

CALL TO THE STATED MEETING

National Capital Presbytery

March 23, 2021

Stated Meeting Items:

- 1) Introduction of new minister members of National Capital Presbytery
- 2) Proposed NCP Fossil Fuel Divestment Resolution
- 3) National Capital Presbytery Policy Statement on Dismantling Racism

Registration Instructions:

To register for the meeting, go to the following link:

<https://thepresbytery.org/presbyterymeeting/>

March 12, 2021

Greetings dear siblings in Christ,

As I write this letter Presbytery Committees, Staff and invited participants are busy preparing for our approaching Presbytery meeting on March 23, 2021. This will be our 4th virtual meeting during my tenure as your moderator. Thus far, each meeting has been a success as the Zoom platform has afforded our gathering a medium for worship and for performing the work necessary to the vision and mission of the National Capital Presbytery. Moving forward, aided by your comments in the evaluations, our staff has designed a modified approach for the virtual March meeting, one that returns to the former model of Presbytery meetings at National where the meeting began with worship in the Sanctuary, then adjourned to Stone Hall for the business portion of the meeting. In similar manner, we will begin the March meeting with worship in one Zoom link, then recess as we move to a different Zoom link to do the business that will be before the body for consideration. The difference of course, is that rather than physically moving from one location to another, we will move from one Zoom link to another. The first link will be in the regular meeting format that allows everyone to use the gallery view and the chat feature. The second link, following the recess, will open in the webinar format that facilitates discussion and voting on motions in an orderly manner.

Another change that we believe will be an aid to commissioners in the meeting concerns the Open Spaces offerings. There will be three open spaces, each with a direct connection to the subject-matter of this meeting. First, our worship leader for this meeting is **Rev. Dr. Brian K. Blount** New Testament scholar and President of Union Presbyterian Seminary. Rev. Blunt will lead an Open Space discussion on work at Union.

Next, the **Dismantling Racism Team** will lead a discussion in Open Space on the NPC Policy Statement that will be considered for approval during the business meeting. Elder Elsie Reid and other team members will be in the Space to lead the discussion and answer questions.

The third Open Space will be led by Elder Mark Eakin and other representatives from the **Earth Care Network** to discuss the NCP Fossil Fuel Divestment Resolution that will be before the body for consideration and approval during the business meeting.

As always, I urge you to download and read the materials in advance of the meeting. The materials will be posted on the NCP website.

I truly thank you for your patience and support as we continue to work towards being God's body in the world, to His glory. Peace and grace,

Michael L. Rankin

NCP Moderator



National Capital
PRESBYTERY
MISSIONAL · PASTORAL · PROPHETIC

Stated Meeting
National Capital Presbytery
March 23, 2021
Via Zoom

We Gather in Community

6:00PM CALL TO ORDER AND PRAYER	Elder Michael Rankin, Moderator
6:10PM OMNIBUS MOTION pp 4-5	Elder Jan Moody, Stated Clerk
6:15PM TRANSITIONS	Rev. John Molina-Moore, General Presbyter
ACTION ITEMS pp 6-12	
6:30PM NCP Fossil Fuel Divestment Resolution/Motion	Elder Charles Barber Elder Mark Eakin Elder Charles Kuo
7:00PM NCP Policy Statement on Dismantling Racism/Motion	Rev. Edwin Andrade
Affirmation of Faith	Rev. Bev Swayze
Benediction	Elder Michael Rankin
Meeting Leaders	
Elder Michael Rankin, NCP Moderator	
Elder Jan Moody, Stated Clerk	
Rev. John Molina-Moore, General Presbyter	
Elder Charles Barber, Leadership Council Chair	
Elder Charles Kuo, MCC Chair	
Elder Mark Eakin, EarthCare Network member	
Rev. Edwin Andrade, Dismantling Racism Team member	
Rev. Bev Swayze	

OMNIBUS MOTION

From the Stated Clerk

- The Stated Clerk moves the approval of the minutes of the January 26, 2021 presbytery meeting.
- The Stated Clerk moves that presbytery receive the report of the following commissions and dismiss the commissions with thanks:
 - The commission to install the Rev. Dr. Ron Hankins as pastor of Silver Spring Presbyterian Church, February 7, 2021 at 3:00 PM via Zoom
 - The commission to install the Rev. Matthew Pooley as pastor of Patuxent Presbyterian Church, Feb. 21, 2021 at 3:00 PM via Zoom
- The Stated Clerk, having received a written request from the clerk of session of Faith Presbyterian Church, moves approval of an exception to the Book of Order rule G-2.0404 which limits the term of call for elders to two consecutive terms of three years each for Elder Edward Jones to extend his term on the session of Faith Presbyterian Church for one year.

From the Nominating Committee

ACCP

c/o 2024 Ronald Flowers, RE, Northminster PC

CDC

c/o 2023 Joyce Rarumangkay, RE, Clifton

c/o 2022 Norman Cobb, RE, First United Presbyterian Church of Dale City

Leadership Council

c/o 2024 Miriam Dewhurst, RE, New York Avenue PC

c/o 2024 Rev. Neill Morgan, TE

MCC

c/o 2024 Rev. Jean Brown, TE

c/o 2023 Rev. Dwight Peace, TE

c/o 2022 George Kerr III, RE, Westminster PC (DC)

c/o 2022 Yenny Delgado, RE, Bethesda PC

c/o 2022 Roland Frenck, RE, Darnestown PC

c/o 2022 Patricia Petty Morse, RE, Northminster PC

Personnel

c/o 2023 Rev. Sterling Morse, TE

c/o 2023 Dan Schlotke, RE, National PC

Prep for Ministry

c/o 2022 Rev. David Bowerman

c/o 2022 Rev. Chuck Booker

c/o2 021 Alan Wisdom, RE, Georgetown PC

Bills and Overtures

c/o 2023 Miriam Dewhurst

c/o 2023 Mark Eakin

From Leadership Council

Mark Eakin, Chair, Bills and Overtures Committee

Action Items for March 23, 2021 NCP Meeting

MOTION 1

Leadership Council moves that NCP approve the recommendation from MCC of the following NCP Fossil Fuel Divestment Resolution

NCP Fossil Fuel Divestment Resolution

Whereas;

National Capital Presbytery expresses its profound concern about the destructive effects of climate change on all God's creation, including a disproportionate impact on communities of persons of color, those living in poverty, and in the least developed countries; the elderly and children; and those least responsible for the emissions of greenhouse gases. The National Capital Presbytery thus recognizes the moral mandate for humanity to shift to a sustainable energy plan in a way that is both just and compassionate. This mandate compels us to action as a presbytery to divest from the fossil fuel industry even as we reduce our use of fossil fuels and shrink our carbon footprint and

Whereas;

National Capital Presbytery acknowledges that those working in the fossil fuel sector may suffer economic disruptions and personal hardships as the world transitions from obtaining its energy from fossil fuel sources to renewable energy sources and therefore, the NCP supports efforts of the PCUSA to use its resources to assist fossil fuel workers through this transition; therefore be it

Resolved,

NCP will call upon the Leadership Council of the National Capital Presbytery to:

- a. Amend the "Prohibited Investments" subsection of Section 9 of *NCP Financial Policies*, as follows: "6. Investments in fossil fuel companies: The assets in the Portfolio shall not be invested in any company listed in the Carbon Underground 200 or companies listed in the Global Industry Classification Standard (GICS) 101010 and 101020."
- b. Direct the Investment Committee to ensure compliance with subsection 3a of this overture by December 2022.
- c. Request regular updates from the Investment Committee to the Leadership Council detailing progress made towards bringing the Portfolio into compliance with subsection 3b.

Resolved,

NCP will call upon the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery to inform the member congregations in the Presbytery of the passage and implementation of this resolution.

Rationale

During the last two General Assemblies (221st in 2014 and 222nd in 2016) our denomination debated divestment from the fossil fuel industry. In 2018 an overture to divest was to have been on the docket of the GA, but because of the pandemic only constitutional and business questions were addressed by the GA.

- In 2014, the Presbytery of Boston sent the overture “On Divestment from Fossil Fuel Companies” with 11 presbyteries concurring.
- In 2016, the Presbytery of San Francisco sent the overture “On PC(USA) Fossil Fuel Divestment” with 30 presbyteries concurring.
- In 2018, the Hudson River Presbytery submitted an overture to the GA asking the PCUSA Foundation and Pension Fund to divest from its holdings in fossil fuel companies with 40 presbyteries concurring. No single overture has ever been presented to the PCUSA with so many presbyteries concurring.

We are proud to say that, in each of these years, the National Capital Presbytery voted overwhelmingly to be one of the concurring presbyteries. **If we feel so strongly about divesting the PCUSA’s funds, we should be willing to do the same with the NCP’s own funds.**

Prior to the 222nd Assembly, nine former moderators signed a letter urging the commissioners to support the overture to divest.¹ Their reasoning included, “Because of the grave and urgent threat of climate change and the fossil fuel sector’s well-documented and unyielding refusal to change, it is no longer morally or ethically right for the PC(USA) to profit from companies that are creating ecological destruction and human suffering on such a monumental scale.” At the conclusion of the 222nd Assembly, Bruce Reyes Chow, Moderator of the 218th General Assembly tweeted: “While there have been many #GA222 decisions that have gone the way I had hoped, our failure to divest in fossil fuels is a monumental miss.”

Synods, presbyteries and churches are starting to have their own divestment discussions. The Synod of the Northeast, Hudson River Presbytery, the Presbytery of San Francisco, and the Presbytery of Boston have all voted to divest from fossil fuels. Tallahassee First Presbyterian, White Plains Presbyterian, and First Presbyterian Palo Alto are among congregations that have voted to divest from fossil fuels.

The primary reason the overture to divest from fossil fuels did not pass at the last two GA's is that the Mission Responsibility Through Engagement Committee (MRTI) argued for continuing shareholder engagement. The Presbyterian Foundation, which manages the PCUSA's endowment funds, follows the lead of the MRTI. The Foundation, however, has subsequently established a fossil-free fund, of which congregations and other bodies, such as presbyteries, can take advantage. As the Foundation notes: "The Foundation's subsidiary, New Covenant Trust Company (NCTC), is providing fossil free managed strategies to congregations and other clients that desire a customized approach. This offers congregations and others a way to meet their objectives and align with their values."

In our own presbytery, in March 2016 we approved the following Creation Care Policy.

Peace and justice are God's plan for all creation. The Earth and all creation belong to God. God calls us to be careful, humble stewards of this Earth, and to protect and restore it for its own sake, and for the future use and enjoyment of the human family. As God offers all people the special gift of peace through Jesus Christ, and through Christ reconciles all to God, we are called to deal justly with one another and the Earth.

Therefore, the National Capital Presbytery and its member churches covenant to become God's creation care stewards by pledging to do and be the following:

1. Our **worship** and discipleship will celebrate God's grace and glory in creation and declare that God calls us to cherish, protect and restore this Earth, by, for example, devoting a worship service to Earth care, having a Moment for Mission related to Earth care, and using locally grown flowers in the church.
2. In **education**, we will seek learning and teaching opportunities to know and understand the threats to God's creation and the damage already inflicted. We will encourage and support each other in finding ways of keeping and healing the creation in response to God's call to Earth-keeping, justice, and community. NCP congregations might choose, for example, to offer classes for children, youth, and adults that help them understand humankind's stewardship role in caring for the Creation and the harmful human and natural consequences of ignoring God's call.
3. Our **facilities** will be managed, maintained, and upgraded in a manner that respects and cherishes all creation, human and non-human, while meeting equitably the needs of all people. In our buildings and on our grounds we will use energy efficiently, conserve resources, and share what we have in abundance so that God's holy creation will be sustainable for all life and future generations. NCP congregations might consider, for example, upgrading lighting in their facilities with LED lights, post reminders on light switches to turn them off when not in use, plant native species and a butterfly garden, and greatly reduce the use of fertilizers and pesticides.

4. Our **outreach** will encourage public policy and community involvement that protects and restores the vulnerable and degraded Earth as well as oppressed and neglected people. We will advocate for eco-justice, sustainable food policies, and reduction of waste of every kind. We will be mindful that our personal and collective actions can positively or negatively affect our neighborhood, region, nation and world. We will seek to achieve environmental justice through coalitions and ecumenical partnerships. NCP congregations might consider, for example, holding a rummage sale, participating in rebuilding projects, like Habitat for Humanity, and making public officials aware of the congregation's support for earth care related issues.

Addressing climate change is about working together for the greater good of the Kingdom of God and bringing the love of Jesus Christ to the world. Communities in Alexandria, VA, and Prince George's County face huge risk of sea level rise. We must consider those who live in proximity to the ocean and the Chesapeake Bay, whose lives and homes are threatened by rising sea levels caused by climate change.

Our work to combat climate change is inspired and sustained by two Biblical mandates:

Genesis 2:15, "And the Lord God took the human and put the human in the Garden of Eden to work it and to keep it."

Matthew 25: 40 "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."

When we continue to invest in fossil fuels, we are not being good stewards of what God has given to us – all of God's creation. And we are putting at risk "the least of these" who are disproportionately harmed by the catastrophic effects of climate change.

Additionally, the commissioners to the 222nd General Assembly considered the following rationale:

In 1981, our church made clear through the document "The Power to Speak Truth to Power" the importance of transitioning away from a fossil fuel-based economy.

In 2008, our church made clear through the document "The Power to Change" that the catastrophic effects of climate change make this transition essential to the preservation of human life and God's good creation.

For over two decades, our church's Committee on Mission Responsibility through Investment has engaged in shareholder action with fossil fuel companies. They have done an exemplary job but have made no impact in addressing Climate Change. When the best people we have make so little progress, the fault lies with an intractable industry,

obsessed with profit at the expense of the Creation.

Some argue that we will not make as high a rate of return on non-fossil fuel investments. While that may have been true at one point, now investing in socially responsible ways is every bit as profitable as investing in fossil fuel companies. Another huge risk to consider is the enormous amount of assets that fossil fuel companies have in the ground. As our society inevitably turns away from fossil fuels to renewables, these assets, which drive their stock prices, will become useless. Investing in fossil fuel companies then is like investing in the buggy whip industry when the world is turning to automobiles.

Many claim that it is inconsistent to divest from fossil fuels while we are members of a society that is addicted to them. This is true. But it is equally inconsistent to attempt to rehabilitate that society while invested in its addiction.

Even as we continue working to mitigate the climate crises, we must shed the burden of our investments in climate destruction. This act will speak more loudly and more clearly than any prophetic declaration we have voiced to date.

We, as Christians, have the privilege, responsibility and obligation to speak with moral authority on issues of great importance. However, the power and clarity of prophetic voice is easily stained by hypocrisy and inconsistency.

It's time to put our money where our mouth is. It's time to divest from fossil fuels.

¹ <http://www.fossilfreepcusa.org/moderators-letter/>

MOTION 2

Leadership Council moves that the presbytery approve the National Capital Presbytery Policy Statement on Dismantling Racism.

National Capital Presbytery Policy Statement on Dismantling Racism

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to acknowledge the pervasive sin of racism in our church and society and commit National Capital Presbytery (NCP) to the work of confronting and dismantling racism. NCP shall seek to accomplish the missional work of building the body of Christ by requiring anti-racism training for our clergy and by marshalling credible, trusted resources to enable and better equip our congregations as they examine and confront the issues of racial injustice, systemic racism, restorative justice, and racial healing.

Rationale:

Racism is more than individual acts of bigotry or prejudice. Racism is any system, institution, or cultural practice or tradition, which protects or prefers the lives, property, and status of White people--or any group which takes power over another, at the expense of our siblings of color or other marginalized persons or groups. Racism is contrary to the Gospel injunction to love God and our neighbor as ourselves. Scriptures teach us that though we are individually unique, we are collectively, as children of God, one in God's eyes, equally beloved by God. As disciples of Jesus Christ, NCP will engage in this transformative work as we seek to build the beloved community of Christ where there is neither "Jew nor Greek...no longer slave or free...no longer male or female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus." Galatians 3:28.

Implementation:

1. The first component of the policy is structured education. NCP shall offer **training** for our clergy, lay leadership, and member congregations on racial and social justice. The Dismantling Racism Team will select a non-profit organization dedicated to catalyzing social justice through service and "allyship" to offer this training.

- a. Attendance at the workshop is **mandatory** for:
 - 1) all minister members of NCP. NCP ministers must participate fully in one of the proffered workshops over the next three years, *i.e.*, during 2021, 2022 and 2023.
 - 2) all NCP Staff

The cost of the training module will be paid from NCP funds. The Committee on Ministry will maintain a roster of those needing and those who have completed the training and will report the list to the Stated Clerk annually.

- b. Attendance at a workshop is **encouraged** for:
 - 1) Chairs of NCP committees and commissions, church staffs, including directors of music, education, and youth, as well as members of NCP congregations, so that NCP may learn more about the work of identifying and ending racism.
- c. NCP invites and encourages clergy and lay members to embrace this discipline of training and commit to the work of confronting and ending racism. The training will provide information and insights into anti-racism efforts; however, this workshop is only a beginning. Ongoing prayer, study,

conversation, discernment, and practice by and among NCP members will be essential.

2. The major work within the Presbytery of dismantling racism, of restoring right relationships with God and each other, will be done within the member congregations of NCP.
 - a. NCP, through its Dismantling Racism Team, will identify *educational resources* for our congregations, some of whom may just be starting to explore the issues of racism and racial injustice while others have already begun to study and take actions toward racial healing. The Dismantling Racism Team will maintain on the NCP website a compendium of trusted resources (written, visual, or experiential) to illuminate and guide this work wherever our congregations may be on this journey.
 - b. Financial assistance in the form of training grants will also be available to congregations needing that help. Applications for financial assistance may be directed to the Director of Congregational Development and Mission.
 - c. These tools are intended to aid our member congregations as they seek a deeper awareness of the sin of racism and its corrosive effects and discern how they may become agents of racial justice and reconciliation.

Conclusion:

Our mission as members of the church of the Triune God is to be agents of salvation, justice, and reconciliation. These training workshops and educational resources are an opportunity and a means for our body to turn away from the sin of racism, to act as faithful disciples of Christ in ministering and caring for the marginalized in our world, and to witness God's love for all creation. We humbly undertake this work, trusting that God's Holy Spirit will be our guide and inspiration,