

## **NEW PRESBYTERY CO-LEADERS SEARCH TEAM REPORT**

On September 29, 2020, this six-person team had their initial meeting for the purpose of organizing and conducting a search for two co-leaders of the newly forming presbytery later to be called the Presbytery of Northeast New Jersey. The team consisted of an equal representation of the three presbyteries forming this new presbytery. The determination and selection of its members was by the Transitional Leadership Team of the new presbytery. Its members are: Teaching Elder Eileen Lindner and Ruling Elder Edgar Miller from the Presbytery of Palisades, Teaching Elder Ruth Boling and Ruling Elder Frederick Moulongo of the Presbytery of Newark and Teaching Elder Ron Thompson and Ruling Elder Elizabeth Lorenzo of the Presbytery of Elizabeth. Teaching Elder Ron Thompson served as chair.

The Search Team was especially aware of the broad diversity of the new presbytery owing to its own diverse composition. The Search Team is comprised of three Ruling Elders and three Teaching Elders; three women and three men; two African Americans, two foreign born members, and two Caucasian women. Reasoning that we were charged both to seek the best possible leadership for the emerging presbytery and knowing that those leaders would serve a community diverse by every measure, we resolved to review the PIFs “blind” as to race and national origin.

The Leader Search Team’s first task was the development of one Ministry Information Form (MIF) for the co-leader positions. This co-leader model was established by the Transitional Leadership Team, who provided the primary job functions. The co-leader model was new to the existing presbyteries and additional information was collected by the Search Team. After meeting on a bi-weekly basis, a draft MIF was completed and presented to the Transitional Leadership Team for approval. The MIF was approved by the Leadership Team on November 25 with minor edits. On December 1, contact was made with the Church Leadership Connection (CLC) in regard to uploading our MIF for matching. Since this involved the creation of a new presbytery, Synod Executive approval was required before the position could be entered into the system. The MIF went live on December 17.

Additional advertisement of the co-leader positions were made in the Presbyterian Outlook, our presbyteries’ News Blasts, and Tricia Dykers-Koenig’s Mid Council Newsletter (January Edition). The first wave of 12 candidates’ Personal Information Forms (PIF) were reviewed January 5. The second wave of 11 PIFs were reviewed January 12. The third and final wave of 11 PIFs were reviewed January 26. The MIF was closed on January 29, seeing no further inquiries/matches.

Out of the 34 PIFs reviewed, 11 were determined for further consideration. The Search Team reviewed each PIF and other supplied documentation/references in making this determination. Each candidate was scored and ranked according to educational background, leadership competencies, relevant experience, and suitability in the role of either Executive Presbyter or Stated Clerk. The final 11 candidates were then ranked and the top six were scheduled for interviews. Interviewing was done by three teams of two, with each team interviewing two candidates. Each interview team was comprised of one Teaching Elder and one Ruling Elder. Standard questions were developed by the Search Team. These questions were asked of each

candidate in a format designed to encourage dialogue between each candidate and their respective interview team. The interviews were recorded, with the candidate's permission, for later viewing by the full Search Team. We gathered on February 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> for discussions of the recorded interviews and final ranking/classification of these six candidates. additional full team interviews were also conducted with the top two candidates.

After prayerful reflection on the foundational documents related to the merger and the leadership qualities identified, the Search Team arrived at a unanimous conclusion. We recommend that the Reverend Stephen Huston (Resource Presbyter) and the Reverend Jeremy Campbell (Stated Clerk) serve as the Co-Leaders of the Presbytery of Northeast New Jersey for an initial term of three years with the potential for renewal for subsequent terms of service.

Despite the wide reach of our search process, the diversity of our own composition and our demonstrated intention to seek diverse candidates we are recommending two white clergymen for these leadership positions. We are doing so because of our deep and unanimous sense that these particular individuals are rightly called to these positions of leadership. Moreover, they are, in our collective judgement, the best qualified of the candidates whom we were able to engage in conversation, and have themselves demonstrated their commitment to diversity in their respective ministries. We are well aware that the leadership of the new presbytery will come, not from its paid staff alone, but from myriad places in the life and witness of our presbytery. Committees, offices such as Moderator, Task Forces, and the like will all afford opportunities for leadership from the many diverse communities within our membership. We are and, we trust others are, committed to promoting just such a diversity in the filling of those positions.

Respectfully submitted,

Ruling Elder Elizabeth Lorenzo	Teaching Elder Ruth Boling
Ruling Elder Edgar Miller	Teaching Elder Eileen Lindner
Ruling Elder Frederick Moulongo	Teaching Elder Ron Thompson