Committee's next planned event is an Antiracism training on March 1, 2025, with Dr. William Yoo, author of *What Kind of Christianity?* Boston Presbytery will be invited. The team is working to make themselves available in a consulting role for congregations that are working on their antiracism projects.

- Heard a report from General Presbyter Shannan Vance-Ocampo on her sabbatical plans.
- Heard a presentation on a proposed budget for the coming year. The proposed budget had a deficit due to a decrease in funding from the Synod and a decrease in per capita income due to attrition and church closures. Roundtable encouraged the budget committee to consider actions that will attempt to reduce the deficit in the recommended budget.
- Discussed a proposed calendar of Presbytery meetings in 2025 with Matthew 25 themes. And voted to recommend that Presbytery suspend Presbytery Bylaw 3.1 to allow only three only three stated meetings in 2025.
- Heard a report from the Personnel Committee about ongoing conversations with Boston Presbytery about the joint stated clerk position. Additionally, Personnel shared plans to have Rev. David Bennett, executive presbyter of Albany, on call during Shannan Vance-Ocampo's sabbatical that begins in November.
- Via Zoom, met the new Communications Coordinator Jenelle Hopkins and Rev. David Bennett, Stated Clerk of Albany Presbytery who will be voted on at the Presbytery meeting to serve as Sabbatical Gap Presbyter.

Roundtable voted to meet six times in 2025.

Roundtable approved the docket for the October 23 Presbytery meeting on Zoom.

Upon recommendation of Roundtable, presbytery **ratified** the election of Elder Peter Cameron as Vice Moderator; Rev. Jane Esterline, retired, as a member of the Permanent Judicial Council; and the Rev. Rachel Mastin as Synod Commissioner.

Upon recommendation of Roundtable, Presbytery **voted** to suspend Presbytery Bylaw 3.1 to allow holding only three stated meetings in 2025; and to hold Stated Meetings on the following dates in 2025:

- February 11
- May 3
- November 13

The February PSNE meeting will be held on Zoom only, and the locations and formats of the May and November meetings are to be determined.

### **Report of the Commissioners to the 226th General Assembly**

Elder Nicole Aronson Champagne and the Rev. Anne Weirich, HR, PSNE's commissioners to the 226th General Assembly in Salt Lake City, shared a report. Elder Champagne was a member of the Environmental and Climate Justice Committee. Rev. Weirich served as moderator of the Polity Committee. Both commissioners gave overviews of their respective committee's work, highlighted notable business at the Assembly, and shared some resources to learn more about the Assembly's work.

## **Business from the 226th General Assembly**

The OGA packet has been distributed to the presbytery with information about the items requiring ratification by the presbyteries: twelve proposed amendments to the Book of Order, and the proposed ecumenical agreement with The Episcopal Church. The Stated Clerk made recommendations as to which amendments the presbytery might handle at this meeting and which could be handled at the February and May meetings.

The presbytery **voted to ratify** Item 24-B.

The presbytery **voted to ratify** Items 24-E and 24-G.

The presbytery **voted to ratify** Items 24-D, 24-H, and 24-L.

The presbytery **voted to ratify** Item 24-F.

Without objection, the presbytery postponed additional items to future meetings.

## **Report of the Personnel Committee**

The Rev. Mark Montgomery reported. A written report has been distributed with the following items for information:

- Check-in meetings with General Presbyter and Stated Clerk have been completed.
- PSNE Personnel Chair, Boston Presbytery Personnel Chair and Stated Clerk Check-in meeting completed.
- Completed exit interview with outgoing Communications Manager.
- Via subcommittee of the Personnel Committee (The Rev. Mark Montgomery, the Rev. Jason Santalucia and the Rev. Dr. Shannan Vance-Ocampo) interviewed candidates for Communications Manager for PSNE. Joyfully and gratefully welcomed Jenelle Hopkins into this role.
- Reviewed and approved Sabbatical Plan for General Presbyter.
- Alongside General Presbyter, developed coverage plan and compensation for candidate to provide Sabbatical coverage.
- Interviewed candidate for General Presbyter Sabbatical coverage. The Rev. David Bennett has been selected for this role.
- Made recommendations to Budget Committee for Personnel compensation for 2025. Included with these recommendations was input from Board of Pensions (accounting for 2025 coverage changes), Synod (minimum compensation guidelines for Mid-Council Staff), and Federal Government for Cost-of-Living Adjustments (COLA) for coming year.

## **Report of the Budget Team**

The Rev. John Merz reported. The proposed budget has been distributed and has been reviewed by Roundtable and Trustees. Rev. Merz shared a presentation with some



highlights.

Upon recommendation of the Budget Team, Roundtable, and Trustees, Presbytery **voted** to approve the 2025 Budget as presented.

Upon recommendation of the Trustees, Presbytery **voted** to form a commission to examine the future of our Presbytery as it pertains to financial viability, personnel, and shared mission.

The proposed warrant and slate of members for this commission will be brought for Presbytery action in February.

### **Report of the Trustees**

The Rev. Dean Lindsey, chair, reported. A written report has been distributed. Rev. Lindsey shared some highlights about the consulting process with the Vandersall Collective about theology, values, and opportunities about land and property use.

### **Report of the Commission on Preparation for Ministry**

The Rev. Joan Priest, co-chair, reported. A written report has been distributed with the following items for information:

- Several CPM members attended the Ordination of Yejee (Rachel) Park on May 19 and Gerson Roca on September 15.
- In September the Commission held an annual consultation with Candidate Heather Gordon (Noroton: Darien, CT)
- The commission also met with Candidate Ryan Joslin (First: New Haven, CT), we heard him preach, read his statement of faith and exegetical paper, etc. and we voted him Certified Ready to Receive a Call.
- Currently under care of the Presbytery are 4 Candidates, and 4 Candidates Certified Ready to Receive a Call.

### **Report of the Commission on Ministry**

The Rev. John Merz, co-chair, reported. A written report has been distributed with the following items for information:

The Commission wishes to inform the Presbytery that, in accordance with the authority granted under Chapter 8 of the Bylaws of the Presbytery, it has:

1. Received the Rev. Dr. Pablo Diaz as a member from Peace River Presbytery.
2. Approved the contract extension of the Rev. Dr. Stacy Smith as Bridge Pastor at First, New Haven through November 1.
3. Added Stephen Beals to the PSNE pulpit supply list.
4. Welcomed the Rev. David Bennett, GP Sabbatical Coverage consultant, [david@psne.org](mailto:david@psne.org), effective November 18, 2024.

5. Approved the following addendum to the PSNE compensation policy: “When a Transitional/Interim Pastor/Head-of-Staff is serving a church, the Session is encouraged to keep parity during this time, and/or to use a one-time bonus to compensate the Associate Pastor if additional work occurs prior to the beginning of the work of the Transitional/Interim Pastor. If the Session and/or affected Pastor(s) need help with these shifts in compensation, the COM is available as a conversation partner.”
6. Approved the following members of the commission to ordain Candidate Gerson Roca to the ministry of Word and Sacrament, on behalf of the Presbytery of Northern New England:
  - Rev. Dallas Bradel, Moderator
  - Rev. Dr. Shannan Vance-Ocampo, General Presbyter
  - Rev. Theodore J. DeMarco, Providence
  - Elder Peter Cameron, Calvin, Cumberland RI
  - Elder Matthew Harrison, Providence
  - Elder Ann Lochniskar, Haverhill, MA
  - Rev. Allen Timm, Corresponding Member, PNNE
  - Rev. John Sweet, Corresponding Member, Boston

Rev. Roca’s ordination took place on September 15, 2024 at 3:00 pm at Providence Presbyterian Church, Providence, RI, Rev. Deb Packard, Woodbury Union, preaching.

### **Old or New Business**

No additional business.

The General Presbyter celebrated that Elder Lisa Baker, MLK Jr. Community Presbyterian, Springfield, is being nominated as Moderator of the Synod of the Northeast.

The Rev. Anne Weirich celebrated that Katia Dacunha, Igreja Presbiteriana Brasileira, Hyannis is being honored by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts with a Latino Excellence Award.

Presbytery **voted to adjourn**. The moderator closed the assembly in prayer at 9:36 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Kate Carlisle, stated clerk

Proposed 2025 Budget

	2024	2025	Notes
	Final	Draft	
<b>Income</b>			
General Mission	\$25,000	\$25,000	
Investment Fund Annual Distribution	\$35,000	\$90,000	4.07% distr. from investments
Presbytery Per Capita	\$214,238	\$203,900	
GA Per Capita		\$62,157	
Synod Per Capita		\$24,370	
Presbytery Per Capita unpaid by member churches	-\$15,450	-\$15,000	
GA/Synod Per Capita unpaid by member churches	-\$2,911	-\$3,000	
Donations	\$5,000	\$5,000	
Synod Grant Income for Personnel	\$20,000	\$0	We are no longer eligible for this
Clerk Compensation contribution from Boston	\$33,000	\$34,815	40% of total TOC is what Boston pays
<b>Member Giving (new for 2025; special projects?)</b>		\$4,100	\$50.50 x 144 = \$7,272; partial participation
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$313,877</b>	<b>\$431,342</b>	
<b>Expense</b>			
<b>Per Capita Payments</b>			
General Assembly of the PC(USA)		\$62,157	\$10.84, increased by \$1.04
Synod of the Northeast		\$24,370	\$4.25, increased by \$.15
<b>Ministries of the Presbytery:</b>			
Brazilian Fellowship	\$20,000	\$15,000	will step down over 4 years
New Initiatives/Emerging Ministries	\$5,000	\$5,000	
Not so Churchy New Worshipping Community	\$2,000	\$0	Closed in 2024
Latinx in Action New Worshipping Community	\$2,000	\$2,000	
Presbyterian Disaster Assistance	\$500	\$500	
Clergy Wellness Initiatives (Retreats, etc.)		\$1,000	new
<b>Committees:</b>			
Committee on Ministry	\$6,000	\$4,000	
Committee on Preparation	\$2,000	\$2,000	
Nominations	\$200	\$200	
Anti-Racism & Equity		\$4,000	new
Personnel	\$500	\$500	
Roundtable	\$4,000	\$4,000	
Trustees	\$13,100	\$15,000	
<b>Personnel:</b>			
GP Salary/Housing	\$86,521	\$90,021	increase of \$3500.00
GP SECA	\$6,619	\$6,887	
GP Medical Reimbursement	\$4,112	\$4,112	
GP BOP (medical, pension, supp D&D, dental)	\$36,325	\$41,670	43% of effective salary all inclusive for transitional
Stated Clerk Salary/Housing	\$51,500	\$58,841	to bring to minimum standards in both Presbyteries
Stated Clerk SECA		\$4,501	new in 2025
Stated Clerk BOP (medical, pension, supp D&D, dental)	\$20,085	\$18,193	Matrix + BOP Percentages for Pension, DD, TD, and
Communications Manager	\$20,085	\$20,687	new hire; no COLA on this position for 2025
Office/Mail Stipend	\$4,000	\$4,000	
Treasurer - stipend	\$2,000	\$2,000	
<b>Staff &amp; Office Operations:</b>			
GP Auto/Professional Expense	\$7,000	\$7,000	
GP Continuing Education	\$4,556	\$4,556	
GP General Assembly Expense	\$0	\$0	No GA in 2025
Stated Clerk Auto/Professional Expense	\$5,500	\$5,500	
Stated Clerk General Assembly Exp.	\$3,000	\$0	
Payroll/Gusto	\$672	\$672	
Accounting/Jitasa	\$9,480	\$9,735	
Equip. Replacement Reserve	\$2,000	\$2,000	
Legal Contingency	\$1,000	\$1,000	
Staff IT reimbursement	\$3,240	\$3,240	Same as 2024
Office Expenses	\$6,000	\$7,000	
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$328,995</b>	<b>\$431,341</b>	
<b>Operating Budget Net Surplus/Loss*</b>	<b>-\$15,118</b>	<b>\$0</b>	
<b>Net Income/Expense</b>			
		head count	5734 members