

## **Connectional Presbyter/Stated Clerk Report September 20, 2022**

### **Saying Goodbye to the Office**

After some careful information gathering by our treasurer, Jerry Hunter, and several conversations among the staff, with the Committee on Leadership, and the Trustees, the decision has been made together to say goodbye to having a dedicated office space for New Castle Presbytery. The necessary steps to make this happen are already being taken, including instituting a remote phone system that sends any incoming calls to the office number to staff cell phones. Other steps will include working with the session of Head of Christiana Presbyterian Church to determine what office furniture might remain in the space, and then opening an opportunity to the Presbytery to claim anything that is not otherwise spoken for.

Our intention is to be essentially set up for remote work by the end of November 2022, and those details, including a P.O. Box for any physical mail, will be shared as they are implemented.

Many, many thanks to Head of Christiana Presbyterian Church for their gracious hospitality for the last several years. You have been a blessing to us, and through us, we hope and pray, to the Presbytery and beyond.

### **Session Minutes Review 2022**

The following congregations have had their minutes from 2021 reviewed as of September 15:

Buckingham	First: Ocean City	Old Rehoboth
Calvary	First: Smyrna	Pitts Creek
Chestertown	First & Central	Red Clay Creek
Christiana	Frankford	Rehoboth in Midway
Community	Georgetown	Seaford
Concord	Green Hill	St. Andrew's
Coolspring	Hanover	Trinity
Covenant: Wilmington	Head of Christiana	West Nottingham
Dover	Limestone	Westminster: Rehoboth
Easton	Lower Brandywine	Beach
Elkton	Makemie (Snow Hill)	Westminster: Wilmington
Faith Chapel	Manokin	Wicomico
First: Chesapeake City	Milford	
First: Delaware City	New Castle	<b><u>2020</u></b>
First: Milford	New Covenant	First: Smyrna
First: Newark	Ocean View	

### **Presbytery Minutes Review 2021**

The minutes of New Castle Presbytery were reviewed by my colleague in Baltimore Presbytery and were approved without exception.

### **General Assembly**

The report from our commissioners will come during our November Presbytery meeting, but I'd like to thank them for serving so well during our first hybrid assembly of the denomination. When we hear from them in November, we'll also hear that there are over 20 amendments to the Book of Order that we will need to vote on as a Presbytery. For that reason, I've worked with the Vice Moderator to look at dates in early 2023. In the consent agenda is the motion to call a special presbytery meeting on Tuesday, February 7, starting at 6:30 pm, completely on Zoom.

### **Administrative Commission for Perryville**

A full report from the AC for Perryville will come to the Presbytery, but I want to share that they did assume original jurisdiction soon after convening and beginning their work. They've offered congregational listening sessions and individual conversations with key leaders in the church. In many ways, their work is just getting started, so I ask you to continue to pray for them. The members of the commission are RE Debbie Reeves, Chair, TE Gary Willingham-McLain, Secretary, TE Terry Dougherty, and TE Nate Phillips.

### **Manual Revisions and Updates**

A significant series of revisions are coming to this meeting related to the work of our committees. Looking ahead into early 2023, I would like to pull together some small work groups to take a look at the following Appendices/Policies in the Manual:

Appendix N - Child Protection Policy

Appendix P - Prevention of Sexual Misconduct Policy

If you're interested helping examine and update these policies, please let me know!

### **2023 Meetings**

Our last meeting in 2022 will be hosted by First Presbyterian in Newark on Saturday, November 19, and plans are underway to include a housing fair as part of that gathering. In 2023, the Presbytery has set the following meetings: Saturday, May 20, which will be hosted by Chestertown; Saturday, September 23 and Tuesday, November 28, both of which are open for offerings to host.

Additionally, we are beginning to plan for an Equipping and Training Day for the Presbytery on Saturday, January 21 from 9 am to 1 pm. After conversation with the Committee on Coordination, it was agreed to offer this training on Zoom, which will give us the opportunity to invite workshop leaders from beyond the bounds of the Presbytery. More information will be available in November, but please mark your calendars now and share the news. All are welcome!

One of the reasons we try to share these meeting dates as far in advance as possible is that you can take them into consideration as you look at your church calendars. Please, if you have a meeting that conflicts, consider shifting that meeting that one time. With only three business meetings a year, we want to be sure to have as many of our ministers and elders present as possible!

### **Pastor's Retreat**

Our annual Pastor's Retreat is fast approaching, and you don't want to miss it! This year, we're focusing the gathering on those who are currently active in pastoral leadership within a congregation, or congregations as is the case for some of our CREs. The content will help us look inward to our emotions and reactions, with the goal of increasing our own self-awareness and exploring some tools for when we are navigating situations that hook us in unhelpful ways. That can feel pretty deep and maybe intimidating, so we're combining it with some play and the opportunity to express our experiences through some craft materials. The Rev. Shavon Starling-Lewis, co-moderator of the 225<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, will be leading us in our worship, and we'll have a full afternoon with nothing scheduled on Monday. *Registration is open!*

### **Anti Racism Training**

Two Presbytery-provided opportunities for the mandatory anti-racism training have been provided this year, and at least one additional training will be offered before the end of the year. If you are interested in attending another event provided by a different organization and would like to see if that will suffice for the training requirement, please don't hesitate to contact me.

### **Third Thursday Training**

Third Thursday Trainings are continuing with this new name! Usually on the third Thursday of the month at 5 pm, I offer an hour-long presentation on a particular topic, which is recorded and made available for anyone who's interested.

On September 15, the hour was led by Ellie Johns-Kelley, our Presbyterian Foundation Ministry Relations Officer, who helped us explore the fabulous free(!) resources available through the [\*Stewardship Navigator\*](#). Coming up next month on October 20, Colleen Earp, Program Director for Massanetta Springs Camp and Conference Center, will join us to talk a bit about ministry in the 21<sup>st</sup> century with children, youth, and young adults.

All are welcome, so spread the word and join me!

### **Welcome Lunches for Pastoral Leaders**

We've now had two welcome lunches for pastoral leaders who have joined the Presbytery since last October, and it has been a wonderful opportunity to gather, meet one another, and share a meal together with ministers and CREs. I intend to keep this up with a lunch roughly every 4-6 weeks, spread across the Presbytery. Sometimes the gatherings may shift to give us a chance to celebrate those who are or have retired or to go further back to welcome those who arrived during Covid. Our next lunch is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, October 5, but keep your eyes out for an email with more information!

### **Matthew 25 Commitment**

Our commitment to live into the Matthew 25 invitation continues to resonate across the Presbytery and in our congregations. This year, we are focusing on building vital congregations,

the starting point that gives us a foundation for the work of dismantling structural racism and eradicating systemic poverty.

The Vital Congregations Initiative can be a good fit for any congregation, regardless of size or situation. We all have more to learn about being faithful, and this is a way to engage in the conversation together, supporting one another as we explore how God is calling us to mission and ministry. This may be especially timely as we are looking forward out of the worst days of the pandemic (God willing!) and taking stock of how we have changed and how we might need to change in order to love our neighbors in tangible ways.

As of September 14, we have 11 congregations registered on the PC(USA) website as Matthew 25 congregations. If you're interested in learning more, Tracy or I would be happy to come and have a conversation with you!

Chestertown  
Community  
Coolspring  
Dover  
Easton  
Georgetown

Makemie Memorial  
New Castle  
New Covenant  
Ocean View  
West Nottingham

### **Continuing Education and Service Beyond the Presbytery**

I've now finished my third Doctor of Ministry class, turning in my paper titled "Inverting the Center, Shifting the Borderlands: Facing the Idol of Whiteness." My next class will be in January and focus on Preaching and Communication.

September 26-29, I'll be attending the Association of Mid Council Leaders/Association of Stated Clerks fall gathering. We're going to be exploring the gifts of improvisation, so I'm anticipating a lot of laughter and learning how to build ideas with "yes and" answers.

October 10-13, I'm attending Fraught & Flummoxed: Courage and Creativity for the Elevation of the Gospel at Montreat. This conference is focused on cohort learning including building next steps for leadership personally and within the Presbytery.

Lastly, I'm in the process of signing up for the courses necessary to become a registered parliamentarian. It's quite a journey, but I have some good mentors in the area who I can lean on as I wander through the more intricate passages of Robert's Rules of Order.

### **Vacation and Personal**

I'm looking forward to a week of vacation October 27-November 3 after such a busy few months. I continue to take Mondays as my sabbath day, which gives me an opportunity to rest and also explore the greater Delmarva area.