

***THURSDAY
MAILING***



National Capital
P R E S B Y T E R Y
MISSIONAL · PASTORAL · PROPHETIC

October 19, 2023



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Meet Tempest:



Tempest Hutchings joins National Capital Presbytery, as a Finance & Office Administrative Assistant

She brings with her a background in small business administration, having owned her own business for several years where she developed strong interpersonal and organizational skills. She looks forward to God's plan for her life within the supportive role she has stepped into at National Capital Presbytery.

Tempest lives in Bowie with her significant other, Bryan. She enjoys her small group Bible study, singing in her church's choir, hanging out with family and friends, and reading. ***Reach Tempest – thutchings@thepresbytery.org***

Announcements:

National Capital Presbytery

and the congregations of Christian Community Church, Darnestown Presbyterian Church, Leesburg Presbyterian Church, Rockville Presbyterian Church, Church of the Pilgrims, Emmanuel Indonesian Presbyterian Church, and Manassas Presbyterian Church, invite you to the installation service of ***Rev. Dr. Kori Phillips McMurtry, Rev. Blake Collins, Rev. Katie Strednak Singer, Rev. Susan Graceson, Rev. Erin Counihan, Rev. Cynthia Kekung, and Rev. Laura Fitzgibbon*** on Saturday, October 28 at 3:00 p.m. at Gaithersburg Presbyterian Church. *All minister members are asked to vest with red stoles. Others are invited to wear red in thanksgiving for the Holy Spirit, who equips and calls leaders for the church. Clergy will meet in the "Gathering Room" at 2:45 p.m. to assemble for the processional.* RSVP <https://thepresbytery.org/ncp-events/>

The members of the **Church of the Redeemer** cordially invite you to join us for our 65th Anniversary, celebrating 65 years of ministry at 1423 Girard St, NE, Washington, DC 20017. The worship service and reception will be held at the church on noon ***Sunday, November 12, 2023, at 12:00 p.m.*** The service will also be streamed live on Zoom and YouTube. For further details please contact the church office at 202-832-0095 or go to Redeemer's website at <http://www.redeemerpresbydc.org>

Northminster Presbyterian Church invites you to its Fall Bazaar on Saturday, ***November 18, 2023, from 9 am to 3 pm.*** There will be a large variety of items for sale, a silent auction, and a wonderful opportunity for fellowship. We look forward to seeing you.

Attention Specialized and Member-at-Large Minister Members:

It's that time of year to submit your Annual Report and Housing Allowance Request (if applicable). The deadline is Wednesday, November 1, 2023. You should have received an email with the forms from Dina Bickel, NCP's Administrative Coordinator. If you have not, contact Dina dbickel@thepresbytery.org

A parish associate is a specialized teaching elder, at-large, or honorably retired teaching elder member of National Capital Presbytery who wishes to associate with a particular congregation. Does your congregation have one? If so, the parish associate relationship requires approval and/or renewal every year. The form may be found here - https://thepresbytery.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Parish_Associate_Policy-Form_NCP.pdf
Questions? Ask Dina Bickel – dbickel@thepresbtyery.org

We reaffirmed that all Clergy and Certified Christian Educators must attend a "Healthy Boundaries" training within one year of being received by the Presbytery and renewed every three years. An Online Healthy Boundary Training through the Convergence Learning Platform FaithLead will be available in an on-demand format by which clergy and educators can access the course 24/7 and complete it at their own pace. To register: Complete the form [here](#). You will receive an automated response saying that I will send a link to register for the course. Once the course is completed, send your certificate to Dina Bickel. Questions? dbickel@thepresbytery.org

The Stewardship Committee of NCP is not hosting a planned giving or year-end giving event. GOOD NEWS! We have several offerings on our resource page from previous events. Visit - <https://thepresbytery.org/resources-for-congregations/stewardship-workshops-webinars-events/> for a complete list. You can also find all our taped events on NCP's YouTube Channel - [National Capital Presbytery - YouTube](#)

Camp Hanover has two events coming up this fall:

Women's Retreat

October 20-21, 2023

Get away from the hustle and bustle of day-to-day life. Spend a night at Camp Hanover with someone else doing the planning and preparing. The retreat consists of a planned program, quiet time, activities, and worship. The speaker and program theme will be announced soon.
<https://www.camphanover.org/womens-retreat/>

Fall Mini Camp

October 27-29, 2023

Youth in grades 5-12 can explore Camp Hanover in the cooler temperatures of fall. Spend time outside enjoying creation and nature through favorite camp activities. Campers are divided into groups based on their ages, each supervised by our caring staff of counselors.
<https://www.camphanover.org/fall-mini-camp/>



Follow all NCP'S
social media
platforms!
See what's going
on around the
presbytery, with
General Presbyter,
John Molina-
Moore!
(hover over image to
play video)

Around NCP



Facebook



Instagram



YouTube



You are invited
to the inaugural
*Presbytery-wide
Installation
Service*

Saturday, October 28, 2023

at 3:00 PM

Gaithersburg Presbyterian Church

610 S. Frederick Avenue

Gaithersburg, MD 20877

(enter through south entrance via ramp)

Reception to follow



National Capital
PRESBYTERY
MISSIONAL - PASTORAL - MINISTRIES

Preaching

The Rev. Dr. Jonathan Lee Walton
Princeton Theological Seminary, President

Presbytery-wide Choir

Renewal of Ordination Vows

Liturgists

Leadership Council
Committee on Ministry
Church Development Commission
Mission Coordinating Committee

RSVP by

Friday, October 20, 2023

All minister members are asked to vest with red stoles.
Others are invited to wear red in thanksgiving for the
Holy Spirit, who equips and calls leaders for the church.



National Capital
PRESBYTERY
MISSIONAL - PASTORAL - MINISTRIES



Looking for
Sopranos, Altos, Tenors and Bass
for the
Presbytery-wide
Installation Service
Choir

All are invited to the join the presbytery-wide choir!

The choir is led by Kevin Allen Director of Music,
John Calvin Presbyterian Church.

Kevin Allen is a multi-faceted musician, working as a music educator, conductor, pianist, accompanist, and singer.

The Service is Saturday, October 28th, 3:00 pm, at
Gaithersburg Presbyterian Church.

Rehearsal will be held in the choir room of Gaithersburg,
1-2:30 pm on October 28th. Use this [link](#) to sign up.



Bethesda Presbyterian Church
Public Zoom
[Here's Our Zoom link.](#)

Gordon L. Groover Presenters
Wednesdays October 18 & 25
7:00-8:00 pm



**The Tent of Abraham, Sarah,
and Hagar: Being Christian
in the Holy Lands**

Dr. Christine Luckritz Marquis
Associate Professor of Church History
Union Presbyterian Seminary

Dr. Safwat Marzouk
Associate Professor of Old Testament
Union Presbyterian Seminary



Christine and Safwat have led recent Union study seminar to Egypt and Palestine/Israel. They will share with us a survey of contemporary Christianity in these holy lands – and how the Christian minorities navigate their relationships with other faith communities around them.

Montgomery County Lynching Memorial Project

invites you to the

Mr. George W. Peck Marker Dedication



Program *and* Reception

Sunday, October 22, 2023 | 3-5 p.m.

Poolesville Presbyterian Church

Outdoors at 17800 Elgin Rd., Poolesville, MD | Reception at Locals Farm Market

Parking is free and clearly marked | Sign Language interpreted

Montgomery County Lynching Memorial Project (MoCoLMP) will unveil the first historical marker in the county to acknowledge a racial terror lynching.

Mr. George Peck was murdered by a mob in Poolesville in 1880, one of three lynchings that took place in our county.

Free and open to all

In case of rain, the event will be indoors at Poolesville Memorial United Methodist Church, 17821 Elgin Rd.

Register at:


bit.ly/peck-marker
to receive updates



Remembering is Resistance
MoCoLMP
Montgomery County Lynching Memorial Project

To get involved, email: mocolynchingmemorial@gmail.com

www.mocolmp.org

 **MontgomeryCountyLynchingMemorialProject**

 **mocolmp**

Sign up to receive
MoCoLMP's News at
bit.ly/mocolmp-news



How Does Someone Escape White Nationalism?

A Conversation with Derek Black

November 5, 2023 | 7:30 PM

**Saint Mark Presbyterian Church
10701 Old Georgetown Road**

**For FREE tickets
and to learn more:**



SAINT MARK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH PRESENTS

FAITH IN PUBLIC LIFE SPEAKER SERIES

IN HONOR OF REVEREND DR. ROY W. HOWARD

Two Ukrainian Families Need a Sponsor – An Opportunity for Hands-On Ministry

Two Ukrainian families each need a US sponsor to be able to stay temporarily in the United States under the United for Ukraine program (UforU). If you're a US citizen, could you help?

Pashchuk Family



Serhiy and Anna ("Ania") Pashchuk with two daughters, who usually reside in Kyiv, are staying with parents in nearby Zdolbuniv (which is safer than Kyiv). The parents commute to Kyiv to work or work remotely when possible.

Ania Pashchuk was recently diagnosed with breast cancer. She had surgery but because she received a very optimistic prognosis has returned to work part time. Her diagnosis played a key role in the family's decision to consider applying for UforU on account of the good health insurance the program provides. She also wants to let their kids have normal school experience, without spending time in the bomb shelters or learning remotely as was the case for most of last winter.

The Pashchuks attend an Orthodox church in their hometown. Should they find a sponsor in the Washington, DC area, the family has some friends who would be willing to assist with paperwork and other logistics if needed. The Pashchuks have intermediate English abilities.

Plisko Family



Mykola and Olena Plisko and three children are from the Odessa region, which was massively bombed this past summer.

The Pliskos are active members of a local Baptist church in Odessa. Wherever they can find sponsorship in the US, they want to move eventually to be with best friends in the Philadelphia/East Greenville, PA area (that family also came to the US with the UforU program).

The Ukrainian family in the Philadelphia area would help the Pliskos find work and housing, and there is a Ukrainian church in the area as well.

The Pliskos have basic English abilities. Mykola is a professional construction contractor, and Olena is a music teacher.

Both males have driver's licenses and could start making money with Uber or take construction jobs. The mothers also work: Ania is involved in online marketing, Olena is a music teacher.

The two couples are very committed to their country, but recent circumstances have forced them to seek safety abroad. The families are ready to cover their flight tickets costs. Also both males also can legally leave Ukraine.

The expectation from potential sponsors would be to provide accommodation, food, and occasional help with transportation for the first 2-2 1/2 months while the families get all the paperwork to be temporary residents: work permits, social security numbers, health insurance, and US driver's licenses. In terms of housing, some sponsors have been willing to host a family in their own home for these few months while they help the sponsored family finding place to rent. Other sponsors have assisted from the beginning to help the family rent an apartment, so there are alternative ways to address the housing need.

To rent a place, a sponsor may be asked to co-sign the lease, as landlords often require income and credit history statements. Sometimes although one sponsor completes the UforU form and is designated the official sponsor, friends or fellow church members will gather as a team to help refugee families. Normally the UforU program tries to help with interpreters, but this ability to help varies with the region of the country where the sponsor lives. The friends of the Pliskos in East Greenville indicate there are numerous people in the local Ukrainian community who can help with interpreting.

United for Ukraine

The United for Ukraine program, announced by President Biden for Ukrainians over a year ago, and implemented by US Department of Homeland Security provides a pathway for displaced Ukrainian citizens and their immediate family members who are outside the United States to come to the United States and stay temporarily for up to two years. This program quickly grants Ukrainians a legal status, work permits, health insurance, and some benefits like food stamps. The process is straightforward, and the turnaround time for the application review not long. The potential sponsor must qualify, then the family receives visas and permission to travel to the US within a period of time after approval. The official website of the program is:

<https://www.dhs.gov/ukraine>

To volunteer as a sponsor for a family or ask questions, contact Nadiia Khomaziuk at 'nkhomaziuk@usubc.org'

Synod of the Mid-Atlantic (SMA)

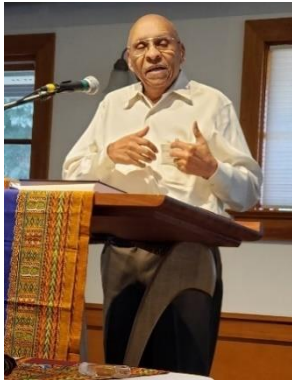
252nd Assembly Highlights

SACRED LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT – Ever since the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) renounced the Doctrine of Discovery; councils have been encouraged to acknowledge the land on which meetings are being held. The Mid-Atlantic on previous occasions invited decedants of a Tribal People or current Tribal Leaders to attend the Assembly and provide the land acknowledgement. We were honored to have Commissioner Teresa Harris (SHE), a resident of Harrisonburg in attendance. She shared that the Tribes occupying the Valley in the long period prior to the arrival of English settlement included the Iroquois, Shawnee Nations, Catawba, Cherokee and the Susquehannock. We thank God for this land and the inhabitants who lived on it, cared for it, and nurtured the land long before white settlers arrived.

FIFTY YEARS AFTER the March on Washington DC which is in our boundaries, Presbyterians convened at Massanetta Camp and Conference Center in Harrisonburg, VA, to delve into the state of Black Church Health and Leadership. The 225th General Assembly of the PCUSA highlighted a concerning statistic: over 80% of Black Churches lacked installed pastors. Further, this Assembly acknowledged that since the 1983 Reunion, Black Congregations had, whether intentionally or unintentionally, lost Vision, Vitality, and Community Connections. Therefore, we recognize that the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic (SMA) consisting of 14-presbyteries, emerged as a response to the dissolution of five all-Black Presbyteries. In essence, the Synod's inception stemmed from the profound pain and loss of community, self-determination, positions and power and identity for Black Presbyterian Presence, Mission, and Witness in the PCUSA.

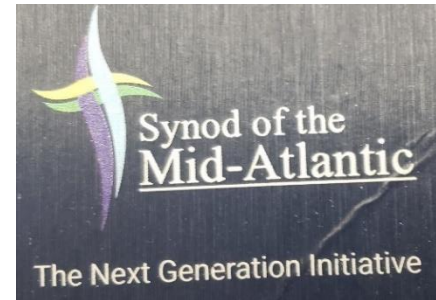


FORTY YEARS AFTER the reuniting of the two largest bodies of Presbyterianism in the United States, the 252nd Synod of the Mid-Atlantic Assembly came together. Mid-Atlantic Synod boundaries were the last of the sixteen synods to be established, largely because in doing so, five All Black Governing Bodies would have to agree to being dissolved. The Rev. Dr. Edward Newberry, HR member of Charlotte Presbytery reported on the last meeting of the All-Black Catawba Presbytery which he described as sad and ended in tears. The final meeting would bring to end the rich history of Education and Evangelism. It was the end of the significant heritage and the leadership fountain of a presbytery organized seventeen months after the end of the Civil War. Dr. Newberry's article entitled, "Reflections on Reunion" published in Periscope 3, provides perspective to the gravity and impact of Catawba Presbytery. *"The lovely carols of Christmas still lingered in our ears. But a solemn assembly convened at Memorial Church in Charlotte NC on December 29, 1988. Constituted with prayer, we conducted concluding business of our historic judicatory. One of the significant acts of that last meeting of the presbytery was the ordination of Jerry Lytle Cannon to ministry. As an ironic twist of history or act of providence, this was the ordination of the brother of the Rev Katie G. Cannon, who Catawba Presbytery had ordained as the first Black female minister. There was a reluctant motion to adjourn. Yet with hearts and voices, we thanked God for the blessings of in all our generations. We petitioned God's gracious care as we move into tomorrow. Prayers being ended, the Catawba story was finished, now to be inscribe in the Book of Life."* Ed's presentation was illuminating and amazing! His



presentation set the stage for the Assembly to address the historical past, current engagement, and possibilities for the future. Would Commissioners who were part of the 114 individuals present be willing and capable of addressing historical and current harms that created structural racism, vestiges of slavery, issues of poverty and dying Black Churches? We are delighted to report that the 252nd Assembly rose to the occasion! Things that are impossible for humanity to accomplish is the STUFF that God does on the REGULAR! The Assembly dedicated itself to doing the heavy lifting, while at the same time taking care of each other in the face of challenging and difficult conversations. We are grateful to Vice Moderator David Cho, who monitored the room thoroughly ensuring that the Assembly consistently took care of each other!

THE NEXT GENERATION INITIATIVE(NGI) rolled out and was amazing! I have yet to attend an Assembly of any sort where more than 114 commissioners, presbytery leaders Black church leaders, COM and CPM were locked and engaged to the max! Can I Get a Witness? The initiative was bathed in worship, drumming, preaching, fellowship, table talk conversations, affinity group gathering and times of intense celebration. WOW! Each presenter spoke of its urgency, validity, and willingness to partner in its further development and implementation. What is the NGI? Please visit www.synatlantic.org to review the full proposal. In short, the NGI seeks to address the SHORTAGE of Black Presbyterian Clergy Leadership for Churches, Mid-Councils, Agencies and beyond. At the same time the NGI is calling Black Presbyterian Churches in the Mid-Atlantic to task for examination, diagnosis and prescribing a way forward that will resort or create Congregational Vitality, Purpose in Vision and Direction, Spiritual Formation and Congregational Wholeness. This synod contains more than one-quarter of the Black Churches in the PCUSA. We have accounted for 124-Black Presbyterian Congregations located in eleven of the synods fourteen presbyteries, namely Baltimore, Charlotte, Coastal Carolina, Eastern Virginia, James, National Capital, New Castle, New Hope, Peaks, Salem, and Western North Carolina. We are grateful to these presbyteries for granting synod permission to contact and gather data (Congregational Snapshots and Presbytery Snapshots) from these churches and the presbyteries. Responses to critical questions about pastoral leadership, post-covid congregational challenges, who occupies the pulpit and administers the Lord's Supper have been collected. The synod is grateful to the 12-Snapshot Facilitators who worked more than 3 weeks to gather the critical information.



RADICAL COLLABORATION – Success, as measured in energy, content, design, participation, and engagement, would not be possible without the input, presence and facilitation of the Rev. Dr. Diane



Moffett, President and Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and Dr. Corey Schlosser-Hall, Deputy Executive Director of Vision and Innovation, PMA. Their team of thirteen highly motivated National Staffers from the PMA, BOP, ASG, and Foundation were present in mind, body, intellect, and spirit. In early May, the Planning Team began collaborating and engaging key partners who were interested in the NGI, and we met every two weeks to share, learn and grow. Representatives from Seminaries, GA Agencies, Presbytery Leaders, Historians, and Persons with Passion gathered religiously. The outcome of these gatherings and listening sessions gave rise to an alignment and a perfect partnership between the National Staff and the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic. Dr. Moffett and Staff were in fact MID-WIVES who were present

and coaching the synod as it gave birth to this critical initiative that will benefit the entire PCUSA. This unique aspect of the collaboration involved Staffers facilitating and recording information for a total of six specifically designed Guided Table Talk Sessions, Affinity Groups and Agencies Listening Engagements. One

poignant question raised during engagement was, “What would the NGI look like ten years from now?” The Mid-Atlantic Region is grateful to the individual contributions made by:

- ✚ Diane Moffett – Preaching the Opening Worship Service/Motivation for Listening Engagement
- ✚ Tim Cargal – Presentation on Shifting Trends in Church and Society and in Theological Education
- ✚ Jermaine Ross-Allam – Presentation on the Center for Repair and Historical Harm
- ✚ Shavon Starling-Louis – Facilitation of the Emerging Young Black Presbyterian Voices
- ✚ Carlton Johnson – Presentation on Healthy Pulpits – Healthy Pews
- ✚ Alonzo Johnson – Preaching the Closing Worship Service
- ✚ Corey Schlosser-Hall – Facilitation and Instructions for the PCUSA Agencies Listening Engagement
- ✚ Big Props to Tabletop Facilitators and Conveners Barry Creech, Sara Lisherness, Denise Anderson, Sy Hughes, David Loleng, Elizabeth and Keenan Rodgers

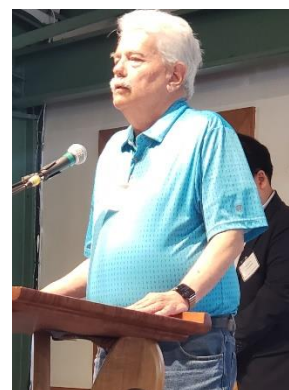
NEW LEADERSHIP: The Nominating Committee is always at work to secure the best leadership from presbyteries to serve synod leaders on committees and commissioners.



The Assembly elected and installed the Rev. Dr. Eunil David Cho (AKAP) as Moderator and RE Barry Parks (JAM) as Vice Moderator. David is Professor of Pastoral Care at Boston University and Seminary and Barry is retired and serves as Clerk of Session at Westminster PC in Charlottesville, Va. We hope you will have multiple opportunities to meet and chat with them in person or over zoom. With newly elected leadership, the Assembly paid tribute to Rev. Addie Peterson (EVA) for completing her year in style. Addie now assumes the position of Past Moderator for which the term ends in 2024. In that role, she will serve on the Synod Executive Committee. On behalf of the Assembly a gift of

love was presented to Addie by Moderator Cho. Join us as we lift and keep in prayer those whom God has called to synod leadership for such a time as this. Additional individuals were elected to serve on committees and commissioners accordingly to include TE Mary Speers (BAL) Committee on Representation, Class of 2025 and RE Alice Freeman (ABI), Committee on Representation Class of 2026; TE Teresa Page (CCC), Jubilee Fund Committee, Class of 2026 and RE Leslie Bailey (JAM), Class of 2025; and RE Barbara Yancy (BAL), Nominating Committee, Class of 2026.

ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE Co-Chairs thanked their members as 80% of the committee are completing two terms of service at the end of the year. Co-chairs are WD Hasty (PEA) and Felicia Hoyle (SAL), Mariam Dewhurst (NAT), Dorothy Descieux (WNC), Kim Robinson (AKAP), Ed Terry (BAL) and Alice Freeman (ABI). Upon the recommendation from the committee the Assembly approved the following actions: A new Child Protection Policy was approved; Fulltime Synod Staff receive a 3% pay increase for 2024; The 2022 Presbytery Minute Review was approved and the Synod Stated Clerk was instructed to communicate to each presbytery stated clerks with a certifying letter expressing thanks and appreciation for their work, and where appropriate request that all exceptions found in the 2022 Presbytery Minutes Review be address before March 2024 review cycle. It is working thru a task force to partner with the Committee on Representation to develop an Anti-Racism Policy. This committee said Farwell to five of its veteran members who will complete two terms of service, namely, Dot, WD, Mariam, Ed, and Kim. Well done!



GRANTS COMMITTEE Chair, Tolokun Omokunde (NHO), thanked Elease Wilson (PEA), David Lovelace (NEW), Chip Stapleton (CCC), Brian Harroff (EVA), Becky Stanley (WNC), Teresa Harris (SHE) and Betty Perkins (CHA). \$15,000 of College and Seminary Scholarships were awarded accordingly. Stultz Scholarships were awarded to Isaiah Grady and Kerry Olivia Lowery each for \$4,000. The Euler Scholarship was awarded to Nenio Pfuzeh in the amount of \$7,000. Small Church Grants awards totaling \$20,000 were given to four churches with each receiving \$5,000, namely, *First Presbyterian Church, Staunton (ABI)* for HVAC; *Good Hope Presbyterian Church (WNC)* for Window Replacement; *First Presbyterian Church, Jacksonville (CCC)* for HVAC; and *First Korean Presbyterian Church (AKAP)* Air Condition in the Church Manse. Visionary Grants totaling \$5,000 were awarded to *Farlington and First Presbyterian Churches* in the amount of \$5,000 to nourishing congregations. Peacemaking Grant was awarded to *Voices of Jubilee* in the amount of 25,000 to support a Prison Youth Ministry. *National Capital* received a \$5,000 grant to certify trainers and facilitators. *Williamsburg Presbyterian Church* was awarded \$5,000 to support a Hunger Program. The Assembly voted to place a \$10,000 cap on requests for Peacemaking Grants. Applications denied included Hillsville PC because it received funding last cycle; Forest Hill PC (Entry Doors) Fund limitation; and Dellebrooke PC was asked to reapply with more specific needs.



FINANCE COMMITTEE Chair, Cherry Peters, was gracious in thanks and praises of her committee members who included Elease Wilson (PEA), Tim Bird (ABI), Carl Wilton (BAL) and Clifford Thomas (NHO). The committee assumed just under 4% decrease in per capita donations from Presbyteries which increases



the draw from reserves to cover loss of per capita and new requirements. Overall increase in income + draw 10.5 %. Areas of expense include a 3% increase for full-time staff salaries, plus concomitant increases to board of pensions, payroll taxes. Impact of the decision earlier this year to increase marketing and grant writing using professional help. 13.6% increase

in cost of two Synod Assemblies in 2024 over BUDGETED amount in 2023. The 2023 actual will be over budget and the effective increase for next year will be more modest. The overall increase in expenses comes in at 9.0%. The committee advised the Executive Committee concerning the synod's capacity to contribute to the Centennial Capital Campaign. The Assembly approved the 2024 Mission and Operating Budget in the amount of \$421,139.91. **Per capita remains at \$1.15 for 2024.**

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE is composed of Moderator Addie Peterson, Steve Scott, Felicia S. Hoyle and WD Hasty, Amanda Pine and Cassandra Thomas, Tolokun Omokunde and Vice Moderator David Cho. Seven recommendations were approved by the Assembly:

- (1) Edits to the Kate B. Reynolds Certification Committee Guidelines.
- (2) Permission was granted to the 252nd Assembly Planning Committee to finalize planning.
- (3) Amanda Pine (EVA) and Cassandra Thomas (CCC) are co-chairs of the Emerging Ideas Committee.
- (4) \$50,000 was approved for Massanetta Springs Centennial Campaign.
- (5) \$50,000 was approved to launch the NGI for Leadership and African American congregations.
- (6) \$25,000 was approved for PDA to assist in responding to the tragic fires in Hawaii.
- (7) \$26,000 was approved in support of Emerging Ideas Committee for 2024 budget.

THE EMERGING YOUNG BLACK PRESBYTERIAN VOICES were hard hitting and astute. The biggest mistake



of the Assembly was to designate only 75 minutes for this segment. It needed a full 2-hours; however, the wisdom of Moderator Addie Peterson extended the time. Facilitated by the Pastor of Memorial Presbyterian Church in Charlotte NC, the Rev. Shavon Starling-Louis guided four other young voices who were seminarians or recently ordained in

the PCUSA. The Late Rev. Dr. Gayraud Wilmore in writings raised gut-retching questions such as, 'Can one be Black and Presbyterian at the same time? Does Reformed Theology allow me to authentically who I am in the White Denomination? When most students entering seminary today are not choosing pastoral ministry as their vocational call, why did you choose to become a pastor or are a pastor? Shavon, who is also Co-Moderator of the PCUSA General Assembly in partnership with Grace Ruth Santana, navigated this and other critical questions. The responses were electrifying. Our region must hear more from these young emerging prophetic voices. They are the church leaders now and church leaders for the future. Big Props to the Rev. Serenity Taylor and the Rev. Antonio MK Lawrence Jr, and Seminarians Ryan G. Atkinson and Kirk Louis. The Synod Emerging Ideas Committee will continue collaborating with them to establish ongoing, open, and meaningful dialogue with seminarians and recently ordained candidates Ministers of Word and Sacrament. It was great to have five faculty members present from Eastern Mennonite College and Seminary, where Rev. Dr. Dan Ott is Dean of the Seminary to be present for these conversations. You bet there will be an Encore in the coming months!

HEALTH IN PULPITS AND PEWS – Reflecting the mirror side of the NGI was the Assistant Director of Theology, Formation and Evangelism of the PMA, Rev. Dr. Carlton Johnson. When we talk about healthy Pulpits and Pews, we are talking about people who were formed at one point in a particular way. Spiritual Formation is essential to have both healthy preachers in the pulpits and healthy parishioners in the pews. The lack of Spiritual Formation is one reason congregations are declining and failing to nurture and recruit the Next Generation of Leadership. Spiritual Formation is a life- long, continuing process that takes place in a community of believers. It involves heart, mind, and soul; therefore, it can be every action, experience, or relationship that nurtures a transformative relationship of trust with God and shapes the way we see and interact with God's world. Spiritual and Faith Formation will come from home and then we can carry it into the streets. Spiritual Formation has to do with *Valuing Life, Creation care, Relationship, Community building, Legacy building, Stewardship, and Institution building*. Real chance that structural racism, poverty is affecting the people who are sitting in the pews. How are we able to serve folks who are experiencing structural racism, which is different than calling someone the "n" word. Systemic poverty is not just the food pantry, the question is not how you feed them this week but why they have been hungry all year. Intersectional foci (Climate Change, Gender Justice and Heteropatriarchy, Militarism). As we listen and engage the foci, they are larger in AA communities. Why are more young people trading in church for African Spirituality. Participants were asked how the song that he opened with made them feel as if he lined the hymn and sang it in Long Meter, a style that is still used in a number of Black Churches. Just sit in it. Kids are connecting with African Spirituality. I do not have to surrender my culture to be in touch to be with the Divine. Whoever you are, being authentic is what draws you closer to God (with all your flaws). How do we move with an understanding of separating ourselves with who we are to be closer to the divine?



SHIFTING TRENDS - The Assembly benefited significantly from powerful presentations highlighting the



changes occurring in Church and Society. Rev. Dr. Bruce Grady is the Executive Presbyter for New Hope Presbytery. As a lifelong theological educator, he has served Duke Divinity School, Shaw Divinity School as Dean and directed the Orman Center which helps to make connections between the academy, church, and community. Rev. Dr. Tim Cargal is the Associate Director for Ministry Leadership Development for the Office of the General Assembly. Tim's membership is in the National Capital Presbytery where he served as synod commissioner in 1999. This segment



sets the foundation for understanding some of the societal and cultural shifts occurring at the intersection of church and society. The devastation the pandemic has wreaked havoc among people and organizations has been acutely felt by churches and their leaders. In addition, Baby boomers are greater in number than successors in many churches. Christianity membership is shrinking in the United States. Non-denominational affiliation is the largest denomination. We examined the Presbyterian Church in general and then discussed the Black Presbyterian Church and Congregations. Further, there have been major shifts in Theological Education as articulated by two scholars in this area.



The Rev. Dr. Tim Cargal is the Associate Director for Ministry Leadership Development for the Office of the General Assembly. Tim's membership is in the National Capital Presbytery where he served as synod commissioner in 1999. The Rev. Dr. David Cho is Assistant Professor of Spiritual Care and Counseling and Co-Director of the Center for Practical Theology at Boston University School of Theology. Currently, he also serves as synod Vice Moderator. Each presenter offered ideas and thoughts on who is attending seminary today. What motivates young people to consider theological education? What career fields are young seminarians gravitating to or from? What are the shifting trends in theological education? How are these factors impacting the next generation of African American leaders to preach in the pulpits, lead mid-councils, and

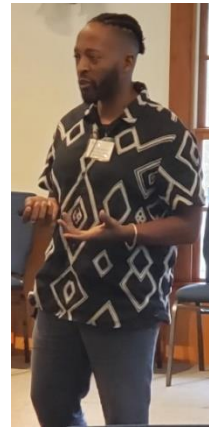
do community organizing? How are seminarians of color navigating theological education? Are seminaries and presbyteries really making space for different kinds of hermeneutics?

STATED CLERK REPORT – Excuses were granted to Commissioners requesting them. AKAP and CHA did not have a commissioner present for this Assembly, and it was noted. Thanks were extended to the class of 2023, many of which served two consecutive terms on commissions and committees. Commissioners were reminded that they are the connections to each presbytery and because of such, they are responsible for sharing the work of the synod accordingly. Three separate consultations were held since the last assembly and included Synod Grants, Atlantic Korean American Presbytery and Kate B. Reynolds Fund. The Synod Clerk participates in the Virginia Council of Churches Judicatory leaders Retreat and as member of the Steering Committee and Coordinating Council. All fourteen presbyteries submitted 2022 minutes for review, and we thank each clerk. I am grateful that the Executive Committee granted permission for the 252nd Assembly to focus on and launch the Next Generation Initiative. Presbytery Search Committees currently active include Salem and Eastern Virginia. Presbytery leaders who will retire before the end of 2023 include Liza Hendricks and Barbara Smith. Appreciation was extended to the Assembly Planning Committee. Synod Staff has added a contract Communication Coordinator who is doing a superb job. The Synod Permanent Judicial Commission has one remedial complaint before it. The Omnibus Motion was approved which included the minutes from



the 251st Synod Assembly, Committee on Representation Report, Kate B Reynolds Minutes and Guideline changes.

CENTER FOR REPAIR OF HISTORICAL HARMS featured the Rev. Anthony Jermaine-Ross Allam, director in full blaze and armor. He blessed us with information from the office, but more than that, he shared how that information can apply to the Synod. He was a sharer of the Good News that Repair and Reparations are common sense for the common good. Jermaine was ordained as minister of Word and sacrament by the Presbytery of the Twin Cities in 2013 where he began ordained ministry as executive director of 21st Century Academy at Kwanzaa Community Church PC(USA) in North Minneapolis—renamed Liberty Community Church—and, later, Associate Pastor for Social Justice at Oak Grove Presbyterian Church. In addition to serving as the Center for Repair’s first director, Jermaine is a PhD candidate in Social Ethics at Union Theological Seminary in Manhattan where he is completing a book tentatively titled “Trammeled by the Bonds of Union: Social Ecology of anti-Black Violence and Impunity after Emancipation.” Jermaine is also a proud theology co-lead volunteer with Restorative Actions—an economic equity initiative born from the intersection of theology, justice, and economics based at the



Synod of Lakes and Prairies. This segment will introduce and help make a deeper connection to the 1983 Denomination Reunion and how the Black Presence was weakened, voices eradicated, and relationships eroded. Rev. Ross-Allam raised questions for consideration such as: Was the agency of Black Church Leadership intentionally or unintentionally rendered a slow death blow? What did the Black Church lose in the process and what might be gained because of it? What ought to be the White Presbyterians response to this? What did Dr. Gayraud S. Wilmore predict about Black Presbyterianism in Black and Presbyterians the Heritage and the Hope? He was laser focused on helping the Assembly to understand the difference between Repair and Reparations.

SOUNDS OF THE DRUMS – The Assembly kicked off, throughout, and concluded its activities with the powerful and rhematic sounds of African Drumming led by Commissioner Tolunkun Omukunde, Alonzo Johnson (PMA) and Keenan Rodgers (BOP). These sounds permeated both the opening and closing worship experiences which were formatted in the best of the Black Church Worship Tradition. The preaching was prophetic, jampacked with life-led illustrations, the liturgy was convicting, and the music satisfied the SOUL’s desire. The Fellowship during plenary, Table Talks, Affinity Groups and after hour gatherings was unbelievable. What a Time!!!



CLOSING WORSHIP - The Rev. Dr. Alonzo Johnson is the National Coordinator for the Self-Development of People Program (SDOP) of the Presbyterian Church (USA). SDOP is a branch of the PCUSA’s Compassion, Peace, and Justice Ministry. He is also the convener of the “Educate A Child, Transform the World initiative. Alonzo has more than 25 years of experience specializing in urban, youth, education, creative arts, anti-racism, and social justice ministries. What better way to end four days of inquiry, presentations, table talks, development of strategies and good fellowship than with a Celebration of Worship? Dr. Johnson utilized powerfully charged illustrations that enabled his sermon to be seen and heard. He projected a picture of the late and great soul musical performer, James Brown, holding an infant and later pointed out that he was the infant being held by James Brown. This was a vivid reminder that one never knows in whose presence of greatness one might find her or himself. The sermon accentuated and raised the level of responsibility as new officers were installed. The Assembly recognized Synod



Commissioners whose terms will end this year and thanked them for years of faithful service to Christ Church in the Mid-Atlantic Region.

RAMBLING THOUGHTS: Several Gospel accounts describe a landowner planning a wedding feast in which many were invited, but for various reasons chose not to attend. He then ordered his servants to go out onto the highways and byways to invite those from the margins. So, they did! The Assembly Planning Team was intentional in inviting its fourteen presbyteries to commit to sending individuals who occupy the following spaces with their presbyteries or churches: Presbytery Executive, Stated Clerk, Representatives from the Committee on Ministry and the Committee on Preparation, three to five Black Church Leaders and its two Synod Commissioners. Further, we invited various agencies from the General Assembly who showed up in large numbers. We are grateful to all who made it a priority to attend and were fully present for the entire Assembly to help launch the Next Generation Initiative. Might God strengthen the ties between the Presbyterian Churches, Presbyteries, Synod and the General Assembly. After all, we are a connectional church!