

Siblings in Christ,

Greetings! First, I would like to thank Rev Dr. Chris Deacon for the job that he has done as our moderator this past year. He has personally helped me to prepare for the role this coming year. Thank you, Chris.

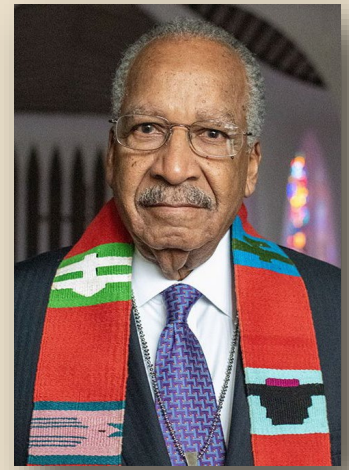
I am indeed honored to be moderator of National Capital Presbytery this coming year. I appreciate your vote of confidence, and I ask for your support.

Some of you may know that I have been leading Adult Bible Study at Northminster Presbyterian Church (my home church) for several years. One of my favorite verses is Micah 6:8 (“He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”) I would like us to let this verse be part of our discernment process as we undertake the business of our Presbytery.

I look forward to seeing you at the Stated Meeting of National Capital Presbytery to be held on Tuesday, **September 24, at 5:00 p.m., at National Presbyterian Church** in Washington, DC

Faithfully,

Lou Durden
Vice Moderator, National Capital Presbytery



**Stated Meeting
National Capital Presbytery
September 24, 2024
5:00PM at National Presbyterian Church
Streaming Link: <https://nationalpres.org/watch/>
We Gather in Community**

5:00	CALL TO ORDER	Rev. Dr. Chris Deacon
	FORMATION OF THE ROLL, DOCKET, OMNIBUS MOTION (p. 3)	Rev. David Baer
5:05	WORSHIP (p. 5) Rev. Dr. Chris Deacon, Preaching; Jesse Colón, Pianist (Riverside); Alison Crichton, Soloist (Northwood) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Celebration of the Lord’s Supper• Installation of Elder Lou Durden as Moderator, and Elder Jesy Littlejohn as Vice Moderator	
5:50	TRANSITIONS / PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION	Rev. John Molina-Moore
6:00	LANDSCAPE CONVERSATION	Rev. Tara Spuhler-McCabe
6:30	COMMISSION ON MINISTRY (pp. 7 & 8)	Rev. Carla Gorrell & Rev. Juli Wilson-Black
6:50	LEADERSHIP COUNCIL (p. 10)	Elder Miriam Dewhurst
7:00	NEW BUSINESS	Elder Lou Durden
	CHARGE AND BLESSING	Elder Lou Durden

Meeting Leaders

Rev. David A. Baer, Stated Clerk

Rev. Dr. Chris Deacon, Outgoing NCP Moderator

Elder Miriam Dewhurst, Leadership Council Chair

Elder Lou Durden, NCP Moderator-Elect

Rev. Carla Gorrell, Commission on Ministry Co-Chair

Elder Jesy Littlejohn, NCP Vice Moderator-Elect

Rev. John Molina-Moore, General Presbyter

Rev. Tara Spuhler-McCabe, Director of Congregational Development and Mission

Rev. Juli Wilson-Black, Commission on Ministry Co-Chair

*This document, the Packet, contains the **action items** for the Stated Meeting.
Please refer to the additional reports posted on the NCP web site
for important information about the work of our officers and committees.*

OMNIBUS MOTION FOR THE SEPTEMBER 24, 2024, PRESBYTERY MEETING

From the Stated Clerk

The Stated Clerk recommends the **APPROVAL** of the minutes of the Stated Meeting held on May 21, 2024, and the Special Meeting held on July 16, 2024.

From the Leadership Council

The Leadership Council places Heather Deacon in nomination for NCP Treasurer, for a three-year term to begin September 24, 2024.

From the Commission on Ministry

In accordance with the NCP Manual of Administrative Operations, the Commission on Ministry places the following names in nomination for election to a one-year term on the COM-associated commissions as indicated:

Congregational Transitions Commission

Mark Harper, co-chair (TE, Takoma Park)
Mike Volpe, co-chair (RE, Falls Church)
Carla Gorrell (TE, retired)
Henry Brinton (TE, Fairfax)
Jesy Littlejohn (RE, Oaklands)
Susan Graceson (TE, Rockville)
Kris Maldarelli (RE, Gaithersburg)
Dean McDonald (TE, retired)
Matt Nabinger (TE, Oaklands)
Juli Wilson-Black (TE, Fairlington)
Taekhan Yoon (TE, United Korean)

Coordinating Commission

Carla Correll, co-chair (TE, retired)
Juli Wilson-Black, co-chair (TE, Fairlington)
Larry Goleman (TE, specialized)
Mark Harper (TE, Takoma Park)
Emma Horn (TE, Immanuel)
Linda Lanam (RE, OPMH)
Gary Sowers (RE, Fairfax)
Katherine Stanford (TE, OPMH)
Michael Volpe (RE, Falls Church)

From the Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee places the following names in nomination for election:

Committee on Preparation for Ministry:

Emilee Williams (TE Fairfax), Class of '27
Mary Casper (RE, St. Mark); Class of '25
Blake Collins (TE, Darnestown), Class of 2027
Aaron Fulp-Eickstaedt (TE, Immanuel), CPM, Class of 2027
Samuel Sarpong (TE, Ebenezer), CPM c/o 2027

Committee on Ministry:

Larry Goleman (TE, Validated ministry), Class of 27

Taekhan Yoon (TE, The United Korean Presbyterian Church), Class of 27
Linda Lanam (RE, OPMH), Class of 27
Henry Brinton (TE, Fairfax), Class of '27
Emma Horn (TE, Immanuel), Class of 2027
Carla Gorrell (TE, Retired), Committee on Ministry c/o 2027
Laura Fitzgibbon (RE, Manassas), Class of 2027

Church Development Committee:

Cynthia Kekung (TE, Emanuel Indonesian), Class of 2027
Betsy Weingarten (RE, St Mark), Class of 2027

Permanent Judicial Commission:

Emily Berman D'Andrea (TE, Potomac), Class of 2029

Leadership Council:

Jeri Fields (TE, Adelphi), Leadership Council, Class of '27
Shani McIlwain (RE, Faith) for Leadership Council, Class of 2027

Personnel

Priscilla O'Donnell (RE, St. Andrew), Class of 2027

Stewardship

David Gray (TE, Bradley Hills), Class of 2025

**National Capital Presbytery
Stated Meeting – National Presbyterian Church**

**Order of Worship
September 24, 2024**

Call to Worship (based on Psalm 96)

Let us sing to the Lord!

We will sing to the Lord a new song!

Let us sing to the Lord!

**We will sing of God's salvation
while blessing God's name!**

Declare God's glory among the nations!

**We will share God's marvelous works
among all the peoples!**

Let us sing to the Lord!

We will sing to the Lord a new song!

For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised!

Let us worship God!

Hymn # 637 (Glory to God): "O Sing to the Lord"

Call to Confession

Friends, a light has dawned on the earth in Jesus, and still we stumble in the dark. We have been called to repentance for the reign of heaven has come near. Let us confess our rebellion and our resistance to follow the one who calls us and lays claim to our lives.

Prayer of Confession

God,

In Jesus you shone your light to all of us who sat in darkness. We see you now, and your call to discipleship. We confess that we are not eager to follow. It will demand that we leave profitable jobs, sometimes. It will demand that we leave family members and move to other parts of the world, sometimes. It will demand that we see our life work as the work of becoming like Christ. If you don't help us, God, we will not be able to follow. The pull of our comfort is great. We do not easily embrace the unknown. But we want to follow you; give us the power to do so.

Assurance of Pardon

Through Christ, God is revealed.

Christ said to us, "You are forgiven,"

he also said "Follow me."

This is a reminder that grace,
while freely given, is not cheap.

Friends, believe the Good News of the Gospel!

In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

Gloria Patri

Passing of the Peace

Scripture: Mark 4:35-41

Hymn #695 (Glory to God): "Change my Heart O God"

Scripture: Matthew 9:18-26

Sermon: "Which Song Will you Sing?" Rev. Dr. Chris Deacon

Solo: Alison Crichton

Celebration of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

Installation

Do you, members of National Capital Presbytery, confirm the call of God to Elder Lou Durden and Elder Jesy Littlejohn to serve as National Capital Presbytery Moderator and Vice Moderator in the service of Jesus Christ? **We do.**

Will you support and encourage them in this ministry? **We will.**

Hymn #772 (Glory to God): "Live Into Hope"

ACTION ITEMS FOR SEPTEMBER 24, 2024 NCP MEETING

COMMISSION ON MINISTRY

ACTION ITEM #1

MOTION: That National Capital Presbytery ESTABLISH an Administrative Commission for the Prince George's Community Presbyterian Church, in accordance with *Book of Order* G-3.0109(b), in response to reports of disorder. The Commission shall have the authority to:

- Visit with the session and the congregation to inquire into and settle the difficulties therein (G-3.0109(b)5, G-3.0303(d)).
- Review the church's bylaws and Manual of Administrative Operations (G-3.0106), providing recommendations to the session for any required policies or documents that may be absent or incomplete.
- Provide for a regular financial review for the church, in accordance with G-3.0113.
- Provide training for the church's officers, in consultation with the NCP Stated Clerk.
- Direct the session and the congregation to meet as necessary (G-1.0502, G-3.0203).
- Assume original jurisdiction, if it determines that the session cannot exercise its authority, following the procedural safeguards in G-3.0303(e).

The commission shall afford to all persons affected by any of its decisions fair notice and an opportunity to be heard on matters at issue before making a decision final.

The commission shall keep a full record of its proceedings and shall submit that record to the council or councils for incorporation into its records. It shall make a report of its decisions to the NCP stated clerk, who shall transmit it to the council at its next stated meeting. NCP may rescind or amend an action of its administrative commission in the same way actions of the council are modified.

The Moderator of the Presbytery is authorized to name up to five (5) members to serve on this Administrative Commission, divided as equally as possible between ruling and teaching elders.

Rationale: In March of this year, Prince George's Community Presbyterian Church lost its beloved pastor, the Rev. Dr. Edward Harding, Jr., following a period of illness. During the pastor's illness and following his death, the presbytery has appointed moderators to work with the session. The COM became aware that the session had not held regular meetings in some time, and that members of the session were unsure of who had access to the church's accounts.

The *Book of Order* provides a non-exclusive list of functions that may be entrusted to Administrative Commissions created by councils of the church. Among these functions is:

(by presbyteries, synods, and the General Assembly) visiting particular councils, congregations, or agencies over which they have immediate jurisdiction reported to be affected with disorder, and inquiring into and settling the difficulties therein, except that no commission of a presbytery shall be empowered to dissolve a pastoral relationship without the specific authorization by the designating body (G-2.0901); (G-3.0109(b)5)

ACTION ITEM #2

MOTION: The Commission on Ministry, pursuant to Book of Order G-2.0504(c) and the Presbytery's Policy on Changes in Pastoral Roles within a Congregation, recommends that the Presbytery **GRANT** an **EXCEPTION** to allow the Rev. Yena Hwang, who is currently serving as an Interim Pastor at Falls Church Presbyterian Church, to be eligible to be called and installed as Pastor.

Rationale: The Book of Order states that a pastor serving in a temporary pastoral relationship is "ordinarily" not eligible to become the installed pastor (G-2.0504b), but allows the presbytery to grant an exception by a three-quarters vote (G-2.0504c). The NCP Policy on Changes in Pastoral Role provides a process whereby the CTC is able to bring such a recommendation for a minister who has been serving for at least 12 months. In accordance with this policy, Yena has communicated her request in writing and met with representatives of the CTC (Carla Gorrell and Mark Harper), who have recommended granting the exception.

Rev. Yena Hwang began serving as interim pastor in May 2023. During the search process, her Personal Discernment Profile (PDP) was matched with the Ministry Discernment Profile (MDP) for the installed position at Falls Church PC, indicating a fit between her perceived gifts and the church's perceived needs for permanent pastoral leadership.

When approached by the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC), initially Yena declined to be considered as a candidate. Her intent was to continue to pursue interim ministry as a vocation. After prayer and conversations with colleagues, Yena discerned that there was high energy in the congregation for change and future possibilities for new mission. This led to Yena's decision to be considered as a candidate and to request an exception.

Yena submitted and the Session approved her resignation as Interim effective June 30. This action allowed the discernment process to proceed without her presence as a pastor. Yena wanted to make a clean break between serving as Interim and a potential call to serve as Head of Staff.

Session conducted the required discernment in July. The process included answering questions provided by CTC and scheduling two listening sessions with members of the congregation, to be completed in Sept.

Session request sent July 24:

The Falls Church Presbyterian Church (FCPC) Session and Pastoral Nominating Committee (PNC) are requesting a Presbytery exception to the usual process for selection of our next Senior Pastor/Head of Staff. Based on an extensive PNC search and Session discernment, we are asking approval to call Rev. Yena Hwang, our former Transitional Pastor, to this position. As required by COM, we have answered the "Questions for Discernment as It Relates to Changes in Pastoral Roles within a Congregation". (Sent with the Session's answers to the Discernment questions.)

CTC approved the Session's request on August 1st.

CTC also recommended that Falls Church hold listening sessions with members of the congregation to answer questions and hear any concerns. Those sessions were held Sept 8 and 15.

Conclusion:

The PNC was formed in May 2023. They held a jumpstart event for the congregation to imagine priorities for future ministry and mission, and to provide feedback to the PNC for the kind of pastoral leadership needed to serve their vision for the future.

The PNC interviewed three final candidates, prior to considering Yena. One was not a good fit. One withdrew. One accepted a different call just days before the scheduled on-site visit and interview. That left Yena as the only remaining candidate.

NCP's mission strategy is to assure that congregations are able to call qualified pastors that have the requisite gifts, experience and leadership skills. The new reality is that, in a national search for pastoral leadership, there is a chronic shortage of applicants that are a good fit with a particular congregation's needs. The COM believes that PNCs should be able to fill pastor vacancies within a reasonable period of time, and that during the search process, the Spirit sometimes surprises with an unexpected match between a congregation and a candidate. Therefore COM recommends the approval of this exception.

LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

ACTION ITEM #3

MOTION: The Leadership Council moves that the Presbytery AMEND the purpose of the Next Blessing Fund, established by the Presbytery at its Stated Meeting on November 18, 2014, by replacing the existing text in its entirety with the following:

Next Blessings Fund: This fund is established upon dissolution of Trinity Presbyterian Church, Bethesda, by action of the National Capital Presbytery at its November 18, 2014, meeting. This fund is to provide support for struggling churches through discerning their future sustainability. The fund will subsidize a presbytery staff position of a pastor/facilitator to work with churches is assessing their current and future vitality. This position will work with multiple churches, congruently, and provide realistic routes for churches to pursue. These routes could include but will not be limited to: developing new community-based mission and ministry, redeveloping church property, merging with other churches, closing. Use of these funds will be approved by the Leadership Council. Any unused funds remaining in the "Next Blessings Fund" on September 24, 2029, will revert to the Board Designated Unrestricted funds of the Presbytery.

Rationale: In November 2014, National Capital Presbytery created the Next Blessings Fund, using \$500,000 from the proceeds of the sale of the property held by Trinity Presbyterian Church in Bethesda, following the dissolution of that congregation. In the ten years since that time, no disbursements from the fund have ever been requested or made. The balance of the fund, as of June 30, 2024, is \$590,669.37. In the absence of further action from the Presbytery, the balance of this fund will revert to the Presbytery's Unrestricted Fund in November of this year.

The original text of the resolution creating the fund can be found below:

Now, therefore be it resolved that this Administrative Commission hereby recommends that National Capital Presbytery designate \$500,000 of the Trinity Bethesda assets to create the "Next Blessings Fund," to provide loans and/or grants for capital repairs, ministry initiatives, or "extreme makeovers" for struggling congregations participating in the "Next Blessings" initiative of Presbytery;

Further, be it resolved that this "Next Blessings Fund" will be administered by the "Next Blessings" Ministry and jointly overseen by the Church Development Committee and the Committee on Ministry of the Presbytery;

Further, be it resolved that based on the Administrative Commission's knowledge of the history of Trinity Presbyterian Church (Bethesda) this "Next Blessings Fund" eligibility requirements must include the following elements:

- An Administrative Commission with original jurisdiction elected by Presbytery to oversee the congregation's ministry;
- New pastoral leadership (in most cases) will be employed;
- No more than three years of program support with annual positive evaluation required after initial grant or loan before support is continued for subsequent years: i.e., \$30,000 in year one, \$20,000 in year two, \$10,000 in year three;

- No more than \$50,000 may be available in loans to the congregation with the interest rate being set by the "Next Blessing" Committee;

And, further be it resolved, that after ten (10) years from the date of dissolution of Trinity Presbyterian Church of Bethesda, any unused funds in the "Next Blessings Fund" will be revert to the Unrestricted Fund of Presbytery as currently described in Section 5, Temporarily Restricted Funds, B. Board Funds, j. Unrestricted Fund of the NCP Financial Policies (adopted May 13, 2013 and revised September 23, 2014).