

CALL TO THE STATED MEETING

National Capital Presbytery

March 22, 2022

Stated Meeting Items:

- 1) Omnibus Motion
- 2) Transitions –Ministers newly received by NCP
- 3) Report from the Bills and Overtures Committee
- 4) Motion from Leadership Council related to NCP meetings

Registration Instructions: To register for the meeting, go to the following link: <https://thepresbytery.org/presbyterymeeting>



March 11, 2022

Greetings Beloved in Christ,

As I write this in preparation for our presbytery meeting on March 22, the distress of the world is on full display. From the suffering of the Ukrainian people to epic flooding in Australia, the earth and God's children cry out. In the face of such trouble and despair, it too often seems that there is little that we can do. And yet as God's people, we are called to, in the words of Wendell Berry, "[Practice resurrection.](#)" As Presbyterians, we trust that when we listen to the Spirit speaking through others and offer ourselves to speak under the guidance of that same Spirit, then together we can discern God's leading, and work with the Spirit to be a part of God's coming day of grace, hope and peace.

I think we will catch a glimpse of that grace at the ***Open Space at 4 PM***, where you will be able to hear from the Refugee Ministry Network about the work that many of NCP's churches are doing in welcoming and resettling Afghan refugees in our area. Thanks to Merritt Groeschel and Mike Edwards for leading that gathering. There may also be other open spaces that you may choose from, as well. The list can be found [here](#).

Worship at 5 PM will be led by the folks of First United Church in Dale City. That worship will be on a zoom link, where you may have your camera on, if that is your preference, so that you can see and be seen by others who are worshipping throughout the presbytery.

Our meeting at 6 PM will follow on that same zoom link. During our meeting we will have the opportunity to mark transitions within our presbytery. We will also once again look forward to this year's General Assembly in June and July. The 225th General Assembly will be meeting in a hybrid model, with committee work being done in-person in Louisville, KY at the Presbyterian Center and plenary sessions being conducted online. If you are unfamiliar with the process of determining the business of the General Assembly, I encourage you to watch [this short video](#).

Following our time together, please take just a few minutes to offer your reflection on the meeting. Although we can't address every issue raised by each presbyter, I assure you that the staff and leadership of NCP take those comments and suggestions to heart as we look ahead and plan future meetings.

I am grateful to be a part of National Capital Presbytery with you, and I thank you for the work you do to bear God's love, made known to us in the saving life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, to our neighbors and our world.

Diane Walton Hendricks, Moderator of NCP



Stated Meeting National Capital Presbytery

March 22, 2022

Via Zoom

We Gather in Community

6:00PM CALL TO ORDER	Rev. Diane Hendricks, Moderator
OPENING PRAYER	Elder Shani McIlwain, Vice Moderator
6:10PM OMNIBUS MOTION	Elder Jan Moody, Stated Clerk
6:15PM TRANSITIONS	Rev. John Molina-Moore, General Presbyter
6:30PM BILLS AND OVERTURES REPORT (Action Item p. 5)	Elder Mark Eakin, Bills and Overtures Chair
7:00PM STANDING RULE ON PRESBYTERY MEETINGS (Action Item p. 5)	Elder Dave McClung, Leadership Council Chair
7:15PM NEW BUSINESS	
BENEDICTION	Rev. Diane Hendricks, Moderator

Meeting Leaders

Rev. Diane Hendricks, NCP Moderator
Elder Shani McIlwain, NCP Vice Moderator
Elder Jan Moody, Stated Clerk
Rev. John Molina-Moore, General Presbyter
Elder Mark Eakin, Bills and Overtures Committee Chair
Elder Dave McClung, Leadership Council Chair

OMNIBUS MOTION FOR THE MARCH 22, 2022 PRESBYTERY MEETING

From the Stated Clerk

The Stated Clerk moves to approve the minutes from the January 25, 2022, NCP Meeting.

The Stated Clerk reports that she received the reports from the following commission and dismisses with thanks the Administrative Commission to ordain Emilee Williams at Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church on January 29, 2022, at 11:00 AM

From the Session Records Review Committee

Based upon 2019/2020 review conducted in January of 2022 the committee moves approval of the minutes and register of 15th Street Presbyterian Church.

From the Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee moves the following people for nomination:

CDC

% 2024 Rev. Chris Deacon

COM

% 2024 Rev. Henry Brinton

% 2024 RE Miriam “Mimi” Stevenson (Northminster PC)

% 2024 RE Linda Lanam (OPMH)

CPM c/o 2024 Rev. Lisa Kenkeremath

Investments

% 2022 Rev. David Gray

% 2023 RE James Moser (Fairlington PC)

% 2024 RE Tack Richardson (OPMH)

Personnel

% 2024 RE Lorethea Davis (Northminster PC)

Session Records

% 2024 RE Julia McBee (St. Matthew PC)

From Leadership Council

Leadership Council moves to approve Rev. David Milam as Chair of the Mission Coordination Committee (MCC) through the term ending in September 2022.

ACTION ITEMS FOR THE MARCH 22, 2022, NCP MEETING

National Capital Presbytery is requested to consider concurrence for a proposed overture that is scheduled to be presented at the 2022 General Assembly.

Motion: the sessions of Takoma Park PC, Warner Memorial PC, and Fairlington PC move that National Capital Presbytery concur with the Mid Kentucky Presbytery sponsored overture ENV-08- On Declaring the Time IS Now to “Cherish Creation, Cut Carbon, and Speak Up”. (See p. 6)

Bills and Overtures Recommendation

The Bills and Overtures Committee recommends that National Capital Presbytery approve this concurrence with ENV-08.

Motion: Leadership Council moves that National Capital Presbytery approve the following Standing Rule for National Capital Presbytery:

Standing Rule # 7

An ad hoc Executive Committee is empowered to consider the cancellation of a scheduled NCP Stated Meeting for circumstances not provided for in Standing Rule 2. The ad hoc committee will include:

- The General Presbyter
- The Stated Clerk
- The Moderator of Presbytery
- The Vice Moderator of Presbytery
- The Chairperson of Leadership Council

A majority in favor of cancellation will suffice to cancel a meeting.

Items of business of the canceled meeting will be considered at the next scheduled NCP Stated Meeting.

The General Presbyter is authorized to determine the most effective means of notification of cancellation of a meeting to the presbytery.

Background

NCP Standing Rule # 2, adopted in 2009, provides for cancellation because of weather-related factors or other emergencies which would make travel to/from a presbytery meeting hazardous. The proposed Standing Rule # 7 provides for consideration of additional circumstances that may indicate a reason to cancel a scheduled Stated Meeting of NCP.

For example, if the General Assembly (GA) is scheduled to gather at the same time as a scheduled NCP Stated Meeting, this may be a circumstance that indicates a need to consider canceling the scheduled NCP Stated Meeting because the NCP moderator and vice moderator are expected to attend GA as commissioners.

Recommendation

The Presbytery of Mid-Kentucky overtures the 225th General Assembly (2022)—as a church, a people of faith, and a social organization embodying Christian values—to:

1. Repent of our participation and growing complicity in the processes that have brought our planetary ecosystem to the tipping point of unsustainability for humans and mass extinction of other species.
2. Direct that all financial investments of the PC(USA) be withdrawn from industries that contribute to the production of the two major greenhouse gasses (CO₂ and methane), which will accelerate the timeline of the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (guided by the [Carbon Underground 200](#) and those listed in the [Global Industry Classification Standard 101010 and 101020](#)) and effectively end our investment in the production and use of [plastics](#).
3. Direct the Board of Pensions and the Presbyterian Foundation to increase investment in sources of low-carbon renewable energy, energy efficiency, and energy storage in ways that complement the policies that transition workers in our present fossil fuel industry into employment in green and sustainable energy sectors.
4. Encourage all PC(USA) members and congregations to study the various documents produced by the General Assembly over the past 30 years, including the recent (2022) [“Investing in a Green Future: A Vision for a Renewed Creation”](#) from the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP), along with scripture and related overtures, such as:
 - [OVT-004]: On Learning About and Starting the Process of Divestment from Fossil Fuels <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000769>
 - [OVT-015]: On Creating the Presbyterian Tree Fund <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000854>
 - [OVT-016]: On Reducing the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Carbon Imprint <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000855>
 - [OVT-027]: On Affirming the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (Paris Agreement) <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000869>
 - [OVT-034]: On Fossil Fuel Divestment <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000876>
5. Urge our congregations and members to become the needed, faithful change we seek by being carbon neutral, net-zero, or even climate positive by 2030; encourage congregations with historic or landmark buildings to retrofit their structures to the furthest extent possible; and implore all PC(USA)-related educational institutions (secondary schools, colleges, universities, seminaries)¹ and individual members to do the same with their homes and facilities.
6. Advocate through our Office of Public Witness in Washington, Presbyterian U.N. office, and other denominational offices for national and international accountability around financial obligations and commitments under the U.N. Framework Convention on

Climate Change (UNFCCC) and Paris Agreement including the pledges made to assist economically developing and emerging countries* with carbon use mitigation and adaptation.

7. Advocate through these same channels for climate justice, based in national and international commitments, to assist economically developing and emerging countries with recovery from the loss and damage resulting from the industrialized countries' disproportionate impact on climate change (aka climate debt), as a new and proactive stewardship of our planet.**

8. Advocate through all PC(USA) channels the implementation of Overture 08-12 regarding carbon dividend, approved by commissioners in 2018, and encourage our government to pursue other economic strategies for incorporating “externalized” environmental costs into pricing of all goods and services.

9. Direct the Presbyterian office at the U.N., Presbyterian Hunger Program staff, and the Office of Public Witness in Washington to develop a 10-year strategy of accompaniment and advocacy before, during, and after the annual Conference of the Parties (COP) to the UNFCCC, by: engaging as practicable with our deployed staff and colleagues at the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) and World Council of Churches (WCC); working cooperatively with former staff and volunteers, to the extent possible, to provide continuity across the years; and collaborating with voluntary organizations, such as Presbyterians for Earth Care, to provide updates and make recommendations consistent with our social witness policy.

¹An example is Luther College in Decorah, Iowa, which has a comprehensive energy conservation and greening strategy; Rocky Mountain College has been pioneering energy conversion strategies for many years.

Rationale

Presbyterians have been pioneers in recognizing climate challenges and embracing environmental theology, going back to the 1960s, including major policy statements in 1981 (of both churches, pre-reunion), 1990, and 2008. These statements have drawn on a more faithful reading of scripture.

The fundamental mandate for creation care comes from Genesis 2:15, where God places Adam in the garden to “till it and keep it.” A better translation from the Hebrew is “to serve it and to preserve it.” In Genesis 1:26–28, God blesses humankind with dominion over the earth. This acknowledgement that humanity is the most powerful species on Earth does not, however, give license to dominate and exploit the planet. Indeed, Genesis 1:29–30 affirms the right of animals to share in the bounty of Earth’s produce. Human “dominion,” as intended in Genesis, is best practiced in care for creation—in stewardship—which Noah fulfills best by implementing God’s first endangered species act. Moreover, the great creation psalm of the Psalter views humanity as one species among many animal species, all meant to flourish together (Psalm 104:14–24). The psalmist exclaims, “O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all; the earth

is full of your creatures” (24). Scripture affirms that God created the world in wisdom and out of love, and it is also out of love for the world that God gave Christ to redeem it (John 3:16). In Christ “all things hold together” (Colossians 1:17), and “every creature under heaven” is to receive God’s good news (23). According to Revelation, God’s work in the world is to “make all things new” (21:5), to bring about a new creation that does not destroy the old but transforms it and renews it. “If the church is the sign of the new creation, then the church must lead the way in caring for creation” (from [Amending G-1.0304, “The Ministry of Members,” by Adding “Caring for God’s Creation,”](#) approved by the 222nd General Assembly (2016) and 104 presbyteries, and contributed by Dr. William P. Brown, William Marcellus McPheeters Professor of Old Testament at Columbia Theological Seminary).

As Presbyterians, we aspire to live into these teachings as well as the words of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew (25:40,45) regarding our call to care for “the least of these” our brothers and sisters, in all their diversity, whose well-being is so intertwined with and dependent upon a healthy ecosystem.

Because of these values we are called to heed the report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).² This research organization has issued six “assessment” reports over the last 33 years, since its founding in 1988, focusing on the interaction of human activity and our world’s warming atmosphere and changing climate. Their most recent report since 2015, issued in August 2021, was compiled and agreed to by 234 authors from 65 countries. It states that “it is unequivocal that human influence has warmed the atmosphere, ocean, and land.”

This “human influence” is, to a preponderant extent, due to the use of fossil fuels by the industrialized countries during the last 50+ years. In this period, greenhouse gas emissions have increased to their highest levels in more than 2 million years, increasing global average surface temperatures almost 1.2 degrees Celsius (1.2°C) over preindustrial levels. Global surface temperature has increased faster since 1970 than in any other 50-year period over at least the last 2,000 years, and global surface temperature is the highest in over 100,000 years. Optimistically, we are looking at a current trajectory of around a 1.8°C increase by 2050, no matter how quickly we act.³

Sea level has risen faster since 1900 than over any preceding century during at least the last 3,000 years and will be irreversible for millennia to come. Acidification of the oceans due to absorption of carbon dioxide over the last 50 years is unprecedented in at least 2 million years. It is virtually certain that hot extremes (including heatwaves) have become more frequent and more intense since the 1950s, while cold extremes (including cold waves) have become less frequent and less severe. These climatic changes have already caused super-size floods, droughts, fires, hurricanes, cyclones, species loss, and other effects across the United States and the globe. Climate and agricultural zones have shifted poleward, and all seasons are growing hotter. Humans are already driving the sixth mass extinction event, destroying ecosystems upon which we depend and eliminating countless species from the planet forever.

The goal of the global [Paris Agreement](#), is to keep global warming well below 2°C, and pursue efforts to limit it to 1.5°C. To avoid going beyond 1.5°C, global emissions need to reach their peak immediately and then fall within the next decades—reaching net zero by the middle of the century at the latest. That means we need to start acting on climate change now. We must redirect our energy production and economic activities sufficiently to avoid pushing our planet beyond the point at which it will be able to sustain life as we know it, triggering catastrophic death and destruction. To do so, the world needs to halve its current emissions by 2030 and reduce emissions to net-zero by 2050, a challenge that can only be met if emissions reductions start now. The IPCC report has conclusively determined that humanity must act within 10 years.

This does not mean we can wait a decade before acting. Every year we delay dramatically increases the cost of transforming our energy system. The time to act is now!

Furthermore, while less-developed nations and Indigenous peoples are the least responsible for creating these consequences, they are also the most endangered and least well-equipped to respond to them. Efforts should be made to prevent a new “green” colonialism by including communities from developing nations and other Indigenous groups in the benefits of green technologies rather than exploiting them for their resources.

Given their geographic as well as socioeconomic positioning and lived experience, these most vulnerable among our planet’s populations possess unique perspectives regarding how to care for our common heritage of ecosystem, soil, species diversity, air, and water, yet they are frequently excluded from the decision-making processes regarding the changes needed to protect them.

The challenges facing our planet can seem overwhelming. As Christians we are inspired to act not out of fear but out of love for God, love for our neighbors (near and far, present and future), and love for God’s creation entrusted to our care.

Among the options before us for how best to show our love for our neighbors and the planet is the “polluter pays” principle, (embodied in the 1992 Rio Declaration) beyond prohibitions to incorporate “costs” to the global ecosystem into the pricing of goods and services. This will, however, entail significant shifts in our economy and behavior.

One powerful economic tool that can help achieve these shifts and behavior changes—and that has strong support among economists, business leaders, scientists, many faith communities, and people on multiple sides of the political spectrum—is putting a price on carbon that more faithfully reflects the full environmental cost of using fossil fuels. The 223rd General Assembly (2018) affirmed this approach when it passed Overture 08-12: On Supporting Carbon Pricing. Supporting this tool through education and advocacy furthers needed systemic economic change, previously approved General Assembly policy, as well as creation care.⁴

Another way many people of faith are promoting a reduction in climate-changing greenhouse gasses is by calling on their congregations and denominations to disentangle their investments from the fossil fuel industry. According to Richard Brooks, director of the Climate Finance Network Stand, 1,497 institutions, including 520 faith groups and organizations (among them, our fellow Presbyterians in the [Church of Scotland](#) and the [Presbyterian Church of Ireland](#)), are in the process of divesting a total of \$39.88 trillion from fossil fuel-related investments. This is larger than the annual gross domestic product (GDP) of the United States and China combined. Europe's largest pension fund, in the Netherlands, has announced a decision to divest within the next year and a half. (See presentations on divestment by Brooks, the Church of Sweden's financial officer, and a number of other church leaders as part of COP26 in 2021 at [Faith Webinar: COP26, Fossil Fuel Divestment and a Just Transition for All - YouTube](#).)

We wholeheartedly agree with Bishop Hugh Nelson, of the Church of England, who so aptly put it in his address to the COP26, in the webinar linked above, that we are called to “cherish creation, cut carbon, and speak up.”

*Terminology varies as to how best to differentiate the countries and communities that are the greatest producers of greenhouse gasses from those that contribute very little; and between those that are better positioned due to political power, geography, and wealth to withstand the consequences of climate change and those that are not. We have chosen to follow the U.N. terms of “developing countries, emerging economies, and industrialized economies” as aligning generally with “least polluting, more polluting, and historically most polluting” countries and to assume that the historically most polluting countries hold greater political as well as financial power to determine their own destiny and provide support for, adaptation to, mitigation of, and recovery from the devastating effects of climate change upon their own people. In shorthand, these nations are often called Global North and Global South. Marianna Leite, of the ACT Alliance of faith-based organizations, lifts up the seminal writings of Boaventura de Sousa Santos ([Boaventura de Sousa Santos - Book chapters](#)) for a discussion of these terms.

**“Climate justice is a concept that addresses the ethical dimensions of climate change. Applied ethics, research and activism using the term approach anthropogenic climate change as an ethical, legal and political issue, rather than one that is purely environmental or physical in nature. This is done by relating the causes and effects of climate change to concepts of justice, particularly environmental justice and social justice. Climate justice examines concepts such as equality, human rights, collective rights, and the historical responsibilities for climate change.”—Wikipedia

2An independent research body that consolidates research from across the world and presents analysis upon which decisions are made by bodies such as the annual Conference of the Parties, or COP, to the U.N. climate accords.

3If all current commitments by signatory nations are adhered to. The World Resources Institute provides an important breakdown of both current and historic emitters at the following links: <https://www.wri.org/insights/history-carbon-dioxide-emissions> and <https://www.wri.org/insights/interactive-chart-shows-changes-worlds-top-10-emitters>.

4See <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000325> for Overture 08-12, approved in 2018, and <https://citizensclimatelobby.org/basics-carbon-fee-dividend/> for scientific and rational support for carbon pricing and dividends.