

September 19, 2025



Siblings in Christ,

As we prepare to gather for our September Presbytery meeting, one phrase keeps running through my head and it comes from my favorite animated heeler pup, Bluey: “*Let’s do this!*” Whether facing an adventure or a difficult task, Bluey uses those words to steady herself for what’s ahead. We’ve got this. We can do this. *Let’s do this!*

I am both excited and a little nervous as I begin my term as Moderator of National Capital Presbytery for 2025–2026. I’m not afraid of the responsibilities or the challenges before us, nor of making the occasional misstep with Robert’s Rules. What I do feel is a deep desire to do this well. And I imagine that’s what we all want: To do well in the ministries, conversations, and decisions entrusted to us.

Looking at the docket and the transitions unfolding across our presbytery, I anticipate both excitement and trepidation. Congregations and leaders alike are discerning new paths for where God is calling them. Even the items before us that may appear procedural — like amending rules or updating documents — have been prayerfully and carefully considered as steps toward a healthier, more equitable future for the whole body.

As we enter this season together, may we approach our work with humility and grace, remembering that every motion and every vote is ultimately about strengthening the missional, pastoral, and prophetic witness of this presbytery. It won’t always be easy, and it won’t always be perfect; but together, we can do this well.

So, friends ... *let’s do this!*

In grace and peace,

Elder Jesy Littlejohn (They/Them)

Moderator-Elect, National Capital Presbytery



September 19, 2025



Siblings in Christ,

Rev. David Baer is on leave, and we ask that his privacy be respected at this time. Per NCP policy the General Presbyter will serve as Stated Clerk in the absence of the elected Stated Clerk. To help assist in that work The Leadership Council is recommending the appointment of a Co-Acting Stated Clerk to work along side me during this time. The person that Leadership Council is putting forward for you to elect is Rev. Elissa Bailey, who is a member of Great Rivers Presbytery. Rev. Elissa Bailey is the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Great Rivers and the Stated Clerk of East Iowa Presbytery. She has a tremendous amount of experience in serving the role of Stated Clerk and comes highly recommended from many colleges both inside and outside of NCP.

Below is Elissa's bio:

Rev. Elissa Bailey was ordained as a PCUSA Teaching Elder in July of 2009. In 2012, she began her role as the Acting Stated Clerk in Great Rivers. Two years later, this role turned into the elected Stated Clerk role. In April of 2022, the Presbytery of East Iowa partnered with the Presbytery of Great Rivers to extend a 3/4 time call to Elissa. At that point, Elissa left her role as a congregational minister to focus on the role of Stated Clerk. During this time, Elissa also received her Master's in Mental Health Counseling and became a licensed professional counselor in the state of Iowa, where she works at Evergreen Coaching and Counseling part-time.

Rev. Elissa lives in Bloomington, IL with her three amazing children: Grace (almost 13), Sophia (11), and Mitchell (8). In addition to all of the amazing time spent with her children (and three cats), Elissa enjoys crocheting and other arts and crafts. Elissa has always enjoyed the work of the Stated Clerk. She fell in love with polity in Seminary and hasn't looked back since. She is also grateful for the opportunity to be bi-vocational and do all the work that she loves.

I am excited to work alongside Elissa in the coming days. Please join me in welcoming her to this role. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to me.

In Christ,

Rev. John Molina-Moore
General Presbyter and Acting Stated Clerk

Stated Meeting
National Capital Presbytery
September 23, 2025
5:00PM at National Presbyterian Church
Streaming Link: <https://nationalpres.org/watch/>
We Gather in Community

5:00	CALL TO ORDER	Elder Lou Durden
	FORMATION OF THE ROLL, DOCKET, OMNIBUS MOTION (p. 4)	Rev. John Molina-Moore
	SEATING OF CORRESPONDING MEMBERS	
	ELECTION OF CO-ACTING STATED CLERK	Rev. Jeri Fields & Rev. John Molina-Moore
5:10	WORSHIP (pp. 5-6) Elder Lou Durden, Preaching; Joya Follette, Pianist & Vocalist (Northminster) • Installation of Commissioned Ruling Elder, Elder Shawn Richmond • Installation of Elder Jesy Littlejohn as Moderator, and Rev. Rachel Vaagenes as Vice Moderator	
5:50	TRANSITIONS / LIFE OF THE PRESBYTERY	Rev. John Molina-Moore
6:10	REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY (pp. 7 & 8)	Rev. Blair Moorhead
6:20	LEADERSHIP COUNCIL (p. 9-11)	Rev. Jeri Fields
6:30	NEW BUSINESS	Elder Jesy Littlejohn
6:35	CLERK'S REPORT	Rev. Elissa Bailey
6:40	CELEBRATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER	Elder Jesy Littlejohn & Rev. Rachel Vaagenes
7:00	HYMN #276 (Blue hymnal) "Great is Thy Faithfulness"	Joya Follette
7:05	CHARGE AND BLESSING	Elder Jesy Littlejohn

*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 23, 2025, PRESBYTERY MEETING

From the Office of the Stated Clerk

The Acting Stated Clerk recommends the **APPROVAL** of the minutes of the Stated Meeting held on May 20, 2025.

The Acting Stated Clerk recommends the **DISMISSAL** with thanks of the Administrative Commission to First Presbyterian Church of Annandale.

From the Nominating Committee

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

Chairs of Committees (with concurrence of LC)

- Barbara Mitchell (RE, National), Personnel
- Karl Hoffman (RE, New York Avenue), Investments
- Charles Van Gorder (RE, Member at Large), Permanent Judicial Commission
- Mark Harper (TE, Takoma Park) & Henry Brinton (TE, Fairfax), COM Transition Commission
- Carla Gorrell (TE, Honorably Retired), Committee on Ministry

Administrative Commission on Church Property

- LeAnn Hodges (TE, Gaithersburg), c/o 2028

COM Transition Commission

- Mark Harper (TE, Takoma Park), c/o 2028

Personnel

- Barbara Mitchell (RE, National), c/o 2028

Investments

- Karl Hoffman (RE, New York Avenue), c/o 2028

Leadership Council

- Leslie Klingensmith (TE, St. Matthew), c/o 2028

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

**Order of Worship
September 23, 2025**

Call to Worship

Disciples of Christ, we are invited into the ministry of God.

We accept the invitation to love our neighbors as ourselves.

Disciples of Christ, we have gathered to celebrate the ministry of God.

We accept the commission to proclaim the good news, with words if necessary!

Disciples of Christ, let us offer our thanksgiving!

Let us worship with praise and thanksgiving, for the ministry of God!

Hymn # 379 (Blue Hymnal): “My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less”

Call to Confession

We live fractured lives in a fractured world. God seeks not to punish us for those faults, but to reconcile and restore us. Trusting in God’s grace and mercy, let us then make our confession together.

Prayer of Confession (*in unison*) – *adapted from Howard Thurman*

Lord, open unto us – light for our darkness, courage for our fear, hope for our despair, peace for our turmoil, strength for our weakness, wisdom for our confusion, forgiveness for our sins. Open unto us thy Self for our self. Lord, Lord, open unto us. Amen

Assurance of Pardon

Hear the Good News: we are forgiven! We are set free to go out into the world and be the loving, gracious, hopeful, and faithful people of God!

Alleluia! Amen.

Passing of the Peace

Prayer of Illumination

God, by your Holy Spirit, open our minds that as the Scriptures are read and your Word is proclaimed, we may be led into your truth and taught your will. Amen

Scripture 1 Corinthians 9:19-23

Sermon “Don’t Be Afraid of Marketing”

Elder Lou Durden

Prayer (*in unison*)

Let us pray together

Startle us, O God, with your truth. Open our minds to your Spirit, that we may be one with Christ our Lord and serve as faithful disciples. Amen.

Installation of Ruling Elder to Service at Prince George's Community Church

Questions to the Candidate

Moderator Lou Durden

Questions to the Presbytery

Vice Moderator Jesy Littlejohn

Do you, members of National Capital Presbytery, confirm the call of God to our sibling, Shawn Richmond, to serve as a Commissioned Ruling Elder in the service of Jesus Christ? **We do.**

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

Installation of Moderator and Vice Moderator

Constitutional Questions of Elder Jesy Littlejohn & Rev. Rachel Vaagenes

Moderator Lou Durden

Constitutional Questions to all present

Moderator Lou Durden

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

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

ACTION ITEMS FOR SEPTEMBER 25, 2025 NCP MEETING

ACTION ITEM #1

Recommendation from the Commission on Preparation for Ministry

MOTION: The Commission on Preparation for Ministry MOVES that Connie Moore be allowed to enter the expedited candidate process according to the Book of Order G-2.0610 “When a Presbytery concludes there are good and sufficient reasons for accommodation to the particular circumstances of an individual seeking ordination, it may by three-fourth vote, waive any of the requirements for ordination in G-2.06, except G-2.0607d (ordination exams).”

Note: Approval of this accommodation requires a three-fourths majority. The Book of Order requires that the candidacy phase last at least one year (G-2.0602). The expedited process simply removes this time requirement.

Rationale: Connie has already completed her Master of Divinity degree from Union Presbyterian Theological Seminary, and she has passed the five ordination exams. CPM is recommending that we waive the one-year requirement so that she can be certified ready for ministry within the next year. She is a candidate in good standing with Catoclin Presbyterian Church and is under care of the National Capital Presbytery’s Commission on Preparation for Ministry.

ACTION ITEM #2

Recommendation from the Commission on Preparation for Ministry

MOTION: The Commission on Preparation for Ministry MOVES that the Presbytery APPROVE alternate-means ordination exams for Ministry Candidate Nat Amarquaye according to Book of Order G-2.0610.

G-2.0610 Accommodation to Particular Circumstances

When a presbytery concludes there are good and sufficient reasons for accommodations to the particular circumstances of an individual seeking ordination, it may, by a three-fourths vote, waive any of the requirements for ordination in G-2.06, except for those of G-2.0607d. If a Presbytery judges that there are good and sufficient reasons why a candidate should not be required to satisfy the requirements of G-2.0607d, it shall approve by three-fourths vote some alternate means by which to ascertain the readiness of a candidate for ministry in the areas covered by the standard ordination exams. A full account of the reasons for any waiver or alternate means to ascertain readiness shall be included in the minutes of the presbytery and communicated to the presbytery to which an inquirer or candidate may be transferred.

The CPM is seeking approval of the following alternate exams for Candidate Amarquaye:

Theology Exam: The CPM will prepare a scenario in which Candidate Amarquaye will have a mock meeting with a church member who is considering becoming an elder. The meeting will include the member’s questions about what Presbyterians believe and whether they can affirm those beliefs in getting ordained as an elder.

Worship and Sacraments Exam: The CPM will ask Candidate Amarquaye to plan and lead a worship service centered around a baptism, pointing to the meaning and importance of baptism as a sacrament in the Reformed tradition.

Note: Approval of these alternate-means examinations requires a three-fourths majority.

Rationale: Alternative exams are a way to support individuals for whom the written ordination exams have not been successful. As the PC(USA) Advisory Handbook on Preparation for Ministry states, “This provision recognizes written examinations are not appropriate means by which to assess some individuals’ ministry competence” (p. 59). When individuals take the exams multiple times with the same result, it is our goal to support them in finding an alternate way to assess the same knowledge and pastoral readiness.

ACTION ITEM #3

Recommendation from the Leadership Council

MOTION: National Capital Presbytery agrees to redesignate the remaining amount of its \$159,156 donation to the Ministry Crisis Fund (approved at the March 2023 Presbytery Meeting) to the Ministry Crisis Fund 2.0.

Ministry Crisis Fund Background Information/Rationale

National Capital Presbytery's Ministry Crisis Fund (MCF) has been a staple in how the Presbytery walks alongside congregations and clergy in difficult times. For decades, it has primarily been funded through collections taken up at installations.

Recently, we became aware of a donor designation issue. The language in our Financial Policies lists the funds are to be used in the following manner:

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE: "The Ministry Crisis Fund is a longstanding financial resource which provides emergency assistance to ministers and/or their families when other resources are not sufficient. The fund is operated by Committee on Ministry. Income is primarily from the offering taken at all installation services. Assistance is provided in the form of grants or loans; where a loan is provided, ordinarily a promissory note is required."

At some point (likely 15-20 years ago), the following language began to be circulated through the Presbytery regarding how MCF monies were to be used:

CIRCULATED LANGUAGE: "The Ministry Crisis Fund is a longstanding financial resource of National Capital Presbytery. It has two purposes: To assist in responding to emerging crisis in the lives of clergy, church professionals and employees and others involved in our joint ministry. To assist congregations as they deal with emerging ministry crisis, primarily in the area of conflict involving staff and/or members."

It appears that all involved with the fund believed this language had been appropriately approved and NCP has been disbursing funds based on this 'updated' but unapproved language.

Because the donations are designated by the donor, the MCF is considered a donor-restricted fund. As such, any change in its designation must be approved by the donor. The Committee on Ministry, Leadership Council and Presbytery do not have any authority in changing the designation of these monies – only the donors are able to do that.

While the MCF is primarily funded through collections taken up at installations, at the March 2023 Presbytery Meeting, the body voted to designate funds from the dissolution and property sale of Riverdale Presbyterian Church for the MCF. The amount of those funds was \$159,156.

At Leadership Council's September 3, 2025 meeting, Leadership Council voted to create a new fund, Ministry Crisis Fund 2.0, using the circulated language above as its disbursement criteria.

The intent is to use the monies currently in the original MCF as indicated in its original fund language until such time that it is depleted. No new monies will be added to the original fund, all new collections will go into Ministry Crisis Fund 2.0 with its broader disbursement language. This will allow us to honor the original restrictions of the fund while enabling us to be responsive to the changing landscape of ministry.

In order to facilitate the depletion of the original fund (Ministry Crisis Fund) and provide monies for new fund (Ministry Crisis Fund 2.0), we respectfully request that National Capital Presbytery vote to redesignate the remaining amount of its donation made in March of 2023 into the Ministry Crisis Fund 2.0.

As of 8/30/2025, the balance in the original Ministry Crisis Fund is \$159,169.58. There is an additional \$18,000 in outstanding loans to the fund.

ACTION ITEM #4

Recommendation from the Leadership Council

Following the presentation of the first reading at the May 20, 2025 presbytery meeting, the Leadership Council MOVES the following amendment to NCP Standing Rule #3. (Text to be inserted is shown in underlined italics. Text to be removed is ~~struck through~~.)

Standing Rule # 3 (SR-3)

A Special Rule of Order for the consideration of proposed amendments to the Book of Order

When proposed amendments to the Book of Order are before the presbytery for debate and vote, the Chairperson of Bills and Overtures Committee shall present the committee's judgment and recommendation in the form of a report, not a motion.

The committee's report may designate one or more amendments to be included in a consent agenda. Following the presentation of the committee's report, an opportunity shall be given to any voting member of the assembly to remove items from the consent agenda for regular consideration. Once all such removals have been made, the Moderator shall declare that the items not removed have been answered in accordance with the committee's recommendations.

Immediately thereafter, the Moderator of the meeting shall *proceed with each of the items in the committee's report that the presbytery has not yet acted upon, saying:*

"Amendment ____ is now before the presbytery. (And, following discussion and debate, the Moderator shall continue) All in favor of Amendment ____ say "aye"; all opposed say "no". Amendment ____ is approved/is not approved."

The third option which is available, "take no action" would require a motion to the effect "I move that the presbytery take no action on Amendment ____" which would be made before the Moderator has called for the vote on the Amendment. It would be handled in the same manner as any main motion.

Rationale: The last two General Assemblies sent many proposed amendments to the presbyteries for consideration. As NCP engaged in discernment with respect to these proposed amendments, it emerged that only a small number required the careful review and debate of the whole body of the presbytery. To expedite voting on the amendments, the Bills and Overtures Committee each time recommended that the Standing Rules be suspended so that most items could be approved by means of a consent agenda. Suspension of the standing rules requires a two-thirds majority and is rightly perceived as a course deviating from the standard practice. The proposed amendment regularizes this process without abridging the right of any voting member of the assembly to require individual consideration, including a period of discussion, for any item presented by the Bills and Overtures Committee.