

**PRESBYTERY OF THE COASTLANDS
MEETING ON ZOOM
TUESDAY, JUNE 28, 2022**

The stated meeting of the Presbytery of the Coastlands, held on Zoom, on Tuesday, June 28, 2022, was called to order at 6:30pm by the Moderator, Rev. Wendi Werner, who opened the meeting with prayer and acknowledged the land within the Presbytery's geographical bounds taken from the Lenni-Lenape who were indigenous to the land.

Motion: *The Personnel Committee of the Board of Trustees has put forth the Rev. Dr. David Torrey to serve as Acting Stated Clerk of the Presbytery.*

There being no discussion, the vote was conducted.

Motion Carried.

The Moderator asked for and the Acting Stated Clerk declared the presence of a quorum.

ATTENDANCE ROLL OF PRESBYTERY'S COMMISSIONERS

The Acting Stated Clerk announced that a quorum was present.

The following ministers were in attendance:

Ministers Present:

Kyle Anderson
Marie Bacchiocchi
Cindy Bowman
David Bowman
Katherine Cunningham
Lisa Day
Sharyl Dixon
Kyle Doebler
Jim Dunson
Molly Dykstra
Gary W Filson
Fred Garry
Linda Goeddel
Karen Hernandez-Granzen
Chuck Holm
Linda Hora
Jill Kitsko
James Klotz
Marcus Lambright
Jenny Lee
Donna Lepsky
Marcia Lewis
Emily Lueder
Lauren McFeaters

Gordon Mikoski
Nancy Mikoski
Kristie Miles
Lori Neff LaRue
Cynthia Parker
Joanne Petto
Matthew Pigman
Victoria (Tory) Pruner
Paul Quevedo
Nina Reeder
Paul Rhebergen
Katharine Sakenfeld
Len Scales
Jonathan Seitz
Byron Shafer
Shannon Smythe
Mark Terranova
Glory Thomas
Julie Thompson-Barrier
Jeffrey Vamos
Wendi Werner
Dave Widmer
John L. Williams
Diane Ford
Total: 49

Commissioned Ruling Elders present:

Julissa Alvarez Garcia (Principe de Paz)
Rick LaFever (East Windsor)

Total: 2

Elder Commissioners present:

Allentown and NJMCAC Nancy Tindall
Allentown Presbyterian Church Jeffrey McLaughlin
Beth Rigby
Brick Presbyterian Patrice Law

Elder Commissioners present (cont'd):

Christy Tompkins
Ewing Covenant Presbyterian Church Lynn Cornell
Will Olson
First Presbyterian Church Cranbury Ken Gordon
First Presbyterian Church of Dutch Neck Greg Slonaker
Peggy Redman
First Presbyterian Church Hamilton Square Michael Meduski
First Presbyterian Church of Iselin Sue Ramirez
Elizabeth Christensen

First Presbyterian Church of Plainsboro Lisa Minich
First Presbyterian Church of Woodbridge Michael Hora
First Presbyterian of Metuchen Paul Gunsser
JoAnne Bedenek
James Krauszer
Gary Ostermueller
Forked River Presbyterian, Forked River Linda De Lotto
Grace of South Brunswick Peter Godinez
Hightstown Dilys Henninger
Hope, Tinton Falls Steven Buckley
Jackson Linda Van Melis
Jamesburg Diana Chase
Kingston Presbyterian Church Florence Perren-Diaz
Lakewood First Annemarie Gilman
Lakewood Hope Presbyterian Church Patty Williams
Matawan First Presbyterian Church Jerry Godbehere
Kristin Schoelkopf
Nassau Presbyterian Church, Princeton Melissa Davis
New Brunswick Presbyterian Church? Barbara Meyer
Presbyterian Church of Toms River Daniel Raisch
Pennington Presbyterian Church Gary Coleman
Suzanne Elliott
Pierce Memorial PC, Farmingdale Howard Dunbar
Presbyterian Church in New Brunswick Ekpoanwan Onyile
Presbyterian Church of Lawrenceville Tom Wilfrid
David Sung
Presbyterian Church on the Hill Megan Zarodnansky
Del Kunert
Slackwood Presbyterian Church Shirley Hafford
Trinity Presbyterian, East Brunswick Debbie Chen
United Presbyterian Church of Millstone Barbara Truscinski
United Presbyterian, Yardville NJ Gloria Hanewald
Westminster Presbyterian, Trenton NJ Adebisi Shofu
Total: 46 - representing 33 congregation

Other Elders (Officers, Trustees, Council members, and Former Moderators) present:

Brad Clifton Kingston Presbyterian
Megan Gadsby United Presbyterian Church of Yardville
Arthur Hui Nassau Presbyterian Church, Princeton, NJ
Kurt Kaboth Church on the Hill, Ocean & Trustee
Jan Margolis Metuchen
Kathryn Starzer-Farrell Trinity (East Brunswick)
Walter Vincent First, Hightstown
Jean Woodman Hamilton Square, Hamilton, NJ
Delia Zelazny First Presbyterian Church of Avenel
Total: 9

Also, in attendance were:

David Torrey Acting Stated Clerk
Ilene Black Staff
Rev. Dee Cooper Gap Presbyter
Marie Luthringer Staff
Hannah Donoghue Staff - Tech Human

Total: 5

Total Attendance: 117

Pastors excused:

Natalie Bell
James Brumm
Linda Joy Chase
Jessica Dixon
George Erlandson
Chris Houtz
Douglas Kurtz
Robert Louer
Carrie Mitchell
John Monroe
Alan Olson
Jean Pinto
Phyllis Zoon

Total: 13

The Moderator then asked the Acting Stated Clerk to explain the rationale for the Enabling Motion regarding electronic meetings. The Acting Stated Clerk explained that because the Presbytery's By-Laws and Standing Rules do not address the ability to meet by electronic means, an enabling motion needs to be adopted to permit Presbytery to meeting electronically. Such a motion needs to be adopted at each Presbytery meeting until the Standing Rules or By-Laws are amended to provide for the ability to meet via electronic means. Also, in a subsequent meeting there will be a motion to ratify actions taken by the presbytery at previous meetings. A question was asked about the Standing Rules for Electronic meetings as to whether they precluded the use of anonymous ballots. The Acting Stated Clerk reported that the Standing Rules do not preclude the use of anonymous ballots via the poll feature of Zoom, the Standing Rules merely provide for the most common non-counted ballot procedures. A call for division would require the use of the polling feature for anonymous counted ballots.

Motion: *That Presbytery adopt the Enabling Motion and Standing Rules for an Electronic Meeting. (Appendix #1)*

Motion Carried.

The Moderator requested that Visitors identify themselves and welcomed them to the meeting. She then asked for Pastors to introduce their First Time Commissioners. Presbytery welcomed the First Time Commissioners.

Motion: *That the Rev. Dr. Dee Cooper, member of Denver Presbytery, and the Rev. David Torrey, member of Trinity Presbytery, be seated as Corresponding Members.*

Motion Carried.

WORSHIP

The Worship Team led the presbytery in worship focusing on the importance of laments.

ADOPTION OF THE DOCKET

Following worship the meeting continued with the adoption of the docket presented by Rev. Wendi Werner, Moderator of the Gap Council.

Motion: *That the Docket be adopted as presented. (Appendix #2)*

There being no additions or amendments to the docket,

Motion Carried.

COMMUNICATIONS AND CONSENT AGENDA

The Stated Clerk presented the Communications Report and the Consent Agenda for Presbytery adoption.

Motion: *That the Communications and Consent Agenda be adopted as presented. (Appendix #3)*

Motion Carried.

REPORT OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Rev. Fred Garry, Moderator of the Board of Trustees presented the report of the Board. The Moderator expressed a word of thanks to the Board of Trustees and the council in securing the services of the Acting Stated Clerk. The Trustees reviewed the report of the Administrative Commission for the Middlesex PC which shared a plan to sell the property to the Middlesex township.

REPORT OF THE ACTING STATED CLERK

The Acting Stated Clerk reported on some of his activities and his work to get to know individuals and structures of the new Coastlands Presbytery. He shared his intention to serve with humor and diligence to work with, alongside, and among the members of Coastlands Presbytery.

REPORT OF THE GAP COUNCIL

Moderator Wendi Werner noted that this meeting is Rev. Dr. Dee Cooper's last Presbytery meeting as she is accepting a call to serve the Denver Presbytery as their Presbytery leader. Wendi expressed gratitude for Dee's service and informed the Presbytery that the search process for the next Gap Presbyter is underway and they are exploring several individuals that are available.

Wendi also noted that Vice Moderator Rory Chambers was not in attendance at the meeting due to his responsibilities as a Commissioner to General Assembly. Council has started discussing a process to explore and develop a mission and vision goals statement that Rory will be leading in the Fall.

REPORT OF THE MIDDLESEX ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSION

Elder Paul Gunsser presented a report on behalf of the Administrative Commission and to present a request for an amendment to the Warrant for the Middlesex Presbyterian Church dated June 13. A first document from the borough of Middlesex was presented which lays out their proposed use of the property after purchase. An amended Warrant for the Middlesex Presbyterian Church document was presented with the addition of the authority to assume original jurisdiction of the congregation, should that be necessary for the AC to conclude its work.

Motion: *That the property of the Middlesex Presbyterian Church be sold to the borough of Middlesex to be used as a Senior Center, Youth Center, and an Emergency Shelter.*

Discussion followed.

Ken Gordon (Cranbury) asked if the offer from Middlesex borough had any contingencies attached to it. Paul Gunsser replied that it did not. There are no contingencies that the AC is aware of, though there are some issues (DEP and EPA) that the borough is already aware of, since their property has some of the same issues. The offer from the borough is at market value and a good faith offer.

Molly Dykstra asked if there was a sale offer document or inspection document associated with the offer to purchase. There is not a contract at this point. Counsel for the Presbytery has not been retained, but the borough has offered a letter of intent. Do we have a policy as a Presbytery yet as to what happens with proceeds from a sale of real property like this? Are the funds set aside, do they go into a separate account?

Fred Garry answered on behalf of the Trustees. Trustees have put into place a policy on where realized assets go, but the full policy has yet to be developed. The subcommittee is meeting next week to flesh out the policy. At this point there are three paths that funds may follow for investment.

Nancy Tindall asked about the timing of the ultimate sale. Paul responded that both the AC and Middlesex borough are looking toward closing in early to mid-September of this year.

Motion Carried.

Motion: *That the Warrant for the Administrative Commission be amended to include the authority to assume original jurisdiction should such action be necessary. (Appendix #4)*

David Redman asked Paul to clarify what exactly the request means. Paul responded that in the attempt to conclude the matters the AC was charged with. The Middlesex Session is currently composed of 3 members for a non-functioning congregation. One of the Session members, who is also the Treasurer, travels extensively throughout the world. A second Session member also travels extensively. As such it has been difficult for the AC to gather required documents and information in a timely manner. The AC hopes not to have to assume original jurisdiction.

Jerry asked if the Middlesex church supports the request as well. Paul answered that the AC does not ask permission of the congregation to assume original jurisdiction. But he added that due to the difficulties previously cited they were requesting the extension of the warrant to include original jurisdiction.

Arthur Hui asked if the Presbytery would assume any additional liability if the AC assumes original jurisdiction. Wendi asked Arthur to restate the question for Paul. Wendi then asked for information from the Stated Clerk. The Stated Clerk responded that assuming original jurisdiction is a normal part of the process of closing and selling congregational property. Also, assumption of liability would only be made if there was no insurance policy in force by the congregation. Brad answered that liability would apply to the Presbytery's insurance policy immediately upon assumption of ownership of the property by the Presbytery.

Motion Carried.

Wendi thanked Paul for his service and presentation this evening.

SERVICE OF COMMISSIONING FOR GENERAL ASSEMBLY COMMISSIONERS

Moderator Werner indicated there was an oversight in not commissioning of the General Assembly Commissioners prior to the beginning of General Assembly. The following individuals were commissioned by Presbytery for service as Commissioners to General Assembly:

Rev. George Erlandson (Community PC, Edison) in absentia
Rev. Rory Chambers (First PC, Dutch Neck) in absentia
Elder Beth Rigby (Allentown PC)
Elder Dilys Henninger (Hightstown PC)
Molly Boysen - YAAD (Trinity PC, East Brunswick) in absentia

REPORT OF THE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Moderator Kathryn Starzer-Farrell presented the report of the Governance Committee. She presented the following documents for adoption and inclusion in the Manual of Administrative Operations. Wendi indicated that because she has been serving on the Governance Committee, she cannot moderate while being available to answer questions. Therefore, Wendi appointed Elder Jan Margolis as Temporary Moderator.

Kathryn thanked those who have served on the Governance Committee. She indicated that a Town Hall meeting was held Monday night (6/27) for anyone who had questions or concerns about the items being brought for adoption. She shared the graphic of the organization chart for the Presbytery and indicated the roles for consideration at this meeting.

Motion: *The Governance Committee moves the adoption of the Council document, found on page 12 of the Commissioner's Handbook, for its inclusion in the Manual of Administrative Operations. (Appendix #5)*

Motion Carried.

Motion: *The Governance Committee moves the adoption of the Coastlands Treasurer Position Description, found on page 14 of the Commissioner's Handbook, for its inclusion in the Manual of Administrative Operations. (Appendix #6)*

Motion Carried.

Motion: *The Governance Committee moves the adoption of the Commission on Ministry document, found*

on page 16 of the Commissioner's Handbook, for its inclusion in the Manual of Administrative Operations. (Appendix #7)

Motion Carried.

Motion: *The Governance Committee moves the adoption of the Round Table document, found on page 23 of the Commissioner's Handbook, for its inclusion in the Manual of Administrative Operations. (Appendix #8)*

Motion Carried.

Motion: *The Governance Committee moves the adoption of the Standing Administrative Commission for the Dissolution of Congregations document, found on page 24 of the Commissioner's Handbook, for its inclusion in the Manual of Administrative Operations. (Appendix #9)*

Molly Dykstra encouraged the continued use of the terminology of dissolution rather than closure.

David Redman asked if the document was meant to establish a group of people who will be formed and available, or if the document is a form that will be used on a case-by-case basis.

Wendi responded that the intent is to establish a group of individuals who will be commissioned to be ready to go to work when a congregation seeks dissolution.

Walter Vincent asked about having original jurisdiction as an option or if it is included by default.

Wendi answered that each instance of dissolution would require presbytery to instruct the Standing AC to begin its work and the warrant might be adjusted as needed.

Motion Carried.

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON MINISTRY

Rev. Nina Reader, Co-Moderator, presented the report for the Commission on Ministry. She welcomed the following Pastors to the Presbytery.

Rev. Kristie Miles (Brick Presbyterian Church) was introduced by the PNC Chair, Mike Kraynick. Kristie greeted the Presbytery.

Rev. Shannon Smythe (United Presbyterian Church of Yardville) was introduced by PNC Moderator, Megan Gadsby. Shannon greeted the Presbytery.

Nina offered a prayer for the new minister members of Presbytery.

In presenting the following motion, Nina addressed the disparity in work hour expectations between the three previous presbyteries. The previous figure of 50 hours per week was not set as an expectation, but was a reported perception by ministers surveyed in the previous New Brunswick Presbytery. COM asks that congregations NOT consider a commensurate reduction in compensation just because of the reduction in work hour calculations.

A question was asked about how to try to ensure that Ministers earn a living wage that allows them to live in the communities which they serve. Is there an awareness of the need for continued work to adjust to help guide congregations in their negotiations? Is the allocation for travel realistic, or is there a plan to make a recommendation for adjustment purposes?

Nina responded to both questions that the Minimum Terms of Call are a starting point.

Motion: *That the presented documents be approved as the Minimum Terms of Call for Ministers of Word and Sacrament serving in Congregational contexts as well as Certified Ruling Elders for 2022. (Appendix #10)*

Motion Carried.

CELEBRATION OF REV. DEE COOPER'S MINISTRY WITH COASTLANDS PRESBYTERY

Wendi began the expression of gratitude for Dee's service among the Presbytery by sharing a video. When the movie Speed came out there were any number of articles about the physical impossibility of the bus making the 50 foot jump. When the previous Presbytery Leader left, Wendi could not imagine that anyone coming in cold from such a distance would have been able to jump the gap in our process. She worked to raise our awareness of what we needed to do to accomplish our own tasks despite our doubts. She has kept our speed steady and our hand on the wheel in order to continue our forward progress. Presbytery gave Dee a gift certificate for a restaurant named L5 in Denver with gorgeous views and fabulous food and hope that she will think of the Presbytery as she dines with new friends. Wendi then offered a prayer of gratitude and thanksgiving for Dee's service with Coastlands and for strength and encouragement in her new call.

Dee then took a moment of personal privilege to address the Presbytery and thank them for the time she has worked with them and the ways in which they have continued to amaze her in their work together. Dee then shared a blessing adapted from John O'Donohue for the Presbytery.

ADJOURNMENT

The Presbytery adjourned at 8:30pm with prayer by Rev. Wendi Werner, to reconvene on September 27, 2022, at 6:30pm on zoom.

Attested: Rev. David Torrey, Acting Stated Clerk