

July 27, 2021 – Zoom Meeting

**PRESBYTERY OF CENTRAL NEW JERSEY MEETING ON ZOOM
TUESDAY, JULY 27, 2021**

The special called meeting of the Presbytery of Central New Jersey, held on Zoom, on Tuesday, July 27, 2021, was called to order at 6:31pm by the moderator, Rev. Diane Ford, who opened the meeting with prayer.

Rev. Diane Ford acknowledged that land within our geographical bounds was taken from those who were native to the land, specifically the Munsee Lenape and the Lenni-Lenape.

The Rev. Sue Smith, Acting Stated Clerk provided Zoom instructions for recognition and voting.

Rev. Smith declared that there was a quorum.

Roll of Presbytery's Commissioners

The following teaching elders were in attendance:

Kyle Anderson (V)	Diane Ford (V)	John Monroe (V)
Lindsay Anderson-Beck (V)	Fred Garry (V)	William Morris (V)
Marie Bacchiocchi (V)	Linda Goeddel (HR)	Lori Neff LaRue (V)
Natalie Bell (V)	Karen Hernandez-Granzen (V)	Alan Olson (V)
Barbara Booth (V)	Ed Hoener (V)	Cynthia Parker (HR)
Cindy Bowman (HR)	Chuck Holm (HR)	Joanne Petto (V)
James Brumm (V)	Linda Hora (HR)	Nina Reeder (HR)
Katherine Cunningham (HR)	Chris Houtz (V)	Andrew Scales (V)
David Davis (V)	MaryJane Inman (HR)	Len Scales (V)
Walter De Gunya (V)	Nathan Jeremie-Brink (V)	Sue Smith (V)
Miriam Diephouse-McMillan (V)	James Klotz (V)	Theresa Swenson (AL)
Sharl Dixon (V)	Larissa Kwong Abazia (AL)	Lydia Tembo (V)
Jessica Dixon (V)	Marcus Lambright (V)	Glory Thomas (V)
George Erlandson (V)	Jenny Lee (V)	Julie Thompson-Barrier (V)
Gary W Filson (V)	Marcia Lewis (V)	John Williams (V)
	Hannah Lovaglio (V)	Robbie Ytterberg (V)

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The following Commissioned Ruling Elders were present:

Julissa Alvarez-Garcia

The following churches were represented by the Elder Commissioner(s) indicated:

Allentown (N. Tindall)	Manasquan (K. Dioguardi)
Avenel (H. Pallitto)	Martin Luther King, Jr. (T. Laws)
Dutch Neck (D. Redman, M. Redman)	Matawan (B. Ackland)
East Brunswick-Trinity (B. Bodor, K. Starzer-Farrell)	Millstone-Perrineville (C. Heller)
Ewing-Covenant (D. Lovitt, P. Miller)	Nassau (L. Cornell, C. Wehrheim)
Farmingdale (H. Dunbar)	Ocean (E. Kelsey)
Forked River (L. De Lotto)	Pennington (H. Anderson, C. Walker)
Hamilton Square (M. Meduski)	Shrewsbury (J. Davies)
Hightstown (D. Petrenka)	Slackwood C. Belles)
Jackson-Cornerstone (L. Stone)	Tinton Falls (S. Buckley)
Iselin (H. Meyers)	Titusville (K. Schmidt)
Jamesburg (D. Chase)	Toms River (G. Bright, D. Raisch)
Kingston (B. Clifton)	Trenton First (L. Herrick)
Lakewood First (A. Gilman)	Trenton Westminster (A. Belmont)
Lawrenceville (J. Everett, D. Sung, G. Vanderwal)	Witherspoon St. (K. Gift)
	Woodbridge (M. Hora)
	Yardville (G. Hanewald)

The following elders, who are officers, Trustees, Former Moderators, were present: Cherry Oakley, Linda Gilmore, Kurt Kaboth, Nancy Stout, Walter Vincent, Jean Woodman.

Also, in attendance were:

Rev. SanDawna Ashley, Rev. David Baer, Ilene Black (Staff), Robert Carson, Rev. Shelley Donaldson, Rev. Kirk Johnson, Sal Lalama, Marie Luthringer (Staff), Kathy Ramsay, Rev. Nancy Talbot, Rev. Ronald Thompson, Terri Youn.

There was a motion to seat the following as corresponding members: Rev. SanDawna Ashley, Minnesota Valley Presbytery, Rev. David Baer, Presbytery of Northeast NJ, Rev. Shelley Donaldson, Presbytery of Southern New England, Rev. Nancy Talbot, Presbytery of NYC, Rev. Ronald Thompson, Presbytery of Northeast NJ, Elder Sal Lalama, NJ Missional Communities AC. **Approved.**

The Stated Clerk read the call for the meeting:

The stated purpose of the meeting is to:

- Elect an Interim Board of Trustees
- Elect an Interim Board of Trustees President
- Elect an Interim Treasurer of the Corporation
- Approve the warrant for an Administrative Commission for Middlesex Presbyterian Church
- Approve a name for the Presbytery

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A motion was made and seconded to approve the Call and the Docket. **Approved.**

Election of the Trustees

Elder Sal Lalama presented the following slate for the Interim Board of Trustees to serve until February 28, 2021.

Elder Tim Brown
Elder Robert Carson
Rev. David Davis
Rev. Fred Garry
Elder Kurt Kaboth
Rev. Jyung In (Jenny) Lee
Rev. Robert Louer
Rev. Andrew Scales
Rev. Theresa Swenson
Elder Jean Woodman

Nominations were requested from the floor. There was a motion to close the nominations. **Approved.** There was a motion to elect the slate. **Approved.**

Elder Lalama moved that Rev. Fred Garry be elected as the President of the Interim Board of Trustees to serve until February 28, 2021. **Approved.**

Elder Nancy Tindall moved that Elder Linda Gilmore be elected Treasurer of the Corporation to serve until February 28, 2021. **Approved.**

Rev. Shelley Donaldson offered a prayer for the newly elected.

Warrant for the Middlesex Presbyterian Church Administrative Commission

It was moved and seconded to approve the Warrant for the Middlesex Presbyterian Church Administrative Commission (Exhibit A). **Approved.**

Presbytery Name Change

Rev. Hannah Lovaglio moved to approve “The Presbytery of the Coastlands” as the new name of the presbytery. She explained the process that the Core Transition Team used so that the input was as broad as possible. **Approved.**

Adjournment

The Presbytery adjourned at 7:43pm to reconvene on September 28, 2021, at 6:30pm.

The Co-Moderators, Rev. Diane Ford and Elder Cherry Oakley offered the closing prayer.

Attest: Rev. Sue Smith, Acting Stated Clerk

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Appendix A

Warrant

for an

Administrative Commission
of the Presbytery of Central NJ concerning
the Middlesex Presbyterian Church, Middlesex, NJ

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For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:
a time to be born, and a time to die;
a time to plant and a time to pluck up what is planted.

Ecclesiastes 3: 1-2

Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life.
Those who believe in me, though they die, will live;
and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.

John 11: 25-26

A commission is empowered to consider and conclude matters referred to it by a governing body. The appointing body shall state specifically the scope of power given to a commission. A commission shall keep a full record of its proceedings, which shall be submitted to its governing body to be incorporated in its minutes and to be regarded as the actions of the governing body itself. (G-3.0109b)

The decision of an administrative commission shall be the action of the appointing governing body from the time of its completion by the commission and the announcement, where relevant, of the action to parties affected by it. Such decision shall be transmitted in writing to the stated clerk of the governing body, who shall report it to the governing body at its next meeting. A governing body may rescind or amend an action of an administrative commission in the same way actions of the governing body may be modified. (G-3.0109b)

The Middlesex Presbyterian Church in Middlesex NJ was chartered in 1962 with 128 members from the surrounding community and by 1965 constructed its own building. By the early 1970's the church had grown to over 300 members.

For over 35 years Middlesex Presbyterian Church served its community by operating a nursery school which was well regarded and successful.

Throughout its history Middlesex Presbyterian Church developed and provided leadership to both the presbytery and the larger PC(USA) with their then pastor Rev. Dr. Neal Presa serving the denomination as Moderator of the 220th general assembly from 2012-14.

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Over the years the congregation has been very active in hands on mission projects, sent participants on mission trips, participated in the ministry of Camp Johnsonburg, supported their local crop walk, and been a faithful partner and host for many community outreach and self help ministries, such as 12 step programs and chaplaincies.

In recent years the congregation has seen steep decline as members have moved from the area including key members of the session and congregation. Following the pandemic year the director of the nursery school announced their retirement and the session felt that they no longer have the people power to continue to engage the community and maintain the affairs and property of the church. As they have reevaluated things following the pandemic, they are tired and don't have the energy to continue.

As a result of that process the Session of Middlesex Presbyterian Church, at its meeting on July 7th, 2021 requested of the "Central" Presbytery the formation of an AC to help them conclude the affairs of Middlesex Presbyterian Church, to figure out a legacy and plan for the property, taking into account the other ministries which currently use the well maintained and sacred space, and to work with them to find a new church home where members can continue to grow spiritually.

This motion is a request that the Presbytery of Central NJ at its Special Called Meeting on July 27, 2021, create and empower an Administrative Commission. This Administrative Commission shall have the power to conclude the following actions:

1. To dissolve Middlesex Presbyterian Church.
2. To provide for the continuing spiritual and pastoral care of the remaining members of the Middlesex Presbyterian Church.
3. To help as requested by the members to identify a new home where they might transfer their membership en-masse or facilitating ways to continue certain ministries under other structures. While the ministry of Middlesex Presbyterian Church in this form is coming to an end, God is not through with these disciples, and they understand their faith journey to still be interconnected. The nature of this connection and path forward will require ongoing discernment.
4. To transfer members of Middlesex Presbyterian Church to other congregations and to provide for pastoral care for those who do not wish to or are unable to transfer their membership.
5. To grant letters of dismissal to members for those who have not found a new church after a period of one year.

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6. To take possession of all real and personal property of the Middlesex church along with financial records and inventories of equipment and to oversee transfer of all real property and accounts to the Presbytery.
7. To ensure that bills are paid, the property is maintained and secured, and adequate insurance coverage is in place. In addition, the AC shall work with the groups currently using the facility, including 12 step fellowships, Grace Christian Fellowship and other programs which use the building to insure that their vital work is cared for.
8. To consult with the Session or its representatives regarding requests the congregation may have relating to the disposition of equipment, memorials and other property, honoring them where possible and to retain such for future use at the discretion of the Presbytery.
9. To assert the claim of the Presbytery to any property of the Middlesex Presbyterian Church congregation not known at this time or property which may come as beneficiary of a will or trust not known at this time.
10. To assert that the Middlesex Presbyterian Church property remains a vital asset to the ministry of the Presbytery of Central NJ and to hold prayer services on the property.
11. To discern, in consultation with the COM, the future use of the real property and in the event that the decision is to sell the property, to carry out that sale.
12. To determine uses for the various funds of Middlesex Presbyterian Church, including the manse fund, which honor the ministry and legacy of Middlesex Presbyterian Church and build up the ministry and witness of the PC(USA.)
13. To transfer to the Stated Clerk for forwarding to Presbyterian Historical Society all official records of the congregation. Other historical records shall be transferred to the stated clerk for storage or transfer to PHS at their direction.
14. To complete any additional tasks necessary to close the corporation of the church.
15. To see that the ministry and faithful history of the Middlesex Presbyterian Church are suitably celebrated in a service of worship.

In undertaking these actions, the Administrative Commission shall be sensitive to the memory, heritage, and concerns of the members of the Middlesex Presbyterian Church.

The Administrative Commission shall invite at least one representative of the Middlesex Presbyterian Church to participate in its work with voice but without vote.

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Membership in this Administrative Commission shall be by appointment of the moderator of the Interim COM, in consultation with the acting stated clerk. It shall include at least 3 members and appointments shall be announced at the next stated meeting of the Presbytery.

This Administrative Commission shall report its actions to a future Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of Central NJ. They shall provide the Presbytery with interim reports semi-annually and their warrant shall conclude with the completion of the above delegated tasks.

Rev. Sue Smith, Acting Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Central NJ