

**Special Joint Meeting**  
Presbytery of Elizabeth  
Presbytery of Newark  
Presbytery of the Palisades

February 13, 2021

The Presbyteries of Elizabeth, Newark, and Palisades held a joint special meeting via Zoom teleconference. Elder Warren McNeill (Stated Clerk, Newark), announced the presence of a quorum of each of the constituent presbyteries. The Rev. Berj Gulleyan (Moderator, Palisades) called the meeting to order and led the assembly in prayer at 9:10 a.m.

(Attendance)

Ms. Liz Hathaway reported on the meeting arrangements, offering assistance to those who might require it during the meeting.

**Worship**

The assembly was led in worship by the moderators of the presbyteries, the Rev. Ron Thompson (Elizabeth), the Rev. Dan Martian (Newark), and the Rev. Berj Gulleyan (Palisades). The opening worship service included music and readings from scripture—Ecclesiastes 4:9-12, Psalm 133, and Matthew 28:16-20—and a Litany for the Unity of the New Presbytery.

**Preliminary Business**

Elder Warren McNeill, Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Newark, announced that based on pre-registration and a survey of participants, that a quorum of each of the constituent presbyteries. Without objection, the assembly **ADOPTED** the docket as amended.

Without objection, it was **ORDERED** that the Rev. David Baer (Palisades) be appointed recording clerk for this meeting.

The following corresponding members of the assembly were **ENROLLED**:

- The Rev. Diane Curtis (West Jersey)
- The Rev. Leigh Gills (Eastern Virginia)
- The Rev. Dr. Barbara Smith (Salem)
- The Rev. Nancy Talbot (New York City)

Mr. McNeill asked first-time ruling elder commissioners and new minister members of the constituent presbyteries to introduce themselves.

**Community Building**

Mr. McNeill introduced Elder Elise Bates Russell, Executive Director of Camp Johnsonburg, who offered a presentation on the work of her organization during the pandemic. She noted that the camp is

currently offering sabbath stays to individuals, and is planning to open at 50% capacity for its summer program. Ms. Bates Russell invited members of the assembly to consider how the camp might support the ministry of their churches. She concluded her presentation with a short video prepared by the camp's interns.

The Rev. Jeremy Campbell, Stated Clerk of Elizabeth Presbytery, and Elder Maria Santa (Palisades: Fair Lawn, Warren Point) provided an introduction to a time of community building. Members of the assembly were divided into small groups and asked to reflect on a time when they felt welcomed. After these small-group discussions, the assembly came together again. Mr. Campbell and Ms. Santa presented additional discussion regarding the formation of a new community, and concluded with a reading from 1 Corinthians 12, regarding the relationships between members of the Body of Christ. A time of further small-group discussion followed, as members were asked to consider experiences where they had been made to feel part of a community, and what gifts they may bring, as individuals and worshipping communities, to the larger presbytery community.

### **Presentation of Proposed Administrative Manual**

Mr. McNeill presented proposed bylaws, standing rules, and policy documents for the new presbytery to be formed, for information only at this time. It is expected that the new presbytery will receive these documents at the March 13 meeting and, if the way be clear, act upon them at a subsequent meeting in June. The documents were developed by the three stated clerks, and were presented at this meeting as a provisional administrative manual for the Presbytery of Northeast New Jersey.

### **Greetings from the New Jersey Missional Communities Administrative Commission**

The Rev. Ron Thompson, the New Jersey Missional Communities Administrative Commission, introduced himself and gave an update on the work of that commission, which is working on behalf of the Synod of the Northeast to effect the reorganization of the New Jersey Presbyteries.

### **Report of the Transitional Nominating Committee**

David Noble and Deborah Huggins, the co-chairs of the Presbytery of the Northeast Transitional Nominating Committee presented the report of the report of the committee. On behalf of the committee, they **PLACED IN NOMINATION** the Rev. Dr. Wanda Lundy (Palisades) for the office of Moderator of the Presbytery of Northeast New Jersey. There were no nominations from the floor. Upon a motion properly made and seconded, the assembly **VOTED** to **CLOSE** the nominations and to **ELECT** the Dr. Lundy as Moderator.

On behalf of the committee, Mr. Noble and Ms. Huggins **PLACED IN NOMINATION** Elder Kirk Woodward for the office of Vice Moderator of the Presbytery of Northeast New Jersey. There were no nominations from the floor. Upon a motion properly made and seconded, the assembly **VOTED** to **CLOSE** the nominations and to **ELECT** the Mr. Woodward as Vice Moderator.

On behalf of the committee, Mr. Noble and Ms. Huggins **PLACED IN NOMINATION** Susan Friedl, Deborah Huggins, Betty McNair, and David Noble for election to the ongoing nominating committee. There were no nominations from the floor. Upon a motion properly made and seconded, the assembly **VOTED** to **CLOSE** the nominations and to **ELECT** the slate as presented.

## New Presbytery Name

Ms. Liz Hathaway presented the results of the poll on name of the new presbyter. Upon a motion properly made and seconded, the assembly **VOTED** to **ADOPT** “the Presbytery of Northeast New Jersey” as the name for the new presbytery.

## New Office Location

Upon a motion properly made and seconded, the assembly **VOTED** to **DESIGNATE** 340 West Passaic Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Rochelle Park, New Jersey 07662 as the legal address of the Presbytery of Northeast New Jersey. The lease on this property was entered into by the Presbytery of the Palisades, and its term extends for another two years.

## Report of the Financial Task Force

Elder Judy Tharaud presented the task force’s report.

### Report of the Northeast Presbytery Finance Task Force February 13, 2021

The Northeast Presbytery Finance Task Force was appointed by the Transition Team. Members of the task force represent each of the three uniting Presbyteries:

Elizabeth – Dave Bomgaars and Joan Van Pelt  
Newark – Denise Kennedy and Judy Tharaud  
Palisades – James Cella and Eileen Lindner

Starting in November, we have been meeting every two weeks to take the next steps in the consolidation of all things financial: budget, assets, liabilities, per capita, audits.

1. Per Capita – we recommended that each Presbytery keep the Per Capita amount they had budgeted for 2021. Elizabeth \$45 (or \$40.50 if paid by February 1, 2021); Newark \$31.25; Palisades \$42.00. The Presbytery of the Northeast may unify Per Capita for 2022.
2. Audits – As required by the Synod Administrative Commission, we have begun full financial audits of 2020 financial statements for Elizabeth, Newark and Palisades. Each Presbytery BOT has signed an engagement letter with Lerch, Vinci, and Higgins, Certified Public Accountants, Fairlawn, NJ to complete the audits.
3. Budget for Northeast Presbytery – Together with the Transition Team and the Synod AC, we are working to prepare a budget for Northeast Presbytery for the period April 1, 2021 through December 31, 2022. This 21 month budget will provide consistency as we begin our work together and avoid the time consuming budgeting process after only a short period of time.
4. Financial Consolidation – We have also engaged Lerch, Vinci and Higgins, to begin the work of consolidation of assets and liabilities (restricted and unrestricted assets, real property, mortgages, loans and all liabilities). Proportionate distribution to Northeast Presbytery from each presbytery is as follows: Newark (100%), Elizabeth (56%) and Palisades (94%).
5. We are asking each current presbytery to avoid making any unnecessary expenditures so that assets will be preserved for future ministries and missions, and so that the Task Force can get an accurate assessment of all the funds to be shared by the new entities as we work toward consolidation. Each presbytery’s share of assets to be contributed to the new Presbytery will be based on assets as of December 31, 2020.

Upon a motion properly made and seconded, the assembly **VOTED** to **RECEIVE** the report of the Financial Task Force.

### **Report of the Mission Grant Committee**

The Rev. Brooks Smith and the Rev. Anita Wright presented the committee's report. There will be one application for both community organizations and churches. Grants will be made available twice a year, likely in the spring and fall. The committee requests general information regarding what organizations are doing and hoping to accomplish. The maximum grant amount will be \$5,000 per year. A report on a grant must be received before a subsequent grant may be awarded.

### **Greetings from the Synod Stated Clerk**

The Rev. Nancy Talbot, Stated Clerk of the Synod of the Northeast, introduced herself and lauded the work of the presbyteries in coming together as a new community. She noted the potential of the experience of the New Jersey presbyteries becoming a model for re-organization throughout the PCUSA.

### **Adjournment**

With no new business received, the assembly **ADJOURNED** with prayer at 11:50 a.m., led by Valencia Norman (co-moderator of the Presbytery of Newark).

Respectfully submitted,

- signed -

Rev. David A. Baer, recording clerk



| Full Name       | Contact Phone | Email  | Church Name     | I am attending | Will Attend                 | Request to be |
|-----------------|---------------|--|-----------------|----------------|-----------------------------|---------------|
| Laurin McArthur | (973) 901-41  | <a href="mailto:laurin.mcarthur">laurin.mcarthur</a>           |                 |                | Teaching Elder              | Request to be |
| Geri Pretlow    | (973) 809-83  | <a href="mailto:geri5230@hotmail.com">geri5230@hotmail.com</a> | Trinity Presbyt |                | Presbyterian Women in the N | Request to be |

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