

**Minutes
202nd Stated Meeting
of the Presbytery of Southern New England
Tuesday, February 10, 2026
Electronic Meeting**

The Presbytery of Southern New England of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) held a Stated Meeting online via Zoom, on February 10, 2026.

Call to Order

The Presbytery was **called to order** at 5:04pm by Elder Peter Cameron, Moderator, who led the assembly in prayer.

A **quorum** was present electronically. The roll for this meeting was formed using Zoom user data.

ATTENDANCE	Ministers-	42
	<u>Elders-</u>	<u>26</u>
	Total-	68

MINISTERS PRESENT

The following minister members were present:

Nancy Baseel	T.J. DeMarco	Deb Packard
Pamela Spence Bakker	David Esterline	Jenny Peek
Dallas Bradel	Jamie Faile	Greg Penza
Andre Castillo	Chris Foster	Joan Priest
Kymberley Clemons-Jones	Luanne Griguoli	Elian (Emily) Scott
Andries Coetzee	Jan Hawkins	Cass Shaw
Gin Courtney	Thomas Hawkins	Jinny Smanik
Terrlyn Curry Avery	Scott Herr	Christopher Tate
Nancy D'Ippolito	Gregory Keosaian	Mary Thies
Jenny Davis	Erin Keys	Susan Power Trucksess
Stephen Davis	Dean Lindsey	Shannan Vance-Ocampo
Pablo Diaz	Peggy Lindsey	Kevin White
Shelley Donaldson	John Merz	Anne Weirich
Brandi Drake	Patrick Notley	Heather Wright

MINISTERS EXCUSED

The following minister members were excused:

Tricia Dillon Thomas
Lin Grace Rohr

ELDER COMMISSIONERS

The following ruling elders represented the churches of the presbytery (13):

Ashaway: Babcock	
Barrington	
Brookfield: Valley	
Cumberland: Calvin	Lillie Koney, Julio Tavares
Darien: Noroton	
Fairfield: First	Clare Schimpf
Fall River: Calvary	
Greenwich: First	Michelle Binnie, Brian Pennington
Hamden: New Haven Korean	
Hartford: First	
Milford: United	Bob Heerema
New Canaan: First	
New Haven: Connecticut Korean	Charles Kim
New Haven: First	Clara Biesel, Beth Aura Miller, Caty Poole

Providence
Springfield: Martin Luther King
Stamford: First
Warwick: Greenwood
Warwick: Woodbury
Waterford: Crossroads
West Hartford: Westminster
Westerly: Dunn's Corners
Wilton

Dan Blackford, Diane Chase
Lisa Baker, Rachelle Lee
Sarah Avellino, Stephen Hart
Elaine Magyar

Linda Geisler, Barbara Riihimaki, Janet Wade-Utay
Rachel Pierson, Roxanne Tisch

PRESBYTERY ROUNDTABLE

The following ruling elder members of the Presbytery Roundtable were present:

Nicole Aronson Champagne (West Hartford: Westminster)
Peter Cameron (Cumberland: Calvin)
Mildred McNeill (Hartford: First)
Cathy Thomas (Wilton)

COMMISSIONED RULING ELDERS

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

CORRESPONDING MEMBERS

The following teaching elders were present as Corresponding Members:

Kate Carlisle, Presbytery of Boston, PSNE Stated Clerk

CANDIDATES AND INQUIRERS

No Candidates or Inquirers were present.

CERTIFIED CHRISTIAN EDUCATORS

Tara Church, Certified Christian Educator, First Greenwich

VISITORS

No other visitors were registered for the meeting.

CHURCHES WITHOUT REPRESENTATION

Nine (9) Churches were without Elder Commissioner representation.

Welcome and Land Acknowledgment

Jenelle Hopkins, Communications Manager, offered an introduction to Zoom and some guidelines for participation.

The Rev. Dr. Shannan Vance-Ocampo, gave a Land Acknowledgment. She spoke about the history of the practice of Land Acknowledgments in the PC(USA) and about ongoing processes of reconciliation and repair at the denominational level, and shared about her own experience participating in a PC(USA) visit to Dakota Presbytery. She drew connections with the impact of ICE enforcement violence, especially in Minneapolis, on indigenous people.

The Rev. Kate Carlisle, Stated Clerk, offered an introduction to the Mentimeter poll platform for voting.

First time commissioners were introduced and welcomed.

Adoption of the Docket and Consent Motion

The presbytery **approved** the docket and the consent motion by unanimous consent:

1. That the Presbytery approve the minutes of the 201st Stated Meeting on October 21, 2025.
2. That the Presbytery grant excuses from attendance at the 202nd Stated Meeting to those needing the same, but that the Presbytery suspend the reading of their names.

3. That the Presbytery seat as Corresponding Members those ministers for whom an introduction 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.
5. That the Presbytery accept, with thanks, the resignation of Elder Phillip Phiri as Treasurer.

Worship

The presbytery **worshiped** God. The Scripture reading was Matthew 5:38-48, and the assembly discussed the Scripture text in breakout rooms. Rev. Chris Tate led worship and invited the assembly to participate via online poll and a photo-sharing platform. Rev. Tate shared a selection from *For Such a Time as This: An Emergency Devotional*, by Hannah Reichel.

Report of the Commission on Ministry

Rev. Dr. Scott Herr, co-chair, reported.

Rev. Herr acknowledged Tara Church, Director of Children's Ministry at FPC Greenwich, and celebrated her completion of the Certified Christian Educator program in the PC(USA) last year. He highlighted the practical and academic work involved in this certification and offered a prayer for Ms. Church and her ministry.

Rev. Anne Weirich offered a Memorial Moment for the Rev. Robert Gibson, who died in April 2023. Rev. Gibson was a lifelong member of the PC(USA), and was a member of the Community of Jesus who served in a variety of roles in his work.

Rev. Dr. Shannan Vance-Ocampo offered a Memorial Moment for the Rev. James Mahan, who was Pastor of the Turn of River Church from 2009 until his retirement in 2020. As he has since moved to Illinois, this Memorial Moment will be shared with the Presbytery of Great Rivers.

Rev. Herr gave an overview of the COM's ongoing review of presbytery policies and Rev. Vance-Ocampo shared more details about the specific policies being presented today for a vote or a first reading by the assembly.

Upon recommendation of COM, Presbytery **voted to approve the Policy on Administrative Commissions for Ordinations and Installations**. The policy is appended to these minutes.

Upon recommendation of COM, Presbytery **voted to approve the Guiding Principles for the Commission on Ministry**. This was previously known as the COM Manual, but the Guiding Principles should be considered a portion of the COM Manual, which includes all policies and COM resource documents. The Guiding Principles are appended to these minutes.

Upon recommendation of COM, Presbytery **adopted the updated Sexual Misconduct Policy** as proposed. This policy reflects substantial changes to the Book of Order over the past several years, and has been reviewed by the Sexual Misconduct Response Team, the COM, the General Presbyter and Stated Clerk, PC(USA) staff, and legal counsel. The policy is appended to these minutes.

COM presented the proposed Policy on Dissolution of Pastoral Relationships for a first reading.

COM presented the proposed Policy on Commissioned Ruling Elders for a first reading. This policy was developed by a team from the three presbyteries in New England and is intended for adoption and collaboration across the presbyteries.

The Assembly was reminded to submit questions or comments on either of these first readings to the presbytery office by April 1.

Rev. Herr asked the Assembly to hold the Commission in their prayers as COM seeks to support the churches and pastors of the presbytery.

The COM has distributed a written report with the following items for information:

The Commission wishes to **INFORM** the Presbytery, in accordance with the authority granted under Chapter 8 of the Bylaws of the Presbytery, of the following actions:

1. COM **voted** to approve the Parish Associate covenant between the Rev. Dr. Kimberley Clemmons-Jones and the Martin Luther King Community Presbyterian Church.
2. COM **voted** to approve the ordination plans for Stacy Arevalo at the Noroton Presbyterian Church to take place on November 21, 2025.
3. COM **voted** to receive the sabbatical report from the Rev. Gary Morello at the Noroton Presbyterian Church.
4. COM **approved** the updated compensation for CRE April Saber-Assad. Compensation \$1833.00/month for 12 hours/week, and no other changes are being made to her contract.
5. COM **approved** a \$2000 expenditure to cover 50% of the cost of an immigration attorney for Candidate Deborah Jinhwa Lee as she prepares to receive her first call in Susquehanna Valley Presbytery.
6. COM **voted** to dismiss Rev. Melodie Ann Long to Northwest Coast as of February 9, 2023.
7. COM voted to approve the consulting contract between the Rev. Dr. Derrick McQueen (NYC Presbytery) and MLK.
8. COM **voted** to, extend the hand of welcome to incoming minister member:
 - a. If the way be clear, COM **voted** to approve the call between Rev. Seth Weeldreyer and First, Greenwich, upon receipt of a satisfactory compensation worksheet; and to receive him from Lake Michigan Presbytery as a member of PSNE.
9. COM **voted** to approve the interim pastor contract between the Rev. Dallas Bradel and the Greenwood Community Presbyterian Church. This contract renews on March 19, 2026.

The COM also wishes to share with the Presbytery that it held its annual one-day retreat on January 14, 2026 at the Westminster Presbyterian Church. During the retreat the COM spent time with the [Rev. Dr. Jonathan Vanderbeck](#) of Gilead Consulting and the Danielson Institute and considered the topic of: **Systems Beneath the Surface: Race, Gender, and Practice of Ministry**. We explored our work of the past year, trendlines, areas of stress, and areas of promise. This training included discussion of the issue of moral injury as it pertains to the ministry of the COM and time to reflect on the larger systems of which we are a part. The rest of the retreat focused on policy reviews and a few items of business that are incorporated into the report above.

Report of the Trustees

Rev. Dean Lindsey, chair, reported.

Upon recommendation of the Trustees, Presbytery **voted to adopt the updated job description for Treasurer**. The job description is appended to these minutes.

Rev. Lindsey shared gratitude for the work of Rev. David Bennett as the Temporary Administrator and for Elder Philip Phiri in his years of service as Treasurer. Rev. Lindsey introduced Elder Dan Blackford, from the Providence Church.

Upon recommendation of the Trustees, Presbytery **voted to elect Elder Daniel Blackford** as Treasurer.

Elder Blackford is currently a member of the Board of Trustees. Upon recommendation of the Trustees, a supermajority of Presbytery **voted to suspend Bylaw 4.7**, and allow the Treasurer to serve as a voting member of Trustees. Elder Blackford will complete his second term as a Trustee in May.

Upon recommendation of the Trustees, Presbytery **voted to create a Congregational Support Fund**, with an initial balance of \$100,000 in liquid funds, not to be considered part of the investment portfolio or annual operating budget. Trustees will review requests from COM or the personnel committee, and Trustees will have the authority to approve expenditures up to \$10,000. Expenditures

above \$10,000 will need to be approved by Presbytery action.

Presbytery **voted to elect Elder Philip Phiri as Assistant Treasurer**. Elder Phiri is a member of FPC New Haven, and has served as PSNE Treasurer since 2019.

The Trustees have distributed a written report with the following items for information:

The Trustees have been pleased to work with David Bennett who has been serving as our Temporary Business Administrator. We have solicited applications for the regular position and with the Personnel Committee hope to complete that process shortly.

David Bennet has sought bids from several accounting firms to perform a Financial Review of the Presbytery's books covering the years 2023-25. We hope to present this review to the Presbytery by the September meeting.

Discussions between the Administrative Commission for Meadows First Presbyterian, Granby, MA and the Nipmuc Land Trust have stalled. We await further updates from the AC.

The sale of the Groton, St. Andrews, should close in the next several weeks. We offer thanks for the dedicated members of the Administrative Commission who have worked tirelessly to bring this process to conclusion.

Current Investment holdings are as follows:

Account	December 31, 2024	December 31, 2025
Money Market (Liberty Bank)	\$ 1,122,780.64	\$ 562,133.74 (\$500k was transferred from the Money Market to New Covenant Trust in September)
Investment Account (New Covenant Trust)	\$ 1,061,855.74	\$ 1,706,168.68
Totals	\$ 2,184,636.38	\$ 2,288,302.42

Report of the Antiracism and Equity Team

Rev. Kevin White, co-chair, provided information about the upcoming All-Presbytery Antiracism Training, on February 28 at First, New Haven. The training will be led by Rev. Jermaine Ross-Allam, Director of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s Center for the Repair of Historic Harms, and PhD Candidate at Union Theological Seminary. Rev. White invited all to register and attend.

A written report has been distributed with the following items for information:

- **Mark your calendars!** The PSNE 2026 Antiracism Training will be Saturday, February 28, 2026 9:30am-4:00pm at First Presbyterian Church, New Haven. We are excited to welcome Rev. Jermaine Ross Allam, Director of the [Presbyterian Church \(U.S.A.\)'s Center for the Repair of Historic Harms](#), and PhD Candidate at Union Theological Seminary.

Together, we'll explore repair, reparations, Reformed theology, and how this work shapes our local and shared ministries. This will be a transformational and conversational day grounded in faith, justice, and community.

Though these are called "trainings," they are less seminar and information oriented events, and are built around the idea that we engage this work best by building relationships and community together.

We remind everyone that our Presbytery's Antiracism Policy asks all teaching elders and those serving on Presbytery Teams, Commissions, Committees, and in any other leadership position in the Presbytery to attend an antiracism training at least once every three years.

- The Team continues to explore how to best be of service and a resource to the Presbytery, and how to continue growing and deepening relationships in this work. As part of this, we will be reaching out to the churches in the presbytery to gain a better understanding of the particulars of individual congregations regarding antiracism, and how the Presbytery can better meet congregations where they are.

Report of the Nominating Committee

Elder Nicole Aronson Champagne reported.

Rev. Jane Esterline, retired, has resigned from the Nominating Committee.

Roundtable **elected the following slate for the 227th General Assembly:**

- Deacon Ella Kimberly, Westminster, YAAD
- Rev. Kevin White, Calvin, Teaching Elder Commissioner
- Elder Rachelle Lee, MLK Springfield, Ruling Elder Commissioner

Presbytery **voted to ratify** the election of the above commissioners and YAAD.

Report of the Commission on Preparation for Ministry

Rev. Joan Priest, co-chair, reported. She celebrated that Elder Mary Slattery, Dunns Corners, has begun a degree at Dubuque and is newly enrolled as an Inquirer. Rev. Priest shared news and celebration that Candidate Deborah Jinhwa Lee has been called as Pastor of Bovina United Presbyterian Church in Susquehanna Valley Presbytery.

A written report has been distributed informing Presbytery of the following items:

1. The Commission met on November 7, 2025 with **Candidate Ji Hee Hyung** (First Pres.: New Haven, CT) for her Annual Consultation. She is back in the U.S. from Korea and working in a Korean Church in NJ with youth and children, while her husband studies at Columbia University. The Commission also met with **Alex Rogers: Manager of the Preparation for Ministry and Exams for PC(USA)**. We discussed how the process of preparing for ministry is quite different than even 10 years ago and there are many changes coming, especially with ordination exams, as proposals to the General Assembly this summer from a study commission who has been working on these questions.
2. The Commission met on January 9, 2026 with **Elder Mary Slattery** (Dunn's Corners Pres.: Westerly, RI) who was applying to become an Inquirer. Mary has begun a Master's in Ministry Program at the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary and is very active in her church, recently becoming the Children's Ministry Coordinator. It was M/S/V favorably for Mary to be enrolled as an Inquirer. Sophie Beal agreed to be her Liaison.
3. The Commission has been in conversation with **CRRC Jin Hwa (Deborah) Lee** who has been offered a call, if the way be clear, to be the pastor of the Bovina United Presbyterian Church in Bovina Center, NY which is in Susquehanna Valley Presbytery. COM voted to help fund her Visa Processing Fees with that Presbytery. She is expecting to begin her ministry and organize her ordination in the next few weeks. We will have an update on those dates by the time of the Presbytery meeting and can provide them at that time for the record.
4. The Commission continues to discuss their role related to Commissioned Ruling Elders (CRE's) which is becoming a growing practice in our area. A joint policy for managing the CRE process is in the business agenda of the COM for this meeting for a first reading. This policy was worked on over the last year between our Presbytery, Boston Presbytery, and Northern New England Presbytery. There is discussion among the three Presbyteries about gathering the leadership of the CPM's together this year to explore opportunities to share how we do our work and learn about our similarities and differences. The Book of Order allows for a CPM to be shared across Presbytery boundaries. No decisions have been made, we will have initial exploratory conversations this year and keep the Presbytery posted on how they are going.

5. Currently under care of the Presbytery are 1 Inquirer, 2 Candidates, and 4 Certified Ready to Receive a Call.

Report of the General Presbyter

Rev. Dr. Shannan Vance-Ocampo, General Presbyter encouraged the presbytery to review her written report due to time constraints. A written report has been distributed informing Presbytery of the following items:

Information about Collaborations

There are a few areas of exciting collaborations emerging for us:

- The Presbytery Trustees have opened up some extra funds for the work of our COM. This has allowed for some incredible work and collaborations of the COM in ministries throughout the Presbytery. In addition to that work, through those funds, and alongside gifts from an outside donor, we are offering some Clergy Wellness initiatives this year that will be focused on gathering together for mutual support via table fellowship, art, and time in Creation. We will have another clergy retreat November 12-14, 2026 and I am excited to share that [Rachel White](#) will be returning as our artist-in-residence alongside award-winning Irish poet [Pádraig Ó Tuama](#). Pádraig is starting at Yale Divinity School this fall on faculty, and I hope this can be the first of many opportunities for PSNE to collaborate with him. Stay tuned for information and registration in your inbox! Thank you to our Trustees!
- The staff of the three New England presbyteries have been meeting together regularly this year and are preparing ways for our three presbyteries to come together this fall and early next year in conversations around shared opportunities for leadership. This will happen at the “Council” level, so for us, the Roundtable. Other opportunities will continue to emerge. Our three CPM’s are beginning a conversation about ways to share their ministry of the accompaniment of seminarians and commissioned ruling elders (CRE), and we are combining the process of preparing and supporting CRE’s between the three presbyteries. We will also continue to cross-invite each other to events and training when appropriate and applicable. I attended the Korean ministry symposium in Boston Presbytery last month and it was a rich time of learning, collaboration and community. Our Synod is now providing grants for collaboration and we will be applying for some together as the Tri-Presbytery group this year. Stay tuned for more information!
- I attended a gathering at Columbia Theological Seminary in late February for Presbytery and Synod leaders from around the PCUSA. Columbia is considering ways to leverage their resources in service to the larger denomination in creative ways. I think some good collaborations will come out of this, and I am excited to see what emerges next from these conversations. I will have more to share in the fall about this!

227th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A)

The [General Assembly of the PCUSA](#) meets this summer, the theme is *Persevering Towards Wholeness* and the scripture passage is from Revelation, 22 - *the leaves of the trees are for the healing of the nations*. The Assembly will be held in two parts, a virtual “week” of committee meetings June 22-24, a few days for travel, and then in-person meetings in Milwaukee, WI June 27-July 2. You can follow along for Assembly news via the PCUSA social media handles, and by subscribing to the GA “On the Road” newsletter at this [link](#). We will also post information on our social media handles about our commissioners and their work. During the in-person days in Milwaukee, we will gather our commissioners together with the two other Presbyteries in New England for a shared meal, and also attend our Synod of the Northeast luncheon together.

The national office of our denomination and its ministry is going through a season of incredible change and transition with the unification process which will be completed at this GA between the former Office of the General Assembly and the former Presbyterian Mission Agency. They are now combined into the new agency, [Presbyterian Life and Witness](#). I expect that we will learn more about this new agency at the General Assembly and have quite a bit of information to

bring back to you. Please hold the Assembly, its work and discernment, and our commissioners, Rev. Kevin White, Elder Rachelle Lee, and YAD Ella Kimberly, alongside Kate and I as support staff, in your prayers as we work and serve together this summer. Our commissioners will be commissioned at our virtual Presbytery meeting in June. Stay tuned for that info!

Thanksgiving

I want to offer words of thanksgiving to all of those who are going “off” committees and teams of the Presbytery at this meeting and to those who are joining or renewing their service. It is harder and harder each year to engage the many volunteers who serve our Presbytery, because as we all know, everyone is under incredible amounts of stress and loss of time. This is a challenge all volunteer-supported organizations are having during this time of massive cultural shifts and upheaval. I do not take the service that those who can offer it to the Presbytery lightly and I want to say that I always love working with you, I learn from each of you, and I am enriched deeply by our friendships and sharing of life and ministry together. The gift of time, talent, energy, imagination and love you offer to this Presbytery and its shared ministry to the region we have been assigned to steward is an immeasurable gift. Thank you for all that you do and for all that you are!

Finally, as we turn towards the summer months that offer opportunities for rest and renewal, please know I am holding you in my prayers. This really is a time of incredible and heartbreaking challenges that we are living through. I know so many of your hearts are broken into pieces so much of the time, my heart has been too. This is also a time where something new is being birthed, hard as it is to see. The question is, where will we be, and how will we lead? What faithful witness will we offer? Our most important task this time is deep prayerful and community-shared attentiveness to the Gospel. Fidelity to the Way of Jesus is our guidepost for this time. I remain deeply grateful to be alongside this Presbytery and each of you who continue to offer bravery, clarity, and conviction of witness for the time we are in. Please keep me in your prayers too.

Report of the Stated Clerk

Rev. Kate Carlisle, stated clerk, reported. A written report has been distributed informing Presbytery of the following items:

1. The Rev. Mark Porizky has renounced the jurisdiction of the PC(USA) as of January 18, 2026, when he was ordained and installed as Pastor of First Congregational Church of Stonington (The Road Church), in the Fellowship of Northeast Congregational Christian Churches. Rev. Porizky notified me of this matter on January 29. According to the Book of Order, “When a minister of the Word and Sacrament accepts or continues membership of any character in another denomination, except as provided in this Constitution, the presbytery shall record the fact and delete the minister of the Word and Sacrament's name from the roll. Renunciation of jurisdiction shall remove the minister of the Word and Sacrament from membership and ordered ministry and shall terminate the exercise of that ministry.” (G-2.0509)
2. We held another Session Clerks’ Gathering for Minutes Review on January 26. About ¾ of clerks have made major progress on 2024 Minutes Review. I will bring an update on Minutes Review progress to the May meeting.
3. Session clerks have also received information about Annual Statistics reporting to the Office of the General Assembly, due February 17. I will bring a summary report to the May meeting.
4. Please submit the 2026 Terms of Call/Pastoral Compensation report to me by March 1. Please use the worksheet appended to the [2026 Pastoral Compensation Policy](#), or submit information via the [Google form](#), rather than using older worksheets.

Rev. Carlisle also gave verbal notice of Rev. Porizky’s renunciation of jurisdiction.

Rev. Carlisle introduced a number of overtures to the 227th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), for consideration for PSNE concurrence.

Presbytery **voted to concur** with [OVT-032], On Reinstating the Immigrant Attorney Position, from the Synod of the Northeast.

Presbytery **voted to concur** with [OVT-002] On Taking Action to Repudiate Christian Nationalism and Affirm Our Faith Commitments, from the Presbytery of San Jose.

Presbytery **voted to concur** with [OVT-003] On Confession, Repentance and Renewed Theological Engagement Regarding HIV/AIDS and Human Sexuality Overture, from the Presbytery of the Cascades. Presbytery voted to concur with [OVT-006] Calling for a New Missiological Statement for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), from the Presbytery of the Cascades.

Presbytery **voted to concur** with [OVT-007] On Seeking God's Peace Through Nuclear Disarmament in the 21st Century, from the Presbytery of Mission.

Presbytery **voted to concur** with [OVT-009] On Access to Healthcare, from Cherokee Presbytery.

Presbytery **voted to concur** with [OVT-013] Recognition that Israel has Violated the International Law Prohibiting Genocide, from the Presbytery of the Redwoods.

Presbytery **voted to concur** with [OVT-027] Commemorating the 250th Anniversary of the American Revolution, from the Presbytery of Northeast New Jersey.

The following additional written reports have been distributed to the presbytery for information:

Report of the Roundtable

The Roundtable met on December 9 and January 13. The following are general updates, discussions, and items approved by the Roundtable for Presbytery operations:

- **Meeting Logistics:** The agenda and the September 9, 2025, minutes were approved. The 2026 Stated Meeting schedule was set for February 10 (Zoom), May 9 (In-person), and October 27 (In-person).
 - ▶ Roundtable **VOTED** to accept the proposed docket for the February 10 meeting with edits to be made by Kate and Shannan as needed.
 - ▶ MLK, Springfield, is planning to host the May meeting. A host for the fall meeting has not been identified.
 - ▶ Roundtable discussed the possibility of including breakout groups for relational meetings, small group conversations, or another connection opportunity. This will be added as a break in business if the docket allows.
- **Staff & Leadership Updates:**
 - ▶ The Roundtable approved the **2026 Terms of Call** for Rev. Kate Carlisle and Rev. Dr. Shannan Vance-Ocampo "with much gratitude."
 - ▶ At the time of the December meeting, Personnel was conducting annual reviews for the General Presbyter and Stated Clerk, with a shift toward a mid-year review process in 2026.
- **General Assembly Elections:** The Roundtable **voted** to elect Rev. Kevin White (Teaching Elder Commissioner) and Ella Kimberly (Young Adult Advisory Delegate) for the General Assembly.

- **Committee Updates** (from December and January meetings combined):
 - CPM: Reported on changes to the ministry preparation process and the current difficulty for certified candidates in finding calls.
 - Antiracism Team: Training with Rev. Jermaine Ross-Allam is scheduled for February 28, 2026.
 - Nominating: There is an urgent need for new members following Jane Esterline's resignation and the upcoming end of Nicole Aronson Champagne's term as chair.
 - Personnel/Trustees: Mark gave an update about the process for developing a job description for Presbytery Administrator. One question was accountability - personnel is recommending that the person in this role be supervised by Shannan and accountable to Personnel and Trustees. Trustees recommended doing an open search for this position. Roundtable discussed a number of items related to hours and compensation.

- **Job Description for Presbytery Administrator**
 - Roundtable VOTED to approve an amended job description.
 - Roundtable voted to open the search for thirty days via the PSNE newsletter, and to authorize the personnel committee, to identify one to three candidates for an interview, and to authorize personnel to select a finalist to bring for Roundtable approval.
 - Roundtable will plan to call a special meeting if practical when a finalist is identified.

Respectfully Submitted,
Mildred McNeill and Christopher Tate, Roundtable Co-Chairs

Report of the Personnel Committee

Annual Reviews

Since the last stated meeting of the Presbytery, the Personnel Committee has focused on establishing a consistent, sustainable personnel review process.

During this period, the committee:

- Developed a structured personnel review process
- Invited feedback from relevant committees for each staff role
- Reviewed staff self-reflections and identified themes to inform goal setting for 2026

In February, Personnel Committee members will meet with PSNE staff to share review information and complete goal setting for 2026.

The committee will bring any recommendations that require Presbytery action forward at a future meeting.

PSNE Administrative Role

In response to PSNE guidance and approval, the Personnel Committee, in consultation with the PSNE Board of Trustees and PSNE staff, developed a job description for the PSNE Administrator. A presbytery-wide open search has begun, and any interested applicants may apply via psne.org. The application period for this role will conclude at the end of February. Following, members of the Personnel Committee will meet with applicants and select a person to fill the role.

Report from the Temporary Administrator

The past several months have been very productive, focusing a significant amount of time working with our accounting group - Jitasa, redesigning the chart of accounts for the presbytery. These efforts will

result in future reporting being more timely and follow the annual budget. I have also been working with the Trustees to secure financial review services for 2022 forward, which required securing access to a prior accounting system. Per Capita billing has been overhauled and notices went out to sessions about any payments in arrears from 2023-2025, requesting either payment in full or a request for relief.

Within the next 2-3 weeks, the fruit of these labors will result in a preliminary set of 2025 financial statements showing a more complete picture of where PSNE stands financially. I hoped to have these statements in time for this presbytery meeting but this is not possible. The report for 2025 will include a balance sheet noting historic and current fund allocations, giving the trustees and the presbytery a better grasp of unrestricted fund balances. These fund allocations include: Ministerial Relief, New Church Development, MLK Church Community Center, and COM Special Projects. They will show as “Board Restricted” assets, as they were in financial statements prior to 2023 when Jitasa was engaged.

I look forward to continuing in this role as long as it is helpful to PSNE and to working with Dan Blackford who is being elected as treasurer. Special thanks to Philip Phiri, for his service in that role for many years, a role that changed significantly during his tenure.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions related to the financial administration of the presbytery.

Peace & Blessings,
Rev. David Bennett, Temporary Administrator

Report from the Mission and Ministries Commission of Synod of the Northeast

Meeting January 30-31, 2026

Living into the new vision--Re-imagining the church in the world

Synod working theme for 2026: Becoming what God is calling forth (Philippians 1:6)

A new year has begun after the Synod meeting adoption (November 15, 2025) of new vision/structure for synod, which will undergo implementation this year toward election of Synod assembly for governing purposes—with the elimination of the Commission on Mission+Ministry. There will be ongoing quarterly updates on that process which we will share to the presbytery.

The Synod website has been transformed to reflect the new Vision and structure—
check it out <https://synodne.org>

Our PSNE own **Rev TJ DeMarco** has accepted the position of interim stated clerk of the Synod through May 2026, after Nancy Talbot’s conclusion of 12 years in that role for synod.

Rev TJ provided great support to this opening meeting of the synod.

The Commission unanimously approved an overture to the General Assembly directing the Unified Agency to reinstate the **position of staff attorney for immigration** –a vital resource to congregations and middle governing bodies which had been eliminated in the recent GA restructure.

A recent **training for church Treasurers** provided by the synod attracted 248 people. The recording is on the Synod’s YouTube channel as well as other past recordings of synod educational offerings:
[SYNOD OF THE NORTHEAST - YouTube](#)

A wide variety of grants to ministries throughout the synod were evaluated and approved for **campus ministry, youth and young adult leadership development, and one ecumenical/interfaith project.**

Cooperative projects between congregations and presbyteries are particularly welcomed. Grant information is available on the synod website.

Closing Worship for the two day meeting was led by Rev Sarah Craven –in the spirit of Martin Luther King, Jr evoking inspiration for the living of these days in faith and reliance upon Scripture.

Lisa Baker, current Moderator of Synod

Chris Foster (cjfosterri@gmail.com), PSNE Synod Commission representative

Old or New Business

No old or new business.

Presbytery **adjourned** without objection and the Moderator closed the assembly in prayer at 7:29pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Kate Carlisle, stated clerk

[The remainder of the page is intentionally left blank.]

Policy on Administrative Commissions

This policy is related to the creation of administrative commissions for the purposes of installations and/or ordinations to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament. The process for the organization of administrative commissions for any other purpose is outlined in the bylaws of the Presbytery.

1. The Presbytery has delegated the function of establishing the Administrative Commission for installations and ordinations to the Commission on Ministry (COM).
2. It is the responsibility of the person being installed and/or ordained to:
 - a. Consult with the Moderator of the Presbytery and the Stated Clerk to determine if the day and time they are considering is viable.
 - b. Work with their local congregational leadership in organizing the worship service.
 - c. Submit a completed “Administrative Commission Planning Worksheet” to the COM at least one month prior to the proposed date for the worship service. This can be done through the Stated Clerk, clerk@psne.orgThe COM will not approve any plans for an installation and/or ordination without prior consultation and time considerations.
3. The Commission shall be composed of five to seven members, including the Moderator (or Vice Moderator if not available), to serve on the commission to ordain and/or install, in numbers of teaching and ruling elders as equally as possible. There must be at least two (2) minister members of the Presbytery and two (2) elders representing two different congregations in the Presbytery plus at least one more minister or elder.
4. The Stated Clerk provides the necessary materials for the individual to be installed and/or ordained. They are also accessible on the PSNE website. The Stated Clerk can be reached at clerk@psne.org
5. The person being installed and/or ordained is responsible for all organization and details of the worship service. The Presbytery will put out an invitation to the worship service to all members of the Presbytery electronically and via social media. It is customary for the individual being installed and/or ordained to consult with either the Stated Clerk and/or the General Presbyter regarding details of the worship service.
6. The order of worship is guided by the instructions in the Directory for Worship in the Book of Order and the worship service examples in the PC(U.S.A.) Book of Common Worship.
7. The offering at the installation and/or ordination is designated for the clergy and seminarians relief fund of the Presbytery. The Presbytery staff will provide information to be included in the bulletin for the worship service about this offering.

8. Prior to the worship service for an installation and/or ordination, the Moderator will lead a brief meeting of the Administrative Commission to approve the installation and/or ordination.
9. After the installation and/or ordination, the Moderator will provide written and signed minutes to the Stated Clerk for inclusion in the next report of the Stated Clerk to the Presbytery.
10. Guests who are not members of the Presbytery may participate in the installation and/or ordination service. They cannot be members of the Administrative Commission but may be enrolled as corresponding members. This applies to clergy who are members of other Presbyteries in the PC(U.S.A.), ecumenical and/or interfaith clergy.

Administrative Commission Planning Worksheet
For an Ordination and/or Installation of a Minister of Word and Sacrament

Please use this form as you invite **five to seven members**, including the Moderator (or Vice Moderator if not available), to serve on the commission to ordain and/or install, in numbers of teaching and ruling elders as equally as possible. There must be at least two (2) minister members of the Presbytery and two (2) elders representing two different churches in the Presbytery plus at least one more minister or elder. Send the completed worksheet to the Stated Clerk for COM approval of your commission.

Name of Candidate/Minister to be Ordained/Installed:

Place of Ordination/Installation:

Date and Time of Worship:

Ministers on the Commission (members of PSNE):

Name:	Ministry context:
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	

Elders on the Commission (representing unique congregations):

Name:	Congregation:
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	

Corresponding Members (ministers who aren't PSNE members - optional):

Name:	Presbytery or denomination:
1.	
2.	
3.	

Other Worship Leaders:

Name:	Church affiliation:
1.	
2.	
3.	

Commission on Ministry

General Guiding Principles

Approved February 10, 2026



**THE PRESBYTERY OF
SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND**

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Resources and Policies

Please refer to the Presbytery website for all current resources and policies related to the work of the Commission on Ministry that are updated and approved.

Pastoral Searches

Because these resources are updated frequently, an electronic resource file will be provided to Interim and Pastoral Nominating Committees by the COM at the time of training.

Theology of Ministry

The Commission on Ministry is guided by the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in the roles and responsibilities between those who participate in the life of congregations, pastoral leadership, the Presbytery and Sessions.

Marks of Church Membership from the Book of Order, the Ministry of Members G-1.0304:

Membership in the Church of Jesus Christ is a joy and a privilege. It is also a commitment to participate in Christ's mission. A faithful member bears witness to God's love and grace and promises to be involved responsibly in the ministry of Christ's Church. Such involvement includes:

- proclaiming the good news in word and deed,
- taking part in the common life and worship of a congregation,
- lifting one another up in prayer, mutual concern, and active support,
- studying Scripture and the issues of Christian faith and life,
- supporting the ministry of the church through the giving of money, time, and talents,
- demonstrating a new quality of life within and through the church,
- responding to God's activity in the world through service to others,
- living responsibly in the personal, family, vocational, political, cultural, and social relationships of life,
- working in the world for peace, justice, freedom, and human fulfillment,
- caring for God's creation,
- participating in the governing responsibilities of the church, and
- reviewing and evaluating regularly the integrity of one's membership, and considering ways in which one's participation in the worship and service of the church may be increased and made more meaningful.

From the Book of Order on the definition of a Minister of Word and Sacrament G-2.0501:

Ministers of the Word and Sacrament (also called teaching elders and pastors) shall in all things be committed to teaching the faith in word and deed and equipping the saints for the work of ministry (Eph. 4:12). They may serve in a variety of ministries, as authorized by the presbytery. When they serve as preachers and teachers of the Word, they shall preach and teach the faith of the church, so that the people are shaped by the pattern of the gospel and strengthened for witness and service. When they serve at font and table, they shall interpret and "show forth" the mysteries of grace in word and

action, lifting the people's vision toward the hope of God's new creation. When they serve as pastors, they shall support the people in the disciplines of the faith amid the struggles of daily life. When they serve as presbyters, they shall participate in the responsibilities of governance, seeking always to discern the mind of Christ and to build up Christ's body through devotion, debate, and decision.

From the Book of Order on the responsibilities of ministry of the Word and Sacrament G-2.0504:

When ministers of the Word and Sacrament are called as pastor, co-pastor, or associate pastor of a congregation, they are to be responsible for a quality of life and relationships that commends the gospel to all persons and that communicates its joy and justice. They are responsible for studying, teaching, and preaching the Word, for celebrating Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and for praying with and for the congregation. With the ruling elders, they are to encourage people in the worship and service of God; to equip and enable them for their tasks within the church and their mission in the world; to exercise pastoral care, devoting special attention to the poor, the sick, the troubled, and the dying; to participate in governing responsibilities, including leadership of the congregation in implementing the principles of participation and inclusiveness in the decision-making life of the congregation, and its task of reaching out in concern and service to the life of the human community as a whole. With the deacons they are to share in the ministries of compassion, witness, and service. In addition to these pastoral duties, they are responsible for sharing in the ministry of the church in councils higher than the session and in ecumenical relationships.

On the Role of the Presbytery from G-3.03

The presbytery is the council serving as a corporate expression of the church within a certain district and is composed of all the congregations and ministers of the Word and Sacrament within that district. The presbytery shall adopt and communicate to the sessions a plan for determining how many ruling elders each session should elect as commissioners to presbytery, with a goal of numerical parity of ministers of the Word and Sacrament and ruling elders. This plan shall require each session to elect at least one commissioner and shall take into consideration the size of congregations as well as a method to fulfill the principles of participation and representation found in F-1.0403 and G- 3.0103. Ruling elders elected as officers of the presbytery shall be enrolled as members during the period of their service. A presbytery may enroll, or may provide by its own rule for the enrollment of, ruling elders during terms of elected service to the presbytery or its congregations.

The presbytery is responsible for the government of the church throughout its district, and for assisting and supporting the witness of congregations to the sovereign activity of God in the world, so that all congregations become communities of faith, hope, love, and witness. As it leads and guides the witness of its congregations, the presbytery shall keep before it the marks of the Church (F-1.0302), the notes by which Presbyterian and Reformed communities have identified themselves through history (F-1.0303) and the six Great Ends of the Church (F-1.0304).

In light of this charge, the presbytery has responsibility and power to:

a. *provide that the Word of God may be truly preached and heard.* This responsibility shall include organizing, receiving, merging, dismissing, and dissolving congregations in consultation with their members; overseeing congregations without pastors; establishing pastoral relationships and dissolving them; guiding the preparation of those preparing to become ministers of the Word and Sacrament; establishing and maintaining those ecumenical relationships that will enlarge the life and mission of the church in its district; providing encouragement, guidance, and resources to congregations in the areas of mission, prophetic witness, leadership development, worship, evangelism, and responsible administration to the end that the church's witness to the love and grace of God may be heard in the world.

b. *provide that the Sacraments may be rightly administered and received.* This responsibility shall include authorizing the celebration of the Lord's Supper at its meetings at least annually and for fellowship groups, new church developments, and other non-congregational entities meeting within its bounds; authorizing and training specific ruling elders to administer or preside at the Lord's Supper when it deems it necessary to meet the needs for the administration of the Sacrament; and exercising pastoral care for the congregations and members of presbytery in order that the Sacraments may be received as a means of grace, and the presbytery may live in the unity represented in the Sacraments.

c. *nurture the covenant community of disciples of Christ.* This responsibility shall include ordaining, receiving, dismissing, installing, removing, and disciplining its members who are ministers of the Word and Sacrament; commissioning ruling elders to limited pastoral service; promoting the peace and harmony of congregations and inquiring into the sources of congregational discord; supporting congregations in developing the graces of generosity, stewardship, and service; assisting congregations in developing mission and participating in the mission of the whole church; taking jurisdiction over the members of dissolved congregations and granting transfers of their membership to other congregations; warning and bearing witness against error in

doctrine and immorality in practice within its bounds; and serving in judicial matters in accordance with the Rules of Discipline.

Relationship with Sessions G-3.0303

Presbytery, being composed of the ministers of the Word and Sacrament and commissioners elected by the session of congregations within its district, has a particular responsibility to coordinate, guide, encourage, support, and resource the work of its congregations for the most effective witness to the broader community. In order to accomplish this responsibility, the presbytery has authority to:

- a. develop strategy for the mission of the church in its district;
- b. control the location of new congregations and of congregations desiring to move as well as to divide, dismiss, or dissolve congregations in consultation with their members;
- c. establish minimum compensation standards, including provision for dissolution terms, pastoral calls and for those serving in temporary pastoral service, Certified Christian Educators and Certified Associate Christian Educators within the presbytery;
- d. counsel with a session concerning reported difficulties within a congregation, including:
 - i. advising the session as to appropriate actions to be taken to resolve the reported difficulties,
 - ii. offering to help as a mediator, and
- e. acting to correct the difficulties if requested to do so by the session or if the session is unable or unwilling to do so, following the procedural safeguards of the Church Discipline;
- f. assume original jurisdiction in any situation in which it determines that session cannot exercise its authority. After a thorough investigation, and after full opportunity to be heard has been accorded to the session, the presbytery may conclude that the session of a congregation is unable or unwilling to manage its affairs wisely, and may appoint an administrative commission with the full power of session. This commission shall assume original jurisdiction of the existing session, if any, which shall cease to act until such time as the presbytery shall otherwise direct.
- g. consider and act upon requests from congregations for permission to take the actions regarding real property as described in G-4.0206.

A Note about the Form of Government in the Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), this Handbook and Categories of Pastoral Leadership

The new Form of Government of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was established in 2010. Previous COM Handbooks from this Presbytery have not reflected these changes. Each Presbytery now must have a Manual of Operations for Commissions such as the Commission on Ministry which details the operating procedures in that local Presbytery. While previous iterations of this handbook in the Presbytery of Southern New England (PSNE) have had much guidance from the Book of Order, there is now freedom to establish procedures that work in our local context. This manual reflects these procedures and is followed by a series of policies that may be updated by the Commission on Ministry as it sees fit. Any policy updates or changes will be reported to and brought to the Presbytery as appropriate and required. We have also provided a listing of resources to accompany this manual.

The new Form of Government no longer details the many different types of pastoral positions that may be held. For active ministry there are only installed and temporary categories (which can take various forms based on the needs of the congregation). Beyond that are members at large or retired clergy. The Commission on Ministry is guided by the categories and types of membership/leadership for ministry of Word and Sacrament as outlined in G-2.0503 - 4:

G-2.0504 Presbytery and the Minister of the Word and Sacrament

As the Lord has set aside through calling certain members to be ministers of the Word and Sacrament, so the church confirms that call through the action of the presbytery. The presbytery shall determine whether a particular work may be helpful to the church in mission and is a call to validated ministry requiring ordination as a minister of the Word and Sacrament. In the performance of that ministry, the minister of the Word and Sacrament shall be accountable to the presbytery. Ministers of the Word and Sacrament have membership in the presbytery by action of the presbytery itself, and no pastoral relationship may be established, changed, or dissolved without the approval of the presbytery.

G-2.0503 Categories of Membership

A minister of the Word and Sacrament is a member of a presbytery and shall be engaged in a ministry validated by that presbytery, a member-at-large as determined by the presbytery, or honorably retired.

a. Engaged in a Validated Ministry A validated ministry shall:

- (1) demonstrate conformity with the mission of God's people in the world as set forth in Holy Scripture, The Book of Confessions, and the Book of Order of this church;
- (2) serve and aid others, and enable the ministry of others;
- (3) give evidence of theologically informed fidelity to God's Word;
- (4) be carried on in accountability for its character and conduct to the presbytery in addition to any organizations, agencies, and institutions served; and
- (5) include responsible participation in the deliberations, worship, and work of the presbytery and in the life of a congregation of this church or a church in correspondence with the PC(USA) (G-5.0201).

When ministers of the Word and Sacrament are called to validated ministry beyond the jurisdiction of the church, they shall give evidence of a quality of life that helps to share the ministry of the good news. They shall participate in a congregation, in their presbytery, and in ecumenical relationships and shall be eligible for election to the higher councils of the church and to the boards and agencies of those councils.

The presbytery shall review annually the work of all ministers of the Word and Sacrament engaged in validated ministries outside the congregation.

b. Member-at-large

A member-at-large is a minister of the Word and Sacrament who has previously been engaged in a validated ministry, and who now, without intentional abandonment of the exercise of ministry, is no longer engaged in a ministry that complies with all the criteria in G-2.0503a. A minister of the Word and Sacrament may be designated a member-at-large because he or she is limited in his or her ability to engage in a ministry fulfilling all of the criteria for a validated ministry due to family responsibilities or other individual circumstances recognized by the presbytery. A member-at-large shall comply with as many of the criteria in G-2.0503a as possible and shall actively participate in the life of a congregation. A member-at-large is entitled to take part in the meetings of the presbytery and to speak, vote, and hold office. The status of member-at-large shall be reviewed annually.

c. Honorably Retired

Upon request of a member of presbytery, the presbytery may designate the member honorably retired because of age or physical or mental disability.

G-2.0504 Pastoral Relationships

When ministers of the Word and Sacrament are called as pastor, co-pastor, or associate pastor of a congregation, they are to be responsible for a quality of life and relationships that commends the gospel to all persons and that communicates its joy and justice. They are responsible for studying, teaching, and preaching the Word, for celebrating Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and for praying with and for the congregation. With the ruling elders, they are to encourage people in the worship and service of God; to equip and enable them for their tasks within the church and their mission in the world; to exercise pastoral care, devoting special attention to the poor, the sick, the troubled, and the dying; to participate in governing responsibilities, including leadership of the congregation in implementing the principles of participation and inclusiveness in the decision-making life of the congregation, and its task of reaching out in concern and service to the life of the human community as a whole. With the deacons they are to share in the ministries of compassion, witness, and service. In addition to these pastoral duties, they are responsible for sharing in the ministry of the church in councils higher than the session and in ecumenical relationships.

A. Installed Pastoral Relationships

The installed pastoral relationships are pastor, co-pastor, and associate pastor. A minister of the Word and Sacrament may be installed in a pastoral relationship for an indefinite period or for a designated term determined by the presbytery in consultation with the congregation and specified in the call. When a congregation determines that its strategy for mission under the Word so requires, the congregation may call additional pastors. Such additional pastors shall be called co-pastors or associate pastors, and the duties of each pastor and the relationship between the pastors of the congregation shall be determined by the session with the approval of the presbytery. When a congregation has two pastors serving as co-pastors, and the relationship of one of them is dissolved, the other remains as pastor. The relationship of an associate pastor to a congregation is not dependent upon that of a pastor. An associate pastor is ordinarily not eligible to be the next installed pastor of that congregation.

B. Temporary Pastoral Relationships

Temporary pastoral relationships are approved by the presbytery and do not carry a formal call or installation. When a congregation does not have a pastor, or while the pastor is unable to perform her or his duties, the session, with the approval of presbytery, may obtain the services of a minister of the Word and Sacrament, candidate, or ruling elder in a temporary pastoral relationship. No formal call shall be issued and no formal installation shall take place.

Titles and terms of service for temporary relationships shall be determined by the presbytery. A person serving in a temporary pastoral relationship is invited for a specified period not to exceed

thirty-six months in length, which is renewable with the approval of the presbytery. A minister of the Word and Sacrament employed in a temporary pastoral relationship is ordinarily not eligible to serve as the next installed pastor, co-pastor, or associate pastor.

C. Pastoral Relationship Completion - When any relationship ends, no non-disclosure agreement shall be allowable. These are now officially prohibited by the Book of Order.

A non-disclosure agreement, also known as a confidentiality agreement, is an agreement that outlines confidential knowledge, or information that is to remain confidential. Such an agreement binds the party or parties who have signed it and prevents them from discussing any information included in the contract with anyone not authorized by the agreement.

D. Exceptions

A presbytery may determine that its mission strategy permits a minister of the Word and Sacrament currently called as an Associate Pastor to be eligible to serve as the next installed pastor or co-pastor, or a minister of the Word and Sacrament employed in a temporary pastoral relationship to be eligible to serve as the next installed pastor, co-pastor, or associate pastor. Presbyteries that permit this eligibility shall establish such relationships only by a three-fourths vote of the members of presbytery present and voting. [It should be noted that the Presbytery of Southern New England has determined that this practice is not the norm and that Interim/Transitional Pastors should maintain solely that role.]

G-1.0104 Other Forms of Corporate Witness (Immigrant Fellowships, Worshiping Communities, etc.)

In circumstances where the formation of a traditional ecclesiastically and legally organized congregation is not desired or deemed appropriate, and a worshiping community has been formally recognized by a presbytery according to its own definition, presbyteries and congregations may work together with such a group to provide supervision and support. Such recognized groups shall be under the mutually agreed upon oversight of a minister of the Word and Sacrament approved by the presbytery, shall include at least one ruling or teaching elder in their chosen leadership, and shall function under the financial, legal, and disciplinary sponsorship of an ecclesial council (either a session or a presbytery). The sponsoring council shall, in consultation with the worshiping community, authorize any celebrations of the sacraments within

the group in accordance with the Directory of Worship. Membership records for group participation desiring to be formally enrolled as baptized, active, or affiliate members in the PC(USA) shall be maintained by the sponsoring council. Such groups shall not hold property, and may not undertake any financial, legal, or contractual obligations, apart from their sponsoring council. They shall adhere to the sponsoring council's required policies on sexual misconduct, harassment, child and youth protection, and antiracism. Presbyteries shall determine appropriate means of representation and participation of such groups in and through the sponsoring councils (session and/or presbytery).

Dissolution of the Pastoral Relationship (G-2.09)

Please see the Presbytery policy on dissolution of pastoral relationships.

Provision for Temporary Pastoral Leadership (G-2.0504b)

A. Moderator

The COM shall appoint a moderator for the session while a church is without an installed pastor. Normally, a moderator is only assigned until the arrival of an interim pastor, who then will become moderator of the Session during their service as interim pastor. If the COM deems it appropriate, the associate pastor, parish associate or stated supply can serve as the moderator of the session. All moderators of the session must be members of PSNE.

See the presbytery website for the most up-to-date honoria and mileage information, which is updated yearly. Supply preachers (those filling in a pulpit on an occasional basis for an in-between time, vacation, sabbatical or during continuing ed of installed pastor can also be located on the presbytery website).

B. Temporary Supply

When permanent pastoral leadership is unavailable, the pulpit may be filled by the session on a week-to-week basis with a minister of the Word and Sacrament, candidate, or ruling elder in a temporary pastoral relationship. Information regarding possible temporary supply is available through the COM chairperson and on the COM website. A temporary supply may be a candidate for the interim position. The specified period is not to exceed thirty-six months in length.

When the temporary pastoral relationship ends, no non-disclosure agreement shall be allowed. A covenant of closure shall be completed by the pastor and the congregation.

C. Stated Supply

In some situations COM, after consultation with the session, may recommend to the presbytery that a stated supply pastor be appointed to serve a vacant church that is not seeking an installed pastor. The appointment is for a period not exceeding one year. A stated supply can be re-appointed following recommendation of COM, presbytery action, and concurrence by the session.

Review of Stated Supply Relationships

The COM shall review each stated supply relationship through an annual review with session and pastor. This review should occur three months before the end of each contract period.

D. Interim Pastor or Interim Associate Pastor

When a pastor has left a church, regardless of the reason, the session is faced with several options available to it as to how to replace that pastor. The most important first step it should take is to invite COM to explain the pros and cons of the various alternatives and assist in the decision-making as to what is best for that church which includes a financial review. A representative of the COM will visit the session to explain the interim process and to encourage the session to set goals for the interim period, and prepare either a job description OR a Ministry Discernment Profile (MDP) depending on the needs of the congregation (the COM liaison will assist with this determination). The General Presbyter and COM liaison will train the interim search team before they can begin their work and provide them with an extensive online resource folder to assist them in the search.

The actions of the IPNC will be absolutely confidential. This does not preclude general informational reports to the congregation concerning progress, but names or locations of candidates under consideration (or rejected) will not be disclosed to anyone not a member of the IPNC or COM. Members of the congregation may make suggestions as to possible candidates but will not receive a report as to the action of the IPNC on their suggestion.

1. Why an Interim Pastor?

In every transition between pastors, several things need to happen that an interim pastor can facilitate. Congregations need to understand their history, particularly as it relates to former pastors, both recent and past. It is important to consider the church's present identity and its future possibilities. There is a need to develop an enthusiastic commitment to new pastoral leadership and to the opportunities and challenges of a different future for their church.

2. Interim Pastor Selection Committee

The session should appoint an Interim Pastor Nominating Committee (IPNC) of three to five members, consisting of the majority of members from the Session. Other members may be recruited without regard to their present offices. In some cases the session has assigned this task to the Personnel Committee.

3. Expectations of Interim Period

Churches go into an interim period with different opportunities and needs. The session, in consultation with their assigned COM representative, should identify what they would most like to accomplish during the interim. Some possibilities include but are not limited to:

- Experience a different pastoral personality and leadership style

- Renew or re-invigorate the congregation's understanding of mission, its local context and the nature of 21st century ministry (Complete Mission Study in consultation with the COM)
- Review staffing and budget for the future (right-sizing)
- Address new and emerging needs around worship (including time, location, community needs, etc.)
- Deal with any unresolved problems that stand in the way of ministry
- Update church records
- Address building maintenance and needs
- Revise/review administrative practices and stewardship

The session should inform the selection committee of these areas of focus.

4. Writing a Position Description

The session should approve a position description OR Ministry Discernment Profile (MDP) and then forward it to COM for approval. The Interim Pastor is a contract, not installed position, therefore responsible to and employed by the Session not the Congregation.

5. Candidates

COM will consult with the Interim Pastor Search Committee on persons qualified to be interim pastor for the church. The guidelines to be considered for an interim pastor are as follows:

- A positive Executive and criminal reference check
- Completion of acceptable interim/transitional ministry training It is preferable for the candidate to have served at least two successful interim pastorates. The COM will work closely with interim search teams on providing feedback on the suitability and training of candidates and evaluating if updated training is needed.
- The Interim Pastor Search Committee will submit names to COM for approval and background checks prior to inviting candidates for a final interview.
- Approval by COM of all persons being considered as an interim pastor is required.

6. Terms of the Contract

After selecting the final candidate, the committee shall meet with them to negotiate the terms of the contract that will define the interim relationship, consulting with COM along the way to be sure the terms fulfill presbytery requirements. The following guidelines are recommended:

- Compensation should be no lower than that of the previous pastor; however it is customary for interim pastors to be paid at higher rates given their additional training and experience.
- Ordinarily the interim pastor will serve until the new pastor is in place. The COM will receive reports every six months from the interim pastor, which will include time to check in with the interim pastor on progress of the congregation. We are available to meet at any time in the process the interim pastor deems necessary.
- The COM will provide a contract to be filled out, following the sample from the Presbytery.

8. Introduction to the Congregation

The committee should prepare an appropriate plan for presenting the interim pastor to the congregation. This may include such steps as a write-up in the church newsletter and a reception after worship. It should include an introduction during regular Sunday worship at which time a representative of the session will welcome the interim pastor. Ordinarily a representative of COM will explain the special provisions of the interim ministry at this worship service. See our resources for a suggested Litany of Beginning.

III. Mission Study

It is important that every congregation engage periodically in a Mission Study and Action Plan. Normally this study process will be conducted under the authority and with the oversight of the Session. There are a variety of ways to engage a mission study and the interim pastor is encouraged to meet early on with the COM liaison to discuss what options are present and would be appropriate for the congregation.

If there is an interim pastor serving a congregation, COM requires a Mission Study and Action Plan be completed during the interim period. Other times it may be useful to do a Mission Study and Action Plan when a congregation is facing a significant change or transition. The COM no longer has a one-sized fits all Mission Study template for congregations given the wide disparity of types of congregations in our Presbytery. The interim pastor should be in touch with the COM liaison from the beginning to discuss and plan for a context-appropriate Mission Study process. The COM maintains updated resources for these to share as needed.

The departing pastor shall not be involved in the conduct of the Mission Study and Action Plan.

The Session has the final authority to approve the Mission Study and Action Plan. A copy of all completed Mission Studies and Action Plans should be shared with COM.

A completed and approved Mission Study is required by the COM prior to the approval of a PNC/APNC. Exceptions to this requirement require COM approval.

Securing New Pastoral Leadership

When it is time to begin a pastoral search for a Congregation, the Session shall reach out to the COM for training. This process is constantly shifting, and so the COM will give the most up-to-date training when searches occur. It is required that all congregations, regardless of type of search for pastoral leadership, be trained by the COM before proceeding. If a congregation proceeds without training, the search forms will not be approved.

Other Staff Relationships

A. Consultation with COM

Churches shall consult with COM when considering hiring any ordained minister (PCUSA or any denomination) to a full or part-time staff ministry position, such as Director of Christian Education/Faith Formation, Director of Youth Ministries, Director of Family Ministries, Director of Music, Director of Child/Day Care as these would fall under specialized or validated ministry categories.

B. Certified Christian Educator (G-2.1103)

1. The Certified Christian Educator is a professional educator who is certified by the denomination.
2. A church may wish to consider Certified Christian Educators as well as ordained/ordained persons for a position in Christian education.
3. Compensation for a Certified Christian Educator needs to meet Presbytery minimums for pastoral calls. Exceptions should be submitted to the COM for consideration.

C. Parish Associates

Please consult with the COM before entering into a parish associate relationship with any member (active or retired) of presbytery or one of our ecumenical partners. Sample parish associate agreements can be provided.

D. Certified Ruling Elders (CRE's)

Please consult with the COM and CPM of the Presbytery of Southern New England for procedure and educational requirements. This falls under our CRE policy.

New CRE's are expected to participate in EMI, Early Ministry Institute.

Consultation

A. Connections with Congregations and Ministries of the Presbytery

The COM is committed to meeting with all congregations and ministries of the Presbytery. We are also responsible to all who serve in specialized and validated ministries as well as members-at-large and honorably retired clergy. The COM assigns formal liaisons to each congregation, new worshipping community or fellowship every year. Liaisons are the first point of contact and will check in with their assigned ministries throughout the year. For those not serving formally in congregations of the Presbytery, please reach out to the co-chairs of the COM, and/or the Stated Clerk and General Presbyter so that we can assist you.

B. Consulting/Coaching/Mediation

The COM has a number of resources and tools available for the variety of situations that can come up in the life of a congregation. The session should contact your COM liaison for resourcing with any needs it may have. The COM has connections with the Synod of the Northeast Mediation Network, the Synod of the Northeast Coaching Network and the 1001 New Worshipping Communities Coaches from the national church office. We also have relationships with our ecumenical partners and can provide referrals for counseling. While resources are most needed in a time of heightened tension or conflict; we strongly encourage pastors and sessions to engage a yearly process of congregational evaluation so as to avail themselves of proactive and positive resourcing to create healthy, vital and growing missional communities of faith. Resources are not always needed when there is a problem-but are a gift to the ongoing health and vitality of congregational life.

Role of COM Regarding Compensation

The COM has the responsibility to study compensation plans for parish teaching elders and to make recommendations to the presbytery concerning minimum terms of call. It shall annually make a recommendation to the presbytery concerning cost-of-living increases and a salary study for the Presbytery concerning parity related to gender and race.

Terms of Call

Minimum requirements for compensation are set annually by the Presbytery at the fall Stated Meeting. Nearly all of our congregations exceed these minimum requirements. Ordinarily non-installed terms of call for clergy are equivalent.

A. Salary/Housing - The presbytery has established a minimum amount for salary and housing for calls. When there is a manse, the Board of Pensions requires the manse allowance to be at least 30% of cash salary for calculation of pension dues. If a housing allowance is provided, the location of housing is at the sole discretion of the Pastor as it is their private residence.

B. Pension/Major Medical Insurance - This is established by the Board of Pensions. It is recommended that dental and vision care is also included.

C. Professional Expense Reimbursement - minimums established annually. The majority of congregations go above the minimum Presbytery requirement.

D. Paid Vacation - At least one month per year, 4 weeks, 4 Sundays.

E. Study Leave - At least two weeks per year and a minimum allowance as set by presbytery. Early Ministry Institute (EMI) is required for the first three years of a first ordained call and is provided by the Synod of the Northeast. Please see their website for information about training and registration. EMI is in addition to Study Leave.

Both are accruable to a maximum of six weeks over a three-year period. Study leave is provided for the purpose of maintaining and improving a teaching elder's ability to perform pastoral or staff specialist functions more effectively, or to contribute to professional growth. Prior consultation with the session is recommended before any study leave is taken.

F. Mileage Reimbursement - to conform with the current IRS reimbursement rate. Please note that in years when the IRS raises the rate, your pastor is continuing to drive as much as they usually do, and so this allowance should be adjusted accordingly.

G. 403b match - A 403b is offered for all plan participants in the Board of Pensions and church staff who are not enrolled in the Board of Pensions. Many congregations offer a match amount on an annual basis. Please contact the regional representative for our Synod for more information and to be enrolled.

H. Other - other items can be negotiated by the pastor and congregation. It is expected that 50% of SECA is reimbursed.

I. Sabbatical and Family Leave Policy - The Presbytery has approved a policy that is required to be included in the Terms of Call.

J. Please use the Compensation Worksheet on the Presbytery website to calculate all items. This is updated annually.

It is encouraged that every congregation provide COLA raises to all staff on an annual basis. If you fall behind on this as a congregation, your call to your pastor will become unsustainable.

F. Leaves of Absence

1. Medical Leave

In keeping with the congregation's promise to provide for the welfare of the pastor, to stand by them in trouble and share their joys, Presbytery of Southern New England requires that congregations provide medical leave care for their pastors. Medical leave is for short-term medical needs that may arise for the clergyperson and/or their immediate family members. COM is always glad to consult as needs arise. Medical leave policies are different from a disability plan (which is administered through the Board of Pensions). If a short-term medical leave needs to be extended to either family or disability leave, the Congregation must consult with the COM for appropriate resourcing and support. Family medical leave is also governed through G-2.0804 in the Book of Order. Congregations are encouraged to take advantage of resources available through state Paid Family Medical Leave programs, and should follow all applicable state laws.

2. Family Leave

Family leave is governed by G-2.0804 in the Book of Order. Additional reasons for offering leave in this manner include, but are not limited to:

- Leave to accommodate the birth, foster placement, or adoption of a child;
- Leave to provide care to an ill or disabled family member;
- Leave to heal following a loss or tragic event.

3. Sabbatical or Other Extended Leaves*

a. Churches shall include in terms of call provision for extended study leave, or sabbatical, every six years.

b. Any pastor planning to be away from a church for an extended period of time (seven weeks or more) on sabbatical or for extended leave, shall consult with COM and receive its concurrence at least 60 days in advance of leaving. Thus the presbytery may be assured of continuing pastoral care and moderator leadership of the session and the congregation. If necessary, COM will consult with and advise the session about the matter.

See sabbatical policy at this link.

**Unused leave is not transferable to another Presbytery.*

Ministers of Word and Sacrament Who Are Not Installed in a Particular Congregation

A. In Relationship with other Churches

Ministers of Word and Sacrament who are not officially related to a particular church shall respect the position of pastor(s) regarding all pastoral functions within the community.

1. Requests to conduct weddings and funerals are not to be accepted until and unless the pastor of the church has issued an invitation for such.
2. The sacraments will be officiated by another Minister of Word and Sacraments only at the request of the local pastor or by permission of presbytery or synod.
3. Ministers of Word and Sacrament, except when on official presbytery business, are neither to counsel with nor advise members of other congregations.
4. Ministers of Word and Sacrament who are not in a pastoral relationship or staff role at a particular ministry are asked to refrain from speaking at or influencing debate/conversation at meetings of the Congregation. As they are members of the Presbytery, they may not vote at such meetings.

Membership in Presbytery

1. In addition to installed pastors, there are three categories of membership: (G-2.0503). Please see the Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for complete descriptions and requirements of all categories of ministry (G-2.0501-G-2.0509).

- Engaged in a Validated Ministry
- Member-at-Large
- Honorably Retired

2. These categories apply to all continuing members, including parish-related ministries and specialized ministries that are validated by action of the presbytery each year. The stated clerk maintains the rolls of each category. The presbytery must annually review and approve the status of all continuing members.

3. Each member will submit an annual statement to COM describing the ministry that would qualify them for continuing membership, and for determining the appropriate category on the rolls. The COM will review these statements and recommend validation of that ministry.

4. Each member shall demonstrate completion of boundaries training and child abuse prevention training or a COM-approved alternative every three years. There is no waiver for these requirements without prior COM approval. In addition, all members must abide by all policies of the Presbytery including background checks.

5. The ministry that each member maintains as part of their mission as a follower of Jesus Christ may be independent of paid employment. It need not be a full-time ministry in order to be considered for validation for membership. Ministry is thus defined as a form of service, not as a form of employment. Tent-making can be considered for validation.

6. The Book of Order G-2.0505 and G-2.0506 establish the guidelines and procedures to be followed when receiving members of other denominations into membership in the Presbytery.

7. Interim Pastors are required to move their membership to PSNE unless there is a special circumstance that necessitates otherwise (and then can be discussed with COM). PCUSA clergy serving within the geographic bounds of PSNE but who are members of other Presbyteries should consult with their Presbytery of membership and the PSNE COM about membership designation.

The Presbytery of Southern New England

Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedures

Approved by Presbytery:
February 10, 2026



**THE PRESBYTERY OF
SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND**

The Presbytery of Southern New England Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedures

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A Note About Language

The language in this policy referring to any person has been changed from the previously “normative” and binary *she/he* language to expansive *they/them* to be fully inclusive of all people and identities.

There are a few exceptions where the binary *she/he* language remains in the text of this policy. These represent direct quotations from the *Book of Order*, which can only be changed by action of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and not the Presbytery.

I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, sexual misconduct has become a public matter, having been previously quietly dispatched or ignored in our Church, a stain on our witness and ministry and a pattern of collective sinful behavior. Presbyteries, Synods and the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) have adopted policies for the prevention and judicial management of these cases. This document applies to the Presbytery of Southern New England, its ministers, commissioned ruling elders, those leading new worshipping communities, immigrant fellowships, committee members, candidates, inquirers, volunteers, members of the Roundtable, the moderators of any of the Presbytery's entities, employees, or any other person carrying out the programs of the Presbytery of Southern New England. This policy reiterates that sexual misconduct investigations of the Presbytery will receive the full attention of its various related constituencies and adherence to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). At the same time, we must acknowledge the painful truth that just because we have a policy, or provide boundary training, or train teams and committees and staff of our Presbytery, that this will not, fully, eliminate misconduct. And so, we commit, alongside this policy, to the ministry of continual reformation of the Church, ourselves, and our communities, toward relationships and systems where the full personhood and dignity of all people are honored and celebrated because all people are made in the image of God, beloved, holy, and whole.

A. Theological Rationale

Under the grace of God and the Lordship of Jesus Christ, the Church and its people are called to behave responsibly in a connectional system that is clear in its expectations and uniform in its discipline. Biblical standards for ethical behavior are based on a combination of love, justice and the equitable distribution of power. Sexual behavior is one aspect of human interaction that must be conducted justly without exploitation. Our faith, under Christ, leads us to decry any interactions where people are treated without love and justice.

The church has grappled since its inception with the tension between judgment and grace as attributes of God's nature. Though grace predominates and forms the motivation of the church's response, judgment and discipline are expected when individual behavior affects other persons and the church body as a whole. To lightly dismiss an instance of sexual misconduct, although it may appear on the surface to be gracious, is really compounding the misconduct. Maintaining silence is unacceptable.

B. Purpose and Scope

1. Purpose

It is the purpose of this policy:

- a. to define sexual misconduct in the Presbytery of Southern New England in alignment with the Book of Order and Standards of Ethical Conduct of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.);

- b. to provide standards for behavior applicable to all members of the Presbytery of Southern New England: ministers, commissioned ruling elders, committee members, those leading new worshipping communities, immigrant fellowships, candidates, inquirers, volunteers, members of the Roundtable, the moderators of any of the Presbytery's entities, employees, or any other person carrying out the programs of the Presbytery of Southern New England;
- c. to provide for measures to prevent the occurrence of sexual misconduct which includes requiring boundary training and sexual abuse prevention training for all ministers, commissioned ruling elders, candidates and inquirers, those leading new worshipping communities, immigrant fellowships, and Presbytery volunteers on a regularized three-year cycle;
- d. to provide the basis for policies and training to be adopted by church Sessions dealing with church members, non-ordained employees and volunteers in accordance with the Book of Order;
- e. to have a system which provides for an expeditious, professional, confidential, and caring response in sexual misconduct situations;
- f. to serve as a companion to the Book of Order but not to supersede any of its provisions.
- g. to also apply to immigrant fellowships and new worshipping communities of the Presbytery.

2. Scope

The persons governed by this policy are all members of the Presbytery of Southern New England: ministers, commissioned ruling elders, committee members, those leading new worshipping communities, immigrant fellowships, candidates, inquirers, volunteers, members of the Presbytery Roundtable, the moderators of any of the Presbytery's entities, employees, or any other person carrying out the programs of the Presbytery of Southern New England.

- a. **Particular Churches:** This policy does not purport to regulate sexual conduct within the congregations, immigrant fellowships and/or new worshipping communities of the Presbytery of Southern New England, but it does apply to the behavior of ministers, commissioned ruling elders, those leading new worshipping communities, immigrant fellowships, and students under the care of the CPM in ministry settings. It is recommended that Sessions adopt policies and training like this one. Sessions are also required to adhere to all requirements for training and policies in the Book of Order. It is the role of the Presbytery, through the Stated Clerk, to keep local Sessions apprised of these requirements and to offer training and resourcing on policy and training on an annual basis. The Presbytery will provide, on a yearly basis, a listing of required policies and training for each congregation per the Book of Order and will track compliance on a yearly basis, through the Stated Clerk.
- b. **Child Protection:** Because of the unique issues involved in monitoring youth and child activities, this policy is not intended to serve as a full child protection policy. All churches must have a Child Protection Policy and Child Sexual Abuse policy and training in place and updated at least every three

years. When new churches are chartered, they are to be given one year from their charter date to adopt an appropriate child protection policy. It is strongly recommended that any entity creating a Child Protection Policy or updating an existing one consult with legal counsel for their state and their insurance provider for additional resources and feedback. Child Protection Policies should include the following guidelines for all paid and all volunteer personnel who work with (or will work with) any minor children including:

- A “Screening Form” and criminal background check for all paid and volunteer individuals working with children and youth.
- An interview process of all child and youth volunteers
- Implement a “two-adult” rule (Does this need to be more specific?)
- Establish a “six-months-at-your-church” rule (minimum)
- Provide for adequate personnel
- Overnight rule ... must pass screening and background checks
- Discuss suspicious behavior with church leader
- Discuss sexual misconduct with all children and youth leaders
- Considerations around electronic means of abuse and harassment

3. Other Policies and Procedures

This policy is to be interpreted and applied consistently with any and all other applicable policies of the Presbytery of Southern New England, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and state, federal, and local law. In particular, no portion of this policy is to be understood or enacted contrary to the Book of Order. The citations herein are from the 2025-2027 Book of Order and shall be understood to refer to any subsequent amendments at the time of the allegation.

II. DEFINITIONS

A. Sexual Misconduct

Sexual misconduct is the comprehensive term used in this policy to cover the following:

1. Child sexual abuse is any contact or interaction between a child under the age of 18 when the child is being used for sexual stimulation of adults. The behavior may or may not involve touching. Sexual behavior between an adult and a child is always considered coerced.
2. Inappropriate sexual conduct is language, visual contact, touching or other behavior judged by the person to be injurious to their physical or emotional health. It involves crossing a boundary the person was attempting to set.
3. Rape is sexual contact by force, threat, intimidation, or coercion. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, the definition is, "The penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ or object of another person, without the consent of the victim."
4. Sexual malfeasance is sexual conduct within a ministerial or professional relationship (e.g., minister with a parishioner, counselor with a client, church employee with a church member, presbytery staff person with a volunteer or employee). It includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors or conduct of a sexual nature, as well as consensual romantic relationships.
5. Sexual harassment is defined by the Presbytery's Anti-Harassment Policy (October 2025), which includes updated definitions of electronic harassment:
 - a. Sexual Harassment: Sexual Harassment is the behavior characterized by the making of unwelcome and/or inappropriate sexual remarks, physical advances, requests for sexual favors, and/or other verbal and/or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment may take many different forms including, but not limited to, verbal, nonverbal, and physical sexual harassment.
 - b. Electronic Harassment: Electronic Harassment is the use of electronic communication to harass a targeted person or group, including, but not limited to, emails, blogs, social networking websites, online games, forums, instant messaging, Zoom, and other virtual conferencing modalities, text messaging, and mobile phone pictures and videos. Harassment perpetrated through these online media have come to be known as "cyber bullying."

B. Presumed Consent

Presumed consent is the assertion that a particular act was between consenting adults. It may apply to relationships where there is no disparity of power, such as spouses or single adults functioning as peers or colleagues. Within this policy presumed consent does not apply between ministers and parishioners, supervisors and supervised, or with anyone involved with performance review, compensation, promotion or continued

employment, even though the parties claim that a consensual agreement exists. The inherent imbalance of power between the minister and the lay person undermines the validity of such consent. If a minister and lay person or supervised person wishes to pursue a consensual romantic relationship, the General Presbyter, COM chairperson(s), or Stated Clerk should be contacted for guidance. In most such circumstances, one or the other must change churches/jobs so that the professional or pastoral relationship is no longer in place.

C. Presbytery Entities Involved in Sexual Misconduct Cases

1. A Process Support person is a person who provides support and emotional and physical presence, to the alleged victim(s) and their family, the accused, family members of the accused, or the congregation involved in a sexual misconduct case. The Process Support person may also provide clarification of the investigative process of the church and the judicial process of the church to the person(s) with whom they work and are assigned by the COM. The role of a Process Support person is not to speak for the party for whom there is a support, but to inform that party of their rights within the investigative process. The Process Support person shall not give advice regarding civil remedies. When requested by the party for whom they are a Process Support person, they may accompany that person to meetings of Presbytery entities when that party is testifying. The Sexual Misconduct Response Team or the Stated Clerk can assist any person or party in an investigative situation in identifying an appropriate Process Support person.

2. The Commission on Ministry continues in its constitutional role as resource to ministers and congregations, particularly where pastoral vacancies occur. When appropriate, the Commission on Ministry is to facilitate the employment of competent temporary leadership to manage any gap pastoral needs and/or resourcing associated with the sexual misconduct case. The Commission facilitates the relations between congregations, ministers, and the Presbytery, and resolves difficulties on behalf of the Presbytery when possible and expedient.

3. The initial reporting may come through to the General Presbyter, the Stated Clerk, or the Commission on Ministry chairperson(s), and each must ensure that the proper steps are taken to bring the process to issue.

4. The Sexual Misconduct Response Team is a group of teaching and ruling elders, elected by the Commission on Ministry, who are available, if requested, for preliminary pastoral consultation with:

- a. the person making the complaint,
- b. the alleged victim(s) and potential family members
- c. the accused, and/or
- d. the affected governing body (on a congregational level this would be the Session)

It has no judicial function, nor should it attempt to assume one. It may maintain contact with those involved in the situation, if requested, but must not interfere with any disciplinary case in process. This team (under the direction of COM) shall be responsible

for the required trainings of Boundary Training and Child Sexual Abuse Prevention in the Presbytery as outlined by the Book of Order, in a three-year cycle. Attendance at required training sessions shall be tracked by the Stated Clerk, alongside the COM or their designee, and reported at the next Presbytery meeting in their written report. Training is to be organized no less than 9 months in advance of the training to allow for advance notice for all who are required to attend and to give feedback to the Budget Team of the Presbytery on cost considerations. This team is available to members of the Presbytery staff in the ways that are outlined in this policy.

5. The Permanent Judicial Commission is the continuing body elected by the Presbytery to conduct trials when an investigating committee files charges. The composition of the PJC is described in D-3.0101. The duties of the PJC are enumerated in the Book of Order.

- a. The moderator of the PJC shall designate a special review committee of three persons as described in D-3.0102.
- b. When the alleged offense meets the definition of sexual abuse (D-7.0901), the Stated Clerk shall immediately communicate the allegation to this special review committee. The special committee shall determine, according to the procedure in D-7.0902, whether the accused is to be placed on administrative leave.
- c. In cases where the allegation is of sexual abuse of a person under the age of eighteen, or of a vulnerable adult, this does not supersede civil mandated reporting requirements.

6. The Investigating Committee is a group defined in the Book of Order (D-7.0501) and appointed by the designated team in the bylaws of the Presbytery. The Investigating Committee is charged under the Church Discipline with conducting a full investigation of an allegation of sexual misconduct, determining whether or not charges are to be filed, and prosecuting the case, if there is one.

7. The Stated Clerk receives the initial written disciplinary allegation and shall notify the Presbytery at its next stated meeting that a complaint has been received, and an Investigating Committee has been formed. The Stated Clerk is required to adhere to all disciplinary processes as outlined in the Book of Order. The Stated Clerk shall work collaboratively with the Commission on Ministry, Sexual Misconduct Response Team, and General Presbyter or their designee on pastoral needs for those affected, whether or not a formal disciplinary process occurs.

8. If at any time in their work, members of the Response Team, Investigating Committee, Permanent Judicial Commission and/or other responsive groups or persons related to a specific investigation or incident in the Presbytery determine that the situation they are addressing is causing the need for them to access mental health resources, they shall let the Stated Clerk and/or General Presbyter know of their needs. It is the responsibility of the Presbytery to provide appropriate resourcing to volunteers for trauma they may experience in the course of their service.

D. Additional Definitions

1. The Accused is the person against whom a claim of sexual misconduct is being made.

2. An Accuser/Victim is the person claiming knowledge of sexual misconduct by a person covered by this policy or a person claiming to have been the subject of sexual misconduct by a person covered under this policy. The accuser may or may not have been the victim of the alleged sexual misconduct.

3. Employees/Volunteers/Contracted Staff

- a. An Employee of the Presbytery of Southern New England has been hired by the Presbytery and/or its entities to perform specific duties for the Presbytery of Southern New England or its entities. The employee receives salary/remuneration from the Presbytery for work performed.
- b. A Volunteer is a person who provides services for the Presbytery and/or its entities and receives no benefit or remuneration. Volunteers include persons elected or appointed to serve on boards, committees, task forces, and other groups. For purposes of this policy, volunteers are treated the same as employees.
- c. A Contracted Staff person is one who provides services for the Presbytery and/or its entities and receives remuneration. For purposes of this policy, contracted staff are treated the same as employees.

4. A Mandated Reporter is a person required by state law to report suspected incidents of child abuse, including child sexual abuse, which comes to their attention. As state laws vary, any person who has knowledge or suspicion of child abuse and has questions about reporting should confer with an attorney. If you are a member of the Presbytery and would like such a consultation, you may reach out to the Stated Clerk to arrange one with the Presbytery attorney.

In addition to civil law around mandated reporting, the Book of Order also provides an ecclesial definition which applies: G-4.0302 - Mandatory Reporting: Any member of this church engaged in ordered ministry and any certified Christian educator employed by this church or its congregations, shall report to ecclesiastical and civil legal authorities knowledge of harm, or the risk of harm, related to the physical abuse, neglect, and/or sexual molestation or abuse of a minor or an adult who lacks mental capacity when (1) such information is gained outside of a confidential communication as defined in G-4.0301, (2) she or he is not bound by an obligation of privileged communication under law, or (3) she or he reasonably believes that there is risk of future physical harm or abuse. The Stated Clerk of the Presbytery is always available to anyone in the Presbytery to answer questions and provide guidance related to the applicability or interpretation of the Book of Order.

Additional information can be found in Appendix A of this document, which includes an explanation of the interplay between civil and church law.

III. THE RESPONSE TEAM

A. Purpose

A Response Team shall be elected by and serve under the authority of the Commission on Ministry. It shall be reported to the Presbytery with the COM report annually. Doing this annually reinforces and reminds commissioners of the policy and the availability of the Response Team. The purpose of the Response Team is to:

1. Ensure that an expeditious, professional, confidential, pastoral, and caring response is made by the Presbytery to charges of sexual misconduct. The Response Team, however, is not an investigatory body and shall not usurp the roles of Presbytery officials or committees, including investigating committees.

2. This team (under the direction of COM) shall be responsible for the required trainings: Boundary Training and Child Sexual Abuse Prevention. These trainings shall apply to all ministers, commissioned ruling elders, leaders of new worshipping communities and immigrant fellowships, inquirers and candidates under care of the CPM, ordained elders and other volunteers in the Presbytery as outlined by the Book of Order, in a three-year cycle.

- Attendance at required training sessions shall be tracked by the Stated Clerk and COM (or their designee) and reported at the next Presbytery meeting after training takes place in their written report.
- Training is to be organized, and notifications provided no less than 9 months in advance of the training to allow for proper notice for all who are required to attend and budgetary considerations. Honorably retired ministers are exempt unless they are engaged in any form of active ministry.
- Those who are required to attend these trainings per the Book of Order (ministers, commissioned ruling elders, leaders of new worshipping communities, and inquirers and candidates under care of the CPM) will be provided with a letter from the Stated Clerk if they do not attend and given opportunities to resolve their participation within three months with a copy to the COM or CPM. If they do not resolve their training requirements after that time, then the Stated Clerk with the chairpersons of the COM or CPM will write to their employing body notifying them of the non-participation in training and offer a final request for it to be completed within 45 days. If it is not, the consequence is either a (1) the loss of good standing for those under the jurisdiction of the COM, or (2) the loss of ability to move forward to the next step of the ordination process, to be approved to take ordination examinations, and circulate their MDP if under the care of the CPM. For those who do not follow the cycle of training who are volunteers with the Presbytery, they will be asked to step off committee/commission service until their training is completed, and a notice will go to the chairperson of the Presbytery committee/commission they are a member of and the Nominating Committee.
- If anyone who is required to take this training has received its equivalent through an alternative and professional means in the course of other employment or service, they may provide a certificate to the Stated Clerk for consideration of

completion. This includes those new to membership in the Presbytery who took training in another Presbytery before transfer, within the three-year time frame.

B. Membership

The Response Team shall be composed of PSNE teaching and ruling elders in as equal numbers as possible. who represent a range of professional expertise, including but not limited to pastoral counseling/therapy, law, parish ministry, interim ministry, conflict resolution, personnel management and training, and child advocacy. The Response Team should, to the best ability as possible, reflect the various constituencies of the Presbytery.

The Response Team should consist of 4-6 persons to allow for the possibility that more than one allegation of misconduct could be pending at any particular time. Members should agree to serve for six years in overlapping terms to build experience and expertise within the group. No person who has served a six-year term shall be re-appointed until one full year has elapsed. The membership of the Response Team is appointed by the COM annually at their March meeting and then reported to the Presbytery at its next meeting in their written report.

The Response Team shall meet at least annually, during the month of April, with the Stated Clerk and/or General Presbyter, and at that meeting elect their Moderator and recording secretary. The Stated Clerk shall report these two leadership positions to the COM on an annual basis and to the Presbytery at its next meeting in their written report.

C. Training

The Response Team members will receive training in dealing with sexual and ethical misconduct, with specific attention to the dynamics that are unique to the ministerial role and Church Discipline in the Book of Order. The cost of training the Response Team shall be borne by the Presbytery. They shall receive training organized by the Stated Clerk and General Presbyter every three years during the year prior to the training for the rest of the Presbytery.

D. Annual Review

Since this policy cannot detail all the procedures needed by the Response Team in addressing different kinds of cases, the Response Team shall annually evaluate this policy. The Response Team will inform the Commission on Ministry and recommend changes to the policy for approval by the Presbytery as needed.

IV. PROCEDURES AND IMPLEMENTATION

A. General Principles

1. Ministers, commissioned ruling elders, elders, deacons, ministerial candidates and inquirers are subject to inquiry and discipline under the Book of Order, Church Discipline. This policy is intended to supplement the Book of Order, not replace it.
2. Employees of the Presbytery are subject to the employee policies administered by the Presbytery. If they are ordained in any capacity in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) they are also subject to this policy and the Book of Order.
3. The victim, accuser, and accused each have the right to have an advocate (or process support person) present at all interviews and meetings at any stage in the process. This can be done through the process which is defined in the Book of Order or by other means. The advocate may be a colleague, friend, family member, counselor, or other person of their choosing, whose role is to be a supportive presence to the party. Criteria for the advocate and counsel in the context of disciplinary process are found in D-7.08 in the Book of Order.
4. Provision of Information
 - a. All requests for information by anyone outside the disciplinary process or the Response Team shall be referred to the General Presbyter and their designee.
 - b. The Stated Clerk shall report any investigation or trial to the Presbytery as detailed in the Book of Order, including any charges filed and actions taken or recommended. The confidential records of any Investigating Committee will be held and sealed in the permanent file of the Stated Clerk.

B. Allegation

1. Any person becoming aware of an accusation of sexual misconduct or choosing to make such an accusation shall immediately inform either the General Presbyter, the Stated Clerk, or a co-chair of the Commission on Ministry. If one of these individuals is the alleged offender, one of the others shall be notified. Within twenty-four hours of receiving the allegation, the General Presbyter or the COM chair shall seek assistance from the Response Team. The team may include the General Presbyter or the COM chair. If a paid staff member or paid contractor in any capacity of the Presbytery is the one who has either heard the allegation or needs to submit a letter of allegation to the Stated Clerk, they are required to consult first with the Sexual Misconduct Response Team.
2. The Response Team shall offer to meet with the person(s) making the allegation and/or the victim(s). The Response Team may assist the accuser(s) and/or

victim(s) in determining whether a formal written allegation shall be submitted to the Stated Clerk. The Response Team itself may submit such an allegation on behalf of an accuser or victim(s) if requested, but it is not required. The accuser(s) and/or victim(s) may decline to meet with the Response Team. If the offer for this support is declined, a written reminder to the accuser(s) and/or victim(s) shall be provided that the Response Team can be returned to at any point for appropriate support and resourcing.

3. The Response Team shall verify that civil authorities have been or are notified when required or appropriate.
4. If the accusation results in the filing of a written allegation, the Book of Order shall govern the process from that point forward. The Response Team shall continue to provide pastoral care to the accuser, and/or victim, and the accused at the initiative of the parties involved.

C. The Role of the Pastoral Response Team

1. When the Response Team is first notified of an accusation, it shall offer to coordinate pastoral care for the accuser(s)/victim(s), the accused, their families, the congregation, and all other involved parties in consultation with the General Presbyter and/or co-chairs of the COM. The Response Team's responsibilities are to:

- a. notify the affected parties of the Response Team's role;
- b. confirm that civil authorities have been notified, when appropriate (Appendix A);
- c. assess the needs of the affected parties, congregations, entities, agencies, and governing bodies, including the need for advocates and/or an attorney or counsel.

The Victim: The Response Team shall consult with the General Presbyter and their designee, to determine what support and resources should be offered to the victim(s) and to listen to their concerns and ascertain their needs. The General Presbyter or their designee will offer to arrange for at least two persons from the Response Team to provide appropriate support depending on the situation at hand. The Response Team members' role is to help clarify options for the victim(s) so they may decide for themselves what they will choose to do. The victim(s) are always welcome to invite a support person(s) to these conversations if it is helpful for them. There is no requirement for the victim(s) to accept the offer of support of the Response Team, but it shall be offered.

The Accused: The Response Team shall consult with the General Presbyter and their designee, to determine what support and resources should be offered to the accused. The General Presbyter or their designee will offer to arrange for at least two persons from the Response Team to provide appropriate support depending on the situation at hand. The Response Team members' role is to help clarify options for the accused so they may decide for themselves what they will choose to do. The accused is always welcome to invite a support person(s) to these conversations if it is helpful for them. If the accused is placed on Administrative Leave as a result of judicial process, the General

Presbyter and/or their designee, and two members of the Response Team shall meet with the accused and their process support person (if they have one) within 7 days of the imposition of Administrative Leave to go over the boundaries and rules of Administrative Leave and answer any questions. They shall provide the accused with a written copy of the boundaries of Administrative Leave from this policy and if applicable, anything additional that has been given in writing by the PJC. The accused shall be provided with a form to sign that they have received this documentation.

The Congregation: When a congregation is involved, the Response Team, in consultation with the Commission on Ministry and the General Presbyter or their designee, shall determine if it would be helpful to offer the congregation support and services. When appropriate, members of the Response Team may be called upon to meet with the Session to advise the congregation on the kind of support and resources that are available and to help the Session plan a response to the situation. The COM will work with the congregation through their Session on interim staffing and moderating resourcing if needed. If a minister serving a Congregation in the Presbytery is placed on Administrative Leave as a result of judicial process, the General Presbyter and/or their designee, and two members of the Response Team shall meet with the Session within 14 days of the imposition of Administrative Leave to go over the boundaries and rules of Administrative Leave and answer any questions. They shall provide the Session with a written copy of the boundaries of Administrative Leave from this policy and if applicable, anything additional that has been given in writing by the PJC.

Resources: The Response Team will coordinate with the General Presbyter and/or co-chairs of the COM as appropriate on additional resources specific to the varied situations which could arise.

2. At no time will there be only one person in possession of knowledge of any matters pertaining to a case. At least two members of the Response Team will be present when meeting with the accuser(s), victim(s), accused, a congregation, or witnesses. At least two members of the response team, of different genders, when possible, will be present at the meeting.
3. Members of the Response Team will make all reasonable efforts to guard the privacy of persons involved. Material information will be made available only to authorized persons on a need-to-know basis. Any questions about information and confidentiality shall be brought to the attention of the Stated Clerk for advice and consultation.
4. Should the accuser(s) choose to file a written allegation to the Stated Clerk, the Response Team ceases to function, other than in a support role as requested.
5. The accuser(s)/victim(s) may invite a Response Team member to accompany them to meetings with an Investigative Committee if this is helpful to them. A Response Team member attending in a support capacity may attend the meeting but may not speak or provide information when serving in that capacity. It is the responsibility of the accuser(s)/victim(s) to notify the Stated Clerk if they are requesting this support so that they may notify the Investigating Committee. The Response Team may help appoint the accompanier if requested.

6. If no formal allegation is made, the Response Team is to continue in a supportive role with the various parties through their advocates as requested. The Response Team shall review D-7.0201(e) regarding the obligation to file a written allegation based on information they have received. In cases of alleged abuse of a child or vulnerable adult, the Response Team shall ensure that a written allegation is made to the Stated Clerk.

D. Initial Report

1. When any person believes that sexual misconduct has been committed by a minister, commissioned ruling elder, leader of a new worshipping community, committee member, candidate, inquirer, volunteer, employee, or any other person carrying out the programs of the Presbytery of Southern New England, or if such a person self-accuses, the incident can first be reported to the General Presbyter, the Stated Clerk, or the Chair(s) of the Commission on Ministry. Any of these persons receiving a report shall then notify the Response Team. Anyone can go directly to the Stated Clerk at any time.

2. Formal disciplinary process is initiated by submitting a written allegation to the Stated Clerk. According to D-7.0201(c), such a statement “shall include:

- a. A written statement of the alleged offense or offenses; and
- b. Facts which, if proved true, would likely result in censure.

When the Stated Clerk receives a written allegation, the disciplinary process begins according to the Book of Order, including the appointment of an Investigating Committee.

3. If the accuser(s)/victim(s) are not a member of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and therefore lack standing to make an allegation, the General Presbyter and/or chairpersons of the Commission on Ministry shall determine with the Response Team whether an offense may have occurred and whether a written allegation should be submitted to the Stated Clerk (D-7.0201(e)).

4. An accusation or suspicion of sexual abuse of a child or vulnerable adult shall be reported first to civil authorities and then to the General Presbyter, the Stated Clerk, and the chairpersons of the Commission on Ministry. It should be noted that reporting an allegation of child abuse to the Presbytery does not relieve the accuser(s) of their mandated reporting responsibilities under applicable state or federal law. The Presbytery attorney is available for consultation in these matters and the Presbytery Stated Clerk and/or General Presbyter can organize a legal consultation at any time with either the Presbytery legal counsel (civil) and/or PC(USA) legal counsel (ecclesiastical).

5. The General Presbyter or their designee will immediately notify the Presbytery’s insurance company and the Response Team that an allegation was received.

6. Any allegations that fall within the jurisdiction of a local Session (those related to members of the local congregation) shall be referred to the Clerk and Moderator of that Session. They shall be offered the advice and support of the Stated Clerk regarding the Book of Order to help them determine their role and how to request the assistance of the Presbytery. They shall be informed of this policy and the role of the Response Team and

offered their services. If the allegation is of sexual misconduct by a minister member or inquirer or candidate under the care of the CPM, the local church shall report the incident to the General Presbyter, Stated Clerk, or the Chair(s) of the Commission on Ministry. Minister members or inquirers or candidates under care of a CPM are governed by their presbytery of jurisdiction. This also applies to minister members and inquirers and candidates under care of other presbyteries, within the bounds of the Presbytery of Southern New England.

E. The Role of the Investigating Committee

1. The Investigating Committee is charged with conducting an inquiry to determine whether charges should be filed (D-7.0501).
2. The Investigating Committee is appointed under the provisions found in the bylaws of the Presbytery.
3. The Investigating Committee shall be trained by the Presbytery Stated Clerk and if needed, with additional input/training from the constitutional law staff of the national church office or other professional resource persons determined by the Stated Clerk. This may include trauma resources, and mental health care resources for those serving on an Investigating Committee.
4. The expenses of the Investigating Committee shall be provided from the emergency funds for judicial matters held by the Presbytery Trustees (D-7.07). The Stated Clerk will assist the Investigating Committee with the coordination of use of funds.

F. Unsupported Allegations

If the Investigating Committee determines no charges are to be filed, the General Presbyter, and/or Commission on Ministry, continues to be available in a pastoral function to the accused. The Stated Clerk is available for questions related to polity.

G. Disclosure

The Stated Clerk, General Presbytery and/or their designee will make disclosures on a case-by-case basis at the appropriate time and shall consult with PCUSA and/or civil representatives if warranted.

H. Restoration

The Presbytery will follow the restoration process in the Book of Order (D-9.02). If appropriate the Response Team can be consulted to arrange a restoration process.

I. Referrals

The Book of Order in D-7.1103 and G-2.0502 gives an Investigating Committee the opportunity to make a referral of pastoral and/or professional needs related to any party that they feel needs additional work for the good of the Church or its ministry which are uncovered in the course of their investigation and not covered by disciplinary process.

The General Presbyter and/or Stated Clerk shall provide consultation and resourcing at all stages of the referral process.

Referrals can be made at any point during the investigation by the Investigating Committee in writing through the Stated Clerk. If this happens at the conclusion of an investigation, these should be sent within 10 days of the conclusion of an investigation. Ordinarily the COM is responsible for the responses to referrals, however they can be assigned by the Investigating Committee to other parties within and/or outside of the Presbytery depending on the needs assessed by the Investigating Committee.

While the Investigating Committee is the primary party which is responsible for notifications about referrals, they may in some situations determine a need to assign that notification responsibility to another entity.

In all cases the entity receiving the referral is responsible for the development of a process to address the referral. That process can include additional notifications and include any other relevant entity. The referral response process will depend on the referral that is presented and is wholly in the purview of the receiving body.

V. ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PRESBYTERY

A. Availability of the Policy and Compliance

1. All ministers commissioned ruling elders, inquirers and candidates under care of the CPM, leaders of new worshipping communities or immigrant fellowships, members of the Presbytery Roundtable, clerks of session and the moderators of any of the Presbytery's entities, or volunteers shall be given copies of the policy and be required to acknowledge receipt.
2. This document shall also be available on Presbytery's website at www.psne.org.
3. Presbytery employees shall receive this document and be required to acknowledge receipt.
4. All ministers, commissioned ruling elders, leaders of new worshipping communities or immigrant fellowships, committee members, inquirers and candidates under the care of the CPM, volunteers, members of the Presbytery Roundtable, the moderators of any of the Presbytery's entities, and all employees of the Presbytery of Southern New England shall be required to attend boundaries training and Child Sexual Abuse Prevention training. This training is required to be renewed every three years. All new members of the Presbytery are required to attend training no later than one year from joining the Presbytery. Persons who have taken training offered by other entities, such as another presbytery or synod, seminary or other similar institution, may submit proof of that training to satisfy this requirement to the Stated Clerk.
5. In the rare event that an activity of the Presbytery involves persons under the age of 18, the Child Protection Policy of the Presbytery shall also apply.

B. Management of the Policy

Liability and Insurance: The Presbytery, through its Board of Trustees, shall maintain liability insurance that insures for sexual misconduct coverage. Annually, the Board of Trustees will verify that each congregation, new worshipping community or immigrant fellowship in the Presbytery has certified in their minutes that they possess liability insurance. This is normally accomplished through the annual minutes review process. Any congregation, new worshipping community or immigrant fellowship not holding appropriate liability insurance shall be assisted immediately by the Presbytery Trustees or their designee in correcting the situation within 60 calendar days.

C. Screening of Applicable Persons

1. Pre-Employment Reference Checks
 - a. The Personnel Committee shall be responsible for obtaining background checks on all employees and/or contract staff. The cost of these checks is borne by the Presbytery.

b. The General Presbyter and/or the Stated Clerk are responsible for making reference checks to ascertain whether persons seeking membership in the Presbytery in any category have any history of sexual or other misconduct. The General Presbyter and/or Stated Clerk will report their findings to the Commission on Ministry, and they shall be recorded in the written minutes of the COM. The cost of these checks is borne by the Presbytery.

c. When the General Presbyter and/or Stated Clerk provide an outside reference check to another Presbytery or employing entity related to a minister member of the Presbytery, or a student under the care of the CPM, any information provided concerning complaints, inquiries, and administrative disciplinary action shall be accurate. A confidential record shall be kept between the General Presbyter and/or Stated Clerk and the chair(persons) of the COM.

2. Criminal Background Checks

a. Anyone seeking membership in any category in the Presbytery, ministerial candidates or inquirers, those leading immigrant fellowships or new worshipping communities, inquirers and candidates under care and Presbytery staff or contractors shall be required to submit to a criminal history and sexual misconduct background check, conducted by the Stated Clerk or their designee, using a national screening organization which includes an electronic signature for consent and release. The Stated Clerk shall disclose the findings of these reports to the Commission on Ministry, and those findings shall be recorded in its minutes.

b. In the rare instance that an event of the Presbytery includes children under the age of 18, the additional procedures in the Child Protection Policy of the Presbytery apply.

c. The discovery of a criminal conviction will not automatically exclude a person from entry into the Presbytery and work in its congregations or with its youth. The use the Presbytery makes of the criminal record background report will be determined on an individual case-by-case basis, and shall include, where necessary, appropriate supervision of the individual. Only the Stated Clerk or their designee shall order and review the criminal record and sexual misconduct background reports. The exception to this would be that the General Presbyter would do the background checks for the Stated Clerk's employment.

d. The Stated Clerk, and their designee, shall ensure the confidentiality and appropriate retention of criminal record and sexual misconduct background checks. The background check records will be retained for a period of six years. In the case of any background check that reveals a former conviction or other information, a copy of the background check shall be retained in the Stated Clerk's files indefinitely.

e. A person who claims that the information in the report is inaccurate, false, or incomplete shall have the right to dispute it and shall put their dispute in writing with the Stated Clerk, who shall notify the Commission on Ministry of this dispute and in consultation with them, develop an appropriate response process.

D. Requests for Transfer, Release, or Renunciation of Jurisdiction

A Session or the Presbytery is constitutionally prohibited from granting a certificate of transfer to a member or a student under care while an allegation or charges are pending. The reasons for not granting a transfer may be communicated by the Clerk of Session or the Stated Clerk to the appropriate persons.

Should a minister, or inquirer or candidate under care, renounce the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) under D-7.0302, during the disciplinary process, the Stated Clerk shall report to the governing body the renunciation in the way defined by G-2.0407 or G-2.0509 of the Book of Order. These actions shall end the Presbytery's disciplinary process, but not the reporting process(es) required under the Book of Order on a case-by-case basis.

In the case of a renunciation, the Commission on Ministry shall make all reasonable efforts to provide pastoral care to the accuser(s)/victim(s) and the congregation or ministry setting. Depending on the situation and needs, the COM may request the assistance of the Response Team or others in those efforts.

If a minister member or inquirer or candidate under care renounces jurisdiction during the course of an investigation governed by the Book of Order and remains in the Presbytery, and is attending one of the congregations, new worshipping communities, or an immigrant fellowship in the Presbytery, the COM shall make the leadership body of that ministry aware of the presence of that person and offer to aid them in appropriate boundaries for that person. The same shall apply if such a person is attending a ministry of one of our Formula of Agreement partners in our bounds. This notification shall be recorded in the minutes of the COM.

If the minister member or inquirer or candidate under care renounces jurisdiction during the course of an investigation governed by the Book of Order and leaves the Presbytery, and the COM or staff of the Presbytery are aware of their new location, they shall make every effort to report this in writing to the judicatory for that region in the PCUSA via the Stated Clerk. This notification shall be recorded in the minutes of the COM.

E. Disposition of Files

At the conclusion of an investigatory case, under the Rules of Discipline, the records and files of all allegations and their disposition shall be delivered to the Stated Clerk. No committee/commission or its members shall keep copies of a file. This also applies to the Response Team.

In some limited instances related to a referral after an investigatory case, a COM or CPM may maintain limited files at the direction of the Stated Clerk.

The Stated Clerk follows all records retention schedules laid out by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

APPENDIX A

MANDATORY REPORTING OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE Ecclesiastical and Civil Implications and Responsibilities

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) maintains a website and hotline for information. Victims of sexual misconduct or abuse can call the PC(U.S.A.) Helpline at 866-607-7233 to make a report concerning abuse by anyone who is in any way affiliated with the PC(U.S.A.). This Helpline was set up by the PC(U.S.A.) with its partners the Insurance Board and Praesidium.

Councils can also call the Helpline for resources.

<https://pcusa.org/resources/legal/creating-safe-ministries>

General Principles

The Stated Clerk and General Presbyter are available for consultation related to questions around mandated reporting, including connecting you to appropriate counsel. While this consultation may be necessary, do **NOT** delay in acting if you think you may be a mandated reporter.

If you make a report as a mandated reporter via one of the procedures below for CT, RI, or MA in your role as either a minister member, certified ruling elder, elder or officer serving in a volunteer capacity in the Presbytery, inquirer or candidate, employee or contractor, or the leader of a new worshipping community or immigrant fellowship you must also submit your report to the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery for consideration of whether or not ecclesial reporting is needed depending on the situation and so that the Presbytery is notified and can then follow our reporting requirements to our insurance provider.

If your report is related to someone in a supervisory role to you, either the Stated Clerk and/or General Presbyter can be contacted for guidance, resourcing, or reporting so that there is always an internal reporting structure available.

There are two types of guidance and law related mandated reporting:

Ecclesiastical

Book of Order, G-4.0302 Mandatory Reporting

Any member of this church engaged in ordered ministry and any certified Christian educator employed by this church or its congregations, shall report to ecclesiastical and civil legal authorities knowledge of harm, or the risk of harm, related to the physical abuse, neglect, and/or sexual molestation or abuse of a minor or an adult who lacks mental capacity when (1) such information is gained outside of a confidential communication as defined in G-4.0301, (2) she or he is not bound by an obligation of

privileged communication under law, or (3) she or he reasonably believes that there is risk of future physical harm or abuse.

Civil

This information related to civil reporting is current as of January 2026. As our Presbytery includes ministries and members in three states, please consult the appropriate state websites linked below for updated reporting information. If someone is serving or living outside the geographic boundaries of the Presbytery and you need to make a mandated report, please consult the Stated Clerk or General Presbyter, who will help you access the appropriate state and/or international civil information in consultation with the Presbytery legal counsel.

For child abuse occurring in **Connecticut**:

Website: portal.ct.gov/dcf

Download more info:

https://portal.ct.gov/dcf/supports-for-children-and-families/child-abuse-and-neglect?language=en_US

Phone: 1-800-842-2288

Mandated Reporters include all members of the clergy and paid childcare in any public or private facility, child day care center, group day care home or family day care home licensed by the state. A verbal report must be made within 12 hours, and then in writing using this [form](#) within 48 hours, when in the course of their employment or profession, they have reasonable cause to suspect or believe that a child has been abused, neglected, or is placed in imminent risk of serious harm (CGS 17a-101a).

For child abuse occurring in **Massachusetts**:

Website: mass.gov/dcf

Download more info: mass.gov/doc/a-mandated-reporters-guide-to-child-abuse-and-neglect-reporting/download

Phone: 1-800-792-5200

Massachusetts law requires professionals whose work brings them in contact with children to notify DCF if they suspect that a child is being abused and/or neglected. However, anyone can report child abuse and neglect. The list of Mandated Reporters includes clergy members, including ordained or licensed leaders of any church or religious body, persons performing official duties on behalf of a church or religious body, or persons employed by a religious body to supervise, educate, coach, train or counsel a child on a regular basis. Mandated reporters must make an oral report immediately and follow up with a written report within 48 hours.

For child abuse occurring in **Rhode Island**:

Website: dcyf.ri.gov

Download more info: dcyf.ri.gov/sites/g/files/xkgbur416/files/documents/rds-portal/RDSportal_MandatedReporting_ChildAbuse-andor-Neglect.pdf

Phone: 1-800-742-4453

ALL persons in Rhode Island are required by law ([RIGL 40-11-3](#)) to report within 24 hours known or suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect to the Department of Children, Youth, and Families within 24 hours of becoming aware of such abuse/neglect.

APPENDIX B

THE PRESBYTERY OF SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND POLICY ON ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE

A. The Policy

1. Administrative Leave in cases of an allegation of sexual abuse:

The procedure and process in the Book of Order related to administrative leave during an allegation of sexual misconduct shall be followed (see D-7.0902).

B. Conduct of Minister on Administrative Leave

The minister on leave shall:

- not perform any pastoral, administrative, educational, or supervisory duties,
- not officiate at any functions such as baptisms funerals, or weddings,
- be removed from the pulpit supply list in the Presbytery,
- be excused from any volunteer service in the Presbytery during the investigatory period,
- refrain from non-church events in the community that would connect them with church members,
- remain off church property with the exception of a manse if applicable,
- have no contact with members and staff of the ministry they serve,
- be provided with a contact through the Commission on Ministry for questions and unforeseen needs which may arise.

C. Notice

If a minister serving a Congregation in the Presbytery is placed on Administrative Leave as a result of judicial process, the General Presbyter and/or their designee, and two members of the Response Team shall meet with the Session within 14 days of the imposition of Administrative Leave to go over the boundaries and rules of Administrative Leave and answer any questions. They shall provide the Session with a written copy of the boundaries of Administrative Leave from this policy and if applicable, anything additional that has been given in writing by the PJC.

D. Financial Arrangements

For those serving a congregation, immigrant fellowship or new worshipping community of the Presbytery, administrative leave pay is cash, housing and/or manse allowances, SECA, and medical, dental and vision coverage through the Board of Pensions. All other financial arrangements in terms of call and or contracts may be ceased during this period.

Ordinarily, these costs shall be borne by the congregation, immigrant fellowship or new worshipping community. In the event the ministry cannot afford to honor the accused terms of call alongside covering the costs of temporary leadership, the costs of temporary leadership may be borne in whole or in part by the Presbytery of Southern New England. The Trustees maintain an emergency contingency fund. The reasonableness of these costs and availability of funds shall be determined by the Commission on Ministry alongside the Board of Trustees.

The financial provisions of administrative leave only apply to congregations, new worshipping communities and immigrant fellowships of the Presbytery. The Presbytery does not have jurisdiction over the financial matters of any employing organization that is not within the Presbytery.

The period during which financial support is paid shall not ordinarily exceed one year. If the administrative leave is extended, or there are extenuating circumstances, the terms of call may be amended by the congregation, with the approval and/or resourcing of the Commission on Ministry or another appropriate body at the discretion of the Stated Clerk.

E. Enforcement

Any violations of the terms of a person's administrative leave shall be reported to the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery and may themselves become the subject of additional disciplinary proceedings.



THE PRESBYTERY OF SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND

Ministry Description: Volunteer Treasurer

Reports to: Trustees

Supervises: N/A

Estimate Time Commitment: 2 hour/month for Trustees meeting, and 1-2 hours/week average through the year.

Term: Three years, renewable.

Objective: The Treasurer supervises the receipt and disbursement of all monies controlled by the Presbytery in the operation of its ministry and mission.

Responsibilities:

1. Reviews with the Administrator, the monthly financial reports and budget tracking.
2. Works with the Administrator to review account access and automatic transactions.
3. With the Administrator, ensures yearly tax compliance for payroll and payment of various insurance policies for the Presbytery.
4. Reviews, alongside the Administrator, payment and donor management systems and monitors the accuracy of reporting to Trustees, Roundtable and the Presbytery.
5. Works with the General Presbyter and Trustees on yearly evaluation of the external bookkeeping services.
6. Updates the signature cards for each bank and brokerage account as needed, and maintains online banking access for checking, savings, money market, and the Presbytery credit card.

7. Establishes, implements and maintains controls for the disbursement of funds, securing documentation of approvals above \$5,000 which require dual signatures.
8. Serves as the signatory for all physical checks for the Presbytery. Utilizes the treasurer@psne.org email address for all work.
9. Reviews financial review and/or audit reports annually alongside the Presbytery Trustees.
10. Works with the Administrator to ensure that a written report of the Presbytery's financial position is shared at each meeting of the Presbytery. Is available at meetings of the Presbytery alongside the Chair of Trustees to answer any questions.
11. By virtue of the position, is an Officer of the Presbytery, serving as an ex officio member of the Roundtable, yearly budget team, and the Board of Trustees.