

May 15, 2026



Siblings in Christ,

“It’s my last letter....It’s the last one!”

[I hope at least one of you sang that in your head like the witch from *Into the Woods*]

It’s my last letter because at this upcoming meeting we will spend a portion of our time together electing a new Moderator and Vice Moderator! We will also vote to elect our new Stated Clerk candidate, the Rev. Alex Evangelista. Additionally, we will commission those who were selected to serve at the 227th General Assembly this summer in Milwaukee. We are blessed to be led by such gifted people, and I am thankful for the ways God is moving through each of these folks to faithfully serve this presbytery and the greater church.

This Tuesday we will also receive an update from Leadership Council about where we currently stand regarding the property formerly known as Garden Memorial Presbyterian Church; we will learn about transitions happening within our congregations; and we will have the opportunity to worship and come together at the table to join in the sacrament of communion.

In so many ways, this feels like a standard Presbytery meeting, business as usual. But friends: things are happening in this Presbytery. I have had the opportunity, in my time as Moderator, to visit and preach at many of our churches. There is excitement, there is energy, and as we approach Pentecost, I am reminded so deeply of how the Spirit is at work in this place and this body.

So friends, as our time in the “woods” quickly comes to a close, I give thanks for the ways you have entrusted me to walk this path with you. It hasn’t always been straight, and what I thought I knew well often held beautiful surprises and unexpected challenges. And still, I am blessed to know that I have not walked this journey alone. I give thanks for the ways the Spirit keeps showing up among us: in transition, in worship, at the table, and in one another.

See you Tuesday!

Jesy Littlejohn (they/them) Moderator, National Capital Presbytery

PS - Shoutout to Rev. Blair Moorehead and Rev. Mark Harper who enthusiastically texted me after my last letter to answer my not-so-hidden trivia question! Bonus for this one: Who knows the song I referenced at the beginning of my letter?

Stated Meeting

National Capital Presbytery
May 19, 2026
5:00 PM National Presbyterian Church
We Gather in Community

- 5:00 PM CALL TO ORDER Elder Jesy Littlejohn
- OPENING PRAYER Rev. Rachel Landers Vaagenes
- SEATING OF CORRESPONDING MEMBERS Elder Jesy Littlejohn
- 5:05 PM FORMATION OF THE ROLL, OMNIBUS MOTION (p.3), REPORT FROM ACTING
 STATED CLERK Elder Jesy Littlejohn & Rev. John Molina-Moore
- 5:10 PM ACTION ITEM #1 LEADERSHIP COUNCIL (p. 5) Rev. Jeri Fields & Heather Deacon
 Garden Memorial
- 5:25 PM TRANSITIONS Rev. John Molina-Moore
- 5:35 PM ACTION ITEM #2 NOMINATING COMMITTEE (p. 16) Rev. Katie Murchison Ross
 Election of Moderator and Vice Moderator
- 5:45 PM ACTION ITEM #3 STATED CLERK SEARCH COMMITTEE (p. 18) Rev. Juli Wilson-Black
 Election of the Stated Clerk
- 5:55 PM WORSHIP
- Commissioning of GA commissioners
- Elder Jesy Littlejohn (Oaklands)
 - Rev. Rachel Landers Vaagenes (Capitol Hill)
 - Elder Kristin Ford (New York Ave)
 - Elder Beverly Johnson (Lewinsville)
 - Elder Jacquelyn Moore (Sargent Memorial)
 - Rev. Elizabeth Brookens-Sturman (Retired)
 - Rev. David Douthett (Catoclin)
 - Rev. Emma Horn (Immanuel)
 - Sofia Turkman (YAAD) (Saint Mark)
- Communion
- 6:25 PM NEW BUSINESS Elder Jesy Littlejohn
- 6:30 PM CHARGE AND BLESSING Elder Jesy Littlejohn

Meeting Leaders

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

Elder Jesy Littlejohn, NCP Moderator

Rev. Rachel Landers Vaagenes, NCP Vice-Moderator

Rev. Jeri Fields, Leadership Council Chair

Heather Deacon, Senior Director of Finance & Operations and Treasurer

Rev. Katie Murchison Ross, Nominating Committee Chair

Rev. Juli Wilson-Black, Chair, Stated Clerk Search Committee

OMNIBUS MOTION

From the Stated Clerk:

- The Stated Clerk recommends the **APPROVAL** of the minutes of the NCP Stated Meetings held on March 24, 2026.

From the Nominating Committee

To move the following for nomination:

Administrative Commission on Congregational Property

- Peter Manning (TE, First Arlington), c/o 2029

Budget and Finance

- Richard Johnson (RE, OPMH), c/o 2029
- Don Humphries (RE, Northminster), c/o 2029

Committee on Ministry (COM)

- Scott Ramsey (TE, Lewinsville), c/o 2029

Congregational Transitions Commission (CTC)

- Roy Martin (TE, Retired), c/o 2029
- Carolyn Tilley (TE, validated ministry/Takoma Park), c/o 2029

Personnel

- Alice Ogden Bellis (TE, validated ministry/Fifteenth Street), c/o 2029

Session Records

- Bob Patrick (RE, Grace-Springfield), c/o 2029

From the Leadership Council

To move the following for nomination:

Nominating Committee

- Kori Philips McMurtry (TE, Christian Community Presbyterian), c/o 2029
- Erin Counihan (TE, Pilgrims/Western), c/o 2029

To move the following to serve as co-chair for the remainder of the 25-26 year:

- COM Co-Chair: Kris Maldarelli (RE, Gaithersburg)

To move the following to serve as chairs for the 26-27 year:

- ACCP: LeAnn Hodges (TE, Gaithersburg)
- Budget and Finance: Mark Stunder (RE, Boyds)
- CPM: Blair Moorhead (TE, Immanuel)
- Investments: Karl Hoffman (Lay member, New York Avenue)
- Nominating: Katie Murchison Ross (TE, Grace Springfield)
- Session Records: Julia McBee (RE, St. Matthew)

ACTION ITEM #1

Leadership Council - Garden Memorial

MOTION: Leadership Council moves that National Capital Presbytery utilize the DC Resurrection fund to pay outstanding taxes owed to the District of Columbia for the property located at 1720 Minnesota Avenue, SE, Washington, DC, formerly known as Garden Memorial Presbyterian Church.

Rationale: As outlined in the enclosed materials, NCP has been in a 3-year legal process of defending our claim to the worship property related to the former Garden Memorial Presbyterian Church. As part of this process, the property was declared vacant. This declaration triggered a property tax liability. The DC government allows for a significant reduction in property taxes if the property is subject to litigation. NCP has been able to access this reduction each year, but only after going through a multi-level appeal process. The result being that a portion of the 2024 and 2025 tax debt was sold at tax sale before the appeal process for 2024 and 2025 had concluded. On the advice of NCP attorneys, we did not pay those portions until the resolution was reached. With the litigation reduction now properly applied, NCP must redeem the taxes for 2024 and 2025

The current amount of tax debt owed to the District of Columbia is approximately \$109,626.

Note: The balance in the DC Resurrection fund as of March 31 is \$1,100,269

Garden Memorial Summary Background

In 2017, tax debt for the worship property associated with Garden Memorial Presbyterian Church located at 1720 Minnesota Ave SE (Washington DC) was sold at tax sale. Months of correspondence and negotiations resulted in NCP paying property taxes totaling approximately \$55,000 and incurring \$20,000 in legal fees. The congregation entered into an agreement to repay the tax portion only on a monthly, interest-free plan. These payments were consistently made through April of 2021. The last payment recorded on the loan was in March of 2022. The tax liability impacting this situation occurred because of a for-profit day care that operated in the basement of the church building. As part of the agreement with NCP, the daycare was to vacate the premises to ensure they would not continue to incur property taxes.

In July 2022, NCP became aware that Garden Memorial was again delinquent in property taxes, which resulted in the property being sold again at tax sale in large part because they had continued to allow the for-profit day care to operate in their basement.

The resulting actions led to the Presbytery advancing funds to redeem property taxes and set up an AC to access congregational vitality (2022). After multiple attempts to meet with congregation members, and in light of there being no services held or business conducted by the church since March of 2020, the Presbytery amended the authority of the AC to dissolve the congregation (2023). The AC took action to dissolve the congregation in June of 2023. As a result, NCP files legal action to have the property placed in its name. A 3-year legal battle ensued. During this time, the property became inhabited by unhoused people resulting in significant damage and causing disruption to the neighborhood.

Since 2022, NCP has spent approximately \$610,233 caring for and defending its claim to the property. This is in addition to costs still not recovered from the tax issue in 2017 and outstanding monies owed by Garden Memorial to the Ministry Crisis Fund. A summary of monies spent to date is included in this packet.

The property is currently listed for sale with Foundry Commercial. We anticipate coming back to the floor in the coming months requesting permission to approve the sale of this property.

Garden Memorial Expenses

Below is line item summary of expenses paid to date relating to Garden Memorial.

Expenses 2022-March 31, 2026		
Legal	\$	146,574.54
Taxes	\$	190,077.41
Property Fines & Related Expenses	\$	109,473.24
Deed Transfer Fees	\$	<u>164,108.10</u>
	\$	610,233.29
Outstanding Monies (Prior to 2022)		
Remaining Expenses Realted to 2018 Tax Matter	\$	42,000.00
Outstanding Ministry Crisis Loan	\$	14,935.79
Past Due Per Capita	\$	<u>31,659.18</u>
	\$	88,594.97

Line-Item Descriptions

- Legal – Attorney Fees, Filing Fees, Notary Expenses, Legal Research, etc.
- Taxes – Property Taxes
- Property Fines & Related Expenses – Department of Building Fines, Code Violations & Remediations, Expenses Related to Securing the Property, Clearing Utility Debt owed by congregation
- Deed Transfer Fees – Fees paid to transfer deed into NCP name (a chance this will be recouped through appeal)
- Remaining Expenses Related to 2018 Tax Matter – Balance of loan to Garden Memorial for the tax lien portion of clearing the 2017/18 tax situation
- Outstanding Ministry Crisis Loan – Balance remaining on loan to Garden Memorial to pay out severance related to pastoral transition
- Past Due Per Capita – Per Capita owed for years 2004-2023

Garden Memorial Timeline, 2020-Present

This timeline outlines events from 2020-present and does not document or account for the issues prior to 2020 which include the sale of tax debt on the property in 2017.

- July 2022 Became aware that the tax debt on the worship property had been sold at DC tax sale.
- August 2022 Gathered information, consulted church representatives, reviewed history of tax sale for this property, sought legal counsel, and updated Leadership Council.
- September 2022 Leadership Council takes the following actions:
- Leadership Council moves that the Presbytery pay outstanding taxes owed to the District of Columbia for the worship property located at 1720 Minnesota Avenue, SE, Washington, DC, known as Garden Memorial Presbyterian Church. Communication regarding this action is to be sent to all known members of the church. The DC Resurrection Fund will be used for expenses related to this action, including all legal fees incurred by the Presbytery.*
- Leadership Council moves that the presbytery designate an Administrative Commission (AC), members to be appointed by the moderator, to assume original jurisdiction and act as the session for Garden Memorial Presbyterian Church to assess the vitality of the congregation. The commission is instructed to report quarterly to Leadership Council. (Congregation notified of these actions)*
- Requested to meet with representatives of the congregation at the property. Were denied.
- Staff visited property to assess condition (exterior only).
- Met with members of the congregation via zoom. Learned that the congregation had not been worshipping since 2020 (when the pandemic began). Learned there had been no Session or Congregational meetings since 2020 because they had no business to discuss (their words).

Prior to September Presbytery Meeting Church Member B began campaign to pastors in the NCP directory asking them to vote “no” on an AC, calls Synod Executive, and threatens civil action.

Presbytery Meeting approved the motion put forward by Leadership Council (listed in timeline above). As part of this meeting an Action Item Dialogue was held to educate Presbytery on scope of issues.

October 2022

AC is formed. Congregation is notified. Members of AC are: Rev. Bernice Parker-Jones, Elder Charles Barber, Elder Sandra Barrett, Rev. Mark Gaskill, Rev. Juan Guthrie, and Rev. Ruth Hamilton.

Members of AC and Presbytery Staff meet at church to further assess building condition and obtain membership information so that work of AC can begin. Met at church by a member who refused to provide directory/roles/member contact information.

Church Member B successfully submits DC Real Property Tax Exemption Form so that tax liability is reduced

NCP pays past due taxes in the amount of \$54,439.27

11/22-3/23

AC attempts to meet several times with members of the congregation. Attempts are blocked by Church Members A & B. A handful of members do meet with AC and those are very supportive of the work that is trying to be done.

March 2023

AC approves the following action:

*Administrative Commission for Garden Memorial Presbyterian Church **AUTHORIZE** the National Capital Presbytery Treasurer to take appropriate legal action to secure and hold the property of the church in the name of National Capital Presbytery, Inc.*

Presbytery Staff authorize legal counsel to file quiet claim to the property.

At the March Presbytery Meeting, the following action was taken:

*The Leadership Council recommends that the Presbytery **AMEND** the charge of the Administrative Commission for Garden Memorial Presbyterian Church, established in September 2022, to add the following:*

The Administrative Commission, after consultation with such remaining members of the congregation as it is able to contact, shall have the power and authority, at its sole discretion, to carry out all matters related to the dissolution of the church:

- 1. The continued exercise of original jurisdiction, in accordance with **Book of Order G-3.0303e**.*
- 2. Pastoral care of the members.*
- 3. An appropriate celebration of the ministry and mission of the congregation.*
- 4. The orderly dismissal of members to other congregations of their choosing.*
- 5. Securing, holding, and using of the properties of the congregation, including the maintenance of property and liability insurance.*
- 6. The making of recommendations to the Presbytery about the sale or disposition of such property.*
- 7. Conveying all original church records (minutes, rolls, and registers) and historically important documents or artifacts to the Stated Clerk of the presbytery for preservation.*
- 8. Dissolving the legal corporation once all property has been transferred or disposed of.*

The Moderator of the Presbytery shall have the authority to fill any vacancies that may arise in the membership of the Commission.

*In accordance with **Book of Order G-3.0109(b)**, the Commission shall keep a full record of its proceedings for incorporation into the records of the Presbytery. The Commission shall report its decisions to the Stated Clerk, who shall report them to the Presbytery at its next stated meeting.*

Dr. Walton-Hendricks invited the Rev. Bernice Parker-Jones, chair of the Administrative Commission for Garden Memorial Presbyterian Church to speak about the work of the commission.

*Following a period of discussion, the Presbytery voted, and the motion was **carried**.*

April 2023 Presbytery becomes aware that “congregation” is attempting to mortgage the property. Legal counsel advises and is subsequently authorized to file a lis pendant on the property to prevent mortgage.

Rev. Bernice Parker-Jones steps down from AC. Edler Lucius Durden joins AC and is elected chair.

DC Government affixes notice to the property door declaring the property vacant.

Become aware of \$9,000 lien on property by DC Water and multiple Department of Building infractions relating to condition of property (i.e. overgrown bushes, etc.).

May 2023 Member B of sends letter to PC(USA) notifying of their intent to disaffiliate/withdrawal from PC(USA).

June 2023 The AC took the following action:

The Administrative Commission for Garden Memorial Presbyterian Church acted in accordance with the authority conferred by the Presbytery on March 28, to DISSOLVE Garden Memorial Presbyterian Church as a congregation of the Presbyterian Church (USA)

August 2023 Paperwork filed with courts asserting NCP’s claim to the property.

Members of “congregation” meet offsite (no utilities were on at the property) to discuss putting Solar Panels on property as a means of generating income.

NCP attorneys send letter notifying “congregation” that they may not install solar panels.

NCP is notified that solar panel project is on hold due to the need for roof repairs. Attorneys intervene to prevent contractor from performing repairs as property is not insured. (Note, NCP is unable to insure property at this time because NCP is not allowed to access property to perform basic inspection required by insurance company.)

September 2023 Received notice that Church Member A responded to NCP’s claim to filing and subsequently filed a counterclaim asserting his authority to hold the property as a Trustee of the church.

Received notice that court rejected said member’s counterclaim.

Counterclaim was refiled by Church Member A.

October 2023 On advice of counsel, NCP files paperwork to have the property declared vacant.

Received word that property is being occupied by unhoused people.

Filed order with DC courts that NCP be granted access to the property so that steps to secure it can be taken.

Presbytery staff go to property to observe activity.

November 2023 Receive notice that NCP's request to have property taxes exempted on grounds of legal dispute was denied. Appeal subsequently filed.

Received notice that counterclaim to NCP filing (original filing) was dismissed.

Affidavits are filed by staff, contractors and neighbors to bolster request to have access to building granted for purpose of securing property.

Received notice that an attorney entered his appearance as counsel for "defendants" however, the "defendants" were not identified.

December 2023 At hearing for access to property the "defendants" attorney requested more time to identify who he represents as well as to respond to this hearing. Both were granted.

Opposing party files motion opposing our request to access the property.

Received notice that our initial claim asserting our right to the property was dismissed on the grounds they the DC court did not have jurisdiction.

January 2024 Motion to have dismissal reconsidered was filed.

Hearing requesting access to property was cancelled. Notice that an order was forthcoming was received.

February 2024 Metro Police Department begins calling NCP regarding complaints from neighbors about activity at property.

Received Department of Buildings notice that property has been fined because a door has been kicked in.

Motion to reconsider our claim asserting NCP right to the property was granted. Court requested we refile all previous motions to date.

March 2024 Send letter to DOB outlining our position as owner of the property and requesting all outstanding invoices so they can be cured.

Received notice that motion to serve defendants and unknown persons by publication was approved.

Church Member A filed motion to intervene in our claim as well as a counterclaim asserting his right to the property.

Church Member A files motions opposing service by publication and our request to access the property. NCP filed responses to both.

April 2024 Motion allowing NCP access to the property for purposes of securing it is granted. Order placed some conditions on any repairs that might be done.

Motion denying Church Member A's request to intervene in NCP's claim to the property was denied.

A deadline of May 8th was set for filings related to the Property Claim case.

June 2024 Hearing in the case resulted in additional time for the opposing party to submit answers.

July 2024 Church Member A filed an additional counterclaim stating he had been appointed as a Trustee.

Opposing counsel submitted filing withdrawing himself from case. The defendant was given time to file an answer to his filing.

August 2024 NCP files witness list ahead of hearing.

Our motion to strike Church Member A's response and counter claim was granted.

September 2024 Church Member A filed motion to have his answer and counterclaim reconsidered.

October 2024 Court denies Church Member A's request for reconsideration.

November 2024 Church Member A files appeal of denial of his request for reconsideration.

NCP files motion of default to advance Property Claim case.

Opposing counsel was granted permission to withdraw.

December 2024 Hearing on the NCP's default motion is continued until late January.

January 2025 Motion filed by Church Member A appealing their counsel's withdrawal from the case was denied.

Work to secure property is completed. Cost of this work is \$56,282.70.

All appeals by Church Member A are denied.

Fire breaks out on porch of the church. Minimal damage was done. Fire did not breach into the interior.

NCP staff visit property to assess damage from fire.

February 2025 At hearing, NCP's motion of default was granted; however, order had to be amended to include both the Church and Trustees.

March 2025 NCP Files motion for judgement.

NCP receives order granting judgement.

April 2025 Church Member A filed motion appealing judgement. Despite missing the filing deadline, DC Court of Appeals agrees to hear the case.

May 2025 NCP files to record deed in its name, based on the Judgement Order.

DC Court of Appeals issues Order to Show Cause to Church Member A. He has 20 days to respond.

June 2025 Recorder of Deed rejects NCP Deed because they are requiring NCP to pay recordation and transfer taxes (despite judgement order stating these fees were not applicable in this case).

Leadership Council passes the following motion allowing NCP to pay recording fees relating to recording deed in NCP's name:

That the Leadership Council AUTHORIZE the expenditure of \$164,108.10 from the Office Fund for the full amount of the fees related to recording the deed for Garden Memorial Presbyterian Church, with the funds to be reimbursed to the Office Fund when

either the fees are refunded or the property sells, whichever happens first.

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| July 2025 | Church Member A does not file a response to Show Cause Order from DC Court of Appeals; however, DC Court of Appeals rules to allow the appeal to go forward without response from Church Member A. |
| August 2025 | NCP is finally able to obtain liability only insurance on property. |
| February 2026 | Church Member A failed to submit his brief and appendix as required to advance his appeal. |
| March 2026 | Court of Appeals dismisses case. No motions to vacate order or reconsider were filed within the deadline. Property Claim case concludes. |

Not included in this timeline are the multiple vacancy tax exemption filings and appeals that occurred to keep the property current on property taxes and the work done with Department of Building to cure fines related to activity at the property.

ACTION ITEM #2

Nominating Committee – Election of the Moderator and Vice Moderator

The committee nominates **Rev. Rachel Vaagenes** (Capitol Hill) to be Moderator of the National Capital Presbytery for 2026-2027.

The committee nominates **Elder Marco Grimaldo** (Church of the Pilgrims) to be Vice Moderator of the National Capital Presbytery for 2026-2027.

Biographies of Nominees



2026-2027 Moderator – Rev. Rachel Landers Vaagenes (she/her) has been active in NCP for nearly 16 years, serving at Georgetown Presbyterian for 10 years and currently at Capitol Hill Presbyterian Church. This past year has been a privilege serving as Vice Moderator and on Leadership Council, and preparing for GA. Previously, she served on the Nominating Committee (for as long as Jacob labored in Laban's fields) and has also served on

MCC, contributed to the refugee network, supported dismantling racism efforts, and participated in NCP Pride events. Having heard the call to ministry, Rachel left Los Angeles and her dream of becoming an extra in Hallmark movies to attend seminary in New Jersey. She ended up in DC and has loved it ever since. She is bisexual and cares deeply about ensuring everyone feels welcome and knows they are loved by God! Rachel lives in Glover Park with her librarian husband Adrian; their two teen daughters, Maewynn and Evangeline; dogs Ladybird and Lucy; and 100 rescued houseplants.



2026-2027 Vice Moderator – Elder Marco A. Grimaldo is a Ruling Elder at Church of the Pilgrims. Marco has served on various committees and boards of National Capital Presbytery, including the first anti-racism team and currently the Mission Coordinating Committee. He has also served on General Assembly committees at the denominational level and on the boards of the Presbyterian AIDS network, the Presbyterian

Health, Education and Welfare Association, More Light Presbyterians, and the Virginia Coalition for Immigrants' Rights. In his professional life, Marco works at Bread for the World as a strategist for national church partners and Latino communities. Marco is honored to be nominated to this role and shares that, in his experience moderating various

committees and church groups in the past, "I have come to believe that very rarely is it the role of the moderator to solve the problem. Far more often, the most important next step is to answer the question, 'What will we do to move forward?' Marco hopes to use his service as vice-moderator of the presbytery to continue living into his life motto, "be of good service."

ACTION ITEM #3

Stated Clerk Search Committee: Election of NCP Stated Clerk

Motion: To approve the Stated Clerk Search Committee's nomination of **Rev. Alex Evangelista** as Stated Clerk of National Capital Presbytery for a term of five years beginning June 15, 2026.

Dear NCP,

The Stated Clerk Nominating Committee is pleased to present our candidate for Stated Clerk to the Presbytery at the May 19, 2026 meeting. Rev. Alex Evangelista brings a broad background in ministry and leadership in councils of the PC(USA), having served churches, small and large, in the Presbytery of Philadelphia and Peace River. He served as Assistant Clerk in the Presbytery of Philadelphia, chaired the Presbytery of Philadelphia's Bills and Overtures committee, and currently serves on the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, a permanent committee of the General Assembly. Alex combines imagination with critical thinking and close attention to detail, integrates pastoral sensitivity with adherence to polity, and takes leadership initiative while forming strong relationships with colleagues.



A native Spanish speaker, Rev. Evangelista graduated from Azusa Pacific University before moving across the country to study for his Master of Divinity at Princeton Theological Seminary. He is currently working on a Doctor of Ministry in Leadership Studies at Columbia Theological Seminary.

Our committee was impressed by Alex's demonstrated ability to fairly apply our polity in contested situations, as a pastor and presbyter, having navigated conflict with care in his own congregation and having communicated and interpreted our Constitution at the Presbytery and GA levels. We were also impressed by Alex's collaborative leadership approach to solving complex problems. In one former congregation, The Church on the Mall in Philadelphia, Alex led a process of community listening and engagement that resulted in the opening of a volunteer-run emergency shelter for unhoused neighbors, and an affordable after-school childcare in the church.

Alex's enthusiastic references described him as an excellent listener, passionate about polity, with a great love of the church and its people. As one said, "I have seen him put a lot of thought and intentionality into a session meeting's learning moments in order to connect the current issues the elders are facing with a Bible study, case study, or brainstorming session."

A common refrain among his references was that Alex seeks ways to get to "yes" within the framework of our polity and responds with empathy when that is not possible. One experienced Stated Clerk said, "Alex listens for the issue behind a request and tries to find the means for carrying out the mission of God to help it happen, or to help the people involved understand if what they seek will not fit within our framework." As Alex himself says, "I see the Book of Order as a gift for thriving, a theological and constitutional resource that forms trust, clarifies purpose, encourages holy risk, and equips congregations to pursue mission with courage and joy!"

Our committee is delighted to nominate Rev. Alex Evangelista for the approval of the Presbytery to become our next Stated Clerk.

Stated Meeting
National Capital Presbytery
May 19, 2026

Presbytery Reports

The reports in this section contain information about the work undertaken by the Presbytery's committees, commissions, and officers. Items requiring action by the Presbytery have been included in the separate Presbytery Packet document.

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Report from the Administrative Commission on Congregational Property

Committee on Ministry's Report to Presbytery

Leadership Council Minutes – March 24, 2026

NCP Financials – March 2026

Report From the Administrative Commission on Congregational Property

5/15/26

Important Information for Churches

G-4.0206 Selling, Encumbering, or Leasing Church Property from the Book of Order

a. Selling or Encumbering Congregational Property

A congregation shall not sell, mortgage, or otherwise encumber any of its real property and it shall not acquire real property subject to an encumbrance or condition without the written permission of the presbytery transmitted through the session of the congregation.

b. Leasing Congregational Property

A congregation shall not lease its real property used for purposes of worship, or lease for more than five years any of its other real property, without the written permission of the presbytery transmitted through the session of the congregation.

All leases executed by NCP Sessions must contain the following language:

"Notwithstanding anything contained in this Lease/License to the contrary, in the event that the Landlord as a religious organization is dissolved, Lessee or the National Capital Presbytery may terminate this Lease/License, provided that notice of such dissolution is provided to Lessee at least ninety (90) days prior to the anticipated date of dissolution, and (ii) the Lease/License shall not terminate for ninety (90) days after the date of such dissolution unless otherwise agreed by the Parties."

The Presbytery has empowered the Administrative Commission on Congregational Property with the powers of an Administrative Commission to consider and approve requests from churches to lease, sell or encumber the real property of a church. Any action in this regard by a congregation without the Presbytery's permission will not be recognized as legally valid.

If your church is considering leasing, selling, or encumbering real property please contact the Senior Director of Finance & Operations, Heather Deacon, hdeacon@thepresbytery.org.

No action has been taken since our last report.

COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY
REPORT to Presbytery
May 19, 2026

Exams

Lugo/Little Falls- Sustained the examination of Rev. Chris Lugo on March 11th, 2026, and recommend that he be received as a minister member of National Capital Presbytery. There is a contingency that Rev. Lugo takes a Hebrew Exegesis course within the next two years. He is serving as the pastor of Little Falls Presbyterian Church. [Exam 3/11/26; CC 3/17/26; Presbytery 3/24/26]

Sugirtharaj- Sustained the examination of Rev. Dr. Devadosan Sugirtharaj on March 9th, 2026 and recommend him for further consideration and movement toward being received as a minister At- Large of Word and Sacrament. [Exam 3/9/26; CC 3/17/26]

Martin- Sustained the examination of Rev. Dr. Roy Martin on March 18th, 2026 and recommend that he be accepted into National Capital Presbytery as a minister member. Rev. Dr. Roy Martin was recommended for the pulpit supply list. [Exam 3/18/26; CC 4/21/26]

Butler- Approved the examination of Rev. Jennifer Butler and Rev. Butler becoming a minister member of the National Capital Presbytery. [CC 05/06/2026]

Contracts/Terms of Call

Mount Vernon/ Martin- Approved the Stated Supply Contract between the Session of Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church and the Rev. Dr. Roy Martin for the period of sixth months beginning May 3rd, 2026 and ending November 2nd, 2026. [eVote , CTC]

United Parish of Bowie/Ulmer- Approved the Stated Supply Contract between the Session of UPB and Rev. Holly Ulmer for a period of one year beginning July 13th, 2026 and ending July 12th, 2027. [eVote: 5/5/2026; CTC; 5/7/2026]

Manassas/ Greniven- Approved the Stated Supply Contract for an Associate Pastor between the Session of Manassas Presbyterian Church and Rev. Rebekah Greniven for a period of one year; beginning May 1, 2026, and ending April 30th ,2027. [CTC 5/7/2026]

Falls Church/Klose- Sustained the three-year stated supply contract between **Falls Church Presbyterian Church** and **Rev. Megan Klose**, serving as Stated Supply Associate Pastor, effective January 2026. [CTC: 5/7/2026]

APNC/PNCs

Trinity Herndon- Approved forming a Pastor Nominating Committee April 16th, 2026. [CTC 4/16/26]

Brambleton- Approved forming a PNC [CTC 4/16/26]

COM Motions

COM approved the reimbursement of Rev. Carla Gorrell for providing PNC Liaison Training Lunch on Tuesday, February 24th, 2026, at the Presbytery office, taken from the COM Transitions Team Liaison Expenses Item Line (*\$600.00 Remaining*) for \$86.28. [CTC 04/16/2026]

Sabbatical Funding Request/ Pacheco TECN committee voted to provide a grant of \$400 from the Teaching Elder Care and Nurture Coaching Grant fund [TECN 4/14/2026]

Sabbaticals:

Approved the Sabbatical Request from Rachel Pacheco at New York Avenue Presbyterian Church from August 18th, 2025 to November 17th, 2026. [TECN 4/14/2026; CC 4/21/2026]

Sabbatical Approval Request from Jen Dunfee for the period of July 18th, 2026 to August 29th, 2026 from Lewinsville Presbyterian Church APPROVED via e-vote on April 8, 2026 [TECN Evote: 4/8/2026; CC 4/21/2026]

Sabbatical Approval Request from Patrick McElwaine at Geneva Presbyterian Church for the period of June 1st, 2026 to August 31st, 2026, APPROVED via e-vote on April 8, 2026 [TECN Evote: 4/8/2026; CC 4/21/2026]

NCP LEADERSHIP COUNCIL
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday April 1st, 2026, at 12:30 pm
Via Zoom

Sent by the Triune God to be agents of salvation, reconciliation, and justice. We empower and challenge our congregations to be Missional, Pastoral, and Prophetic.

In attendance on Leadership Council: Rev. Mary Rodgers, Rev. Jeri Fields, Rev. David Douthett, Elder Lou Durden, Rev. Rachel Vaagenes, Elder Shani McIlwain, Rev. Leslie Klingensmith

Excused: Elder Jesy Littlejohn, Rev. Dr. Diane Hendricks, Rev. Shelby Harasty, and Rev. Ray Hylton

NCP Staff: Dina Bickel, Heather Deacon, Tara Spuhler McCabe, Tempest Davis

12:30 pm- Call to Order

Rev. Jeri Fields

Lighting of the Christ Candle to Initiate Worship and the Work Set Out Before Us.

12:31 pm CONSENT MOTION:

- Approve LC Meeting Minutes from 03/11/2026
- Approve LC Agenda 04/1/2026

The Consent Motion is **Approved by the Leadership Council.**

12:35 pm **Devotion**

Rev. Mary Rodgers

Action Items:

Leadership Council to approve the celebration of the Lord's Supper at the May 19th, 2026, Presbytery Meeting. **Approved by the Leadership Council.**

Leadership Council to approve the celebration of the Lord's Supper at the September 19th, 2026, Presbytery Meeting. **Approved by the Leadership Council.**

12:40 pm **March Presbytery Meeting Evaluations**

Elder Jesy Littlejohn

12:45 pm **Report**

Heather Deacon

- Garden Memorial Presbyterian Church Update
Reported that legal action has concluded and property will be put on the market. Discussed process, potential challenges, and briefly reviewed financial implications. Anticipate bringing the matter to Presbytery for a vote at the May meeting.

- Northwood Presbyterian Church
Call for offers period has concluded with multiple offers being received.
A process for reviewing and narrowing offers needs to be established.
 - Leadership Council will create a team to review offers and bring a recommendation on which offer should be selected. In addition to John Molina-Moore and Heather Deacon, the team will include: Rev. LeAnn Hodges (ACCP), Elder Shani McIlwain (Leadership Council), and Rev. Leslie Klingensmith.
Approved by the Leadership Council.

After a period of discussion, it was agreed that the offer matrix will be distributed to Leadership Council so they are aware of the scope of the offers received. Confidentiality of contents was stressed.

It was also reported that Christ the King (current tenant/property manager) has not yet signed the extension of their current (but expired) MOU.

- Adelphi
Congregation has secured legal counsel to represent them/NCP in the Easement y Right Lawsuit. Updates will be provided as the case moves forward.
- Giving Control Group for G.A.
NCP is participating in the Funding Model pilot for PC(USA) as they consider if per capita is the best funding source for their work. NCP is participating in the control group, being we will not make any changes to how we remit per capita funds to PC(USA). Participating in the pilot comes with obligations to share some of the learnings with the body. It is noted that this pilot is only looking to address funding at the G.A. level and does not involve Synod or NCP per capita. Heather Deacon and Mark Stunder (Chair of Budget & Finance) are participating on behalf of NCP.

1:05 pm New Business

Rev. Jeri Fields

1:15 pm Closing Prayer

Important Dates:

Next Leadership Council Meeting May 6th, 2026 (In-Person at 6700A Rockledge Dr. Conference Room A, Bethesda, MD 20817)

National Capital Presbytery, Inc.
Statement of Financial Position Summary
March 31

	2026	2025
Assets		
Cash		
Presbytery Cash	\$ 680,028.77	\$ 570,309.01
General Directors Cash	857,144.37	844,785.69
Receiving Center Cash	206,216.75	352,951.28
Total Cash	1,743,389.89	1,768,045.98
Prepaid Expense	-	-
Investments		
Presbytery	280,278.27	270,670.81
Garden	11,645.54	10,193.26
General Directors	214,371.66	187,679.19
PM	179,410.58	172,968.54
Resurrection	5,844,460.21	5,201,551.61
Other	1,458,100.53	1,684,271.30
Church Funds	7,198,505.30	6,777,178.05
New Growth	1,862,209.65	2,130,154.91
Scholarships	1,287,631.84	1,164,032.60
Total Investments	18,336,613.58	17,598,700.27
Receivables		
Other Receivables	21,186.82	25,663.90
General Directors - Loans Receivable	146,313.47	159,726.36
PCUSA - Mortgage Grants Receivable	34,300.00	34,300.00
Total Receivables	201,800.29	219,690.26
Fixed Assets	26,341.04	26,341.04
Total Assets	\$ 20,308,144.80	\$ 19,612,777.55
Liabilities & Net Assets		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable	\$ -	\$ -
Taxes Payable	6,371.35	6,337.62
Annuity	1,207.44	177.17
Insurance Payable	4,592.34	7,911.24
FSA Payable	(14,426.21)	2,523.03
Total Current Liabilities	(2,255.08)	16,949.06
Other Liabilities		
Funds Held for Arlington - Presby Foundation	7,071,202.53	6,650,538.20
Funds Held - Arlington Collateral	101,788.21	101,125.29
Total Other Liabilities	7,172,990.74	6,751,663.49
Total Liabilities	7,170,735.66	6,768,612.55



National Capital Presbytery, Inc.
Statement of Financial Position Summary
 March 31

	2026	2025
Net Assets		
With Donor Restrictions	1,728,838.01	1,496,494.42
Without Donor Restrictions		
Board Designated	1,081,147.27	1,092,298.63
Prior Years' Net Balance	10,248,945.29	10,063,009.07
Current Year Net Balance	78,478.57	192,362.88
Total Without Donor Restrictions	11,408,571.13	11,347,670.58
Total Net Assets	13,137,409.14	12,844,165.00
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	\$ 20,308,144.80	\$ 19,612,777.55

Cash Available for General Operations		
Cash & Cash Equivalents	\$ 20,080,003.47	\$ 19,366,746.25
Less:		
Current Liabilities	(2,255.08)	16,949.06
Net Assets With Donor Restrictions	1,728,838.01	1,496,494.42
Net Assets With Board Designations	1,081,147.27	1,092,298.63
Total Unavailable	2,807,730.20	2,605,742.11
Total Cash Available for General Operations	\$ 17,272,273.27	\$ 16,761,004.14



National Capital Presbytery, Inc.
Statement of Activities Summary
For the 3 Months Ending March 31, 2026

	Current Month Actual	Year-to-Date Actual	Annual Budget	Budget Remaining	YTD Actual as % Annual Budget
OPERATING					
Income					
Operating Income	\$ 88,713	\$ 582,153	\$ 1,138,468	\$ 556,315	51%
Transfers - Non-Revenue	-	-	158,696	158,696	0%
Total OPERATING ACTIVITY Income	88,713	582,153	1,297,164	715,011	45%
Expenses					
Per Capita / Assessments	118,787	118,787	314,382	195,595	38%
Office Expense	8,860	33,256	134,735	101,480	25%
Commission on Preparation for Ministry	3,726	8,632	59,696	51,064	14%
Care Team	-	-	3,000	3,000	0%
Transitions Team	-	-	-	-	N/A
Relations Team	-	-	3,500	3,500	0%
Other	40	150	4,500	4,350	3%
Middle Governing Body	3,140	26,982	114,295	87,313	24%
Administrative Staff Costs	99,094	192,779	663,070	470,291	29%
Total Operating Expenses	233,647	380,586	1,297,179	916,592	29%
Change in Operating Net Balance	(144,934)	201,566	(15)	(201,581)	N/A
MISSIONS					
Income					
Missions Income	13,060	71,906	992,964	921,058	7%
Expenses					
Mission Coordination Committee	628	2,512	24,000	21,488	10%
Grants - General	63	9,487	95,000	85,513	10%
Grants - Specific	44,500	107,100	592,212	485,112	18%
Mission Staff Costs	106	251	281,752	281,501	0%
Total Operating Expenses	45,297	119,350	992,964	873,614	12%
Change in Missions Net Balance	(32,237)	(47,444)	-	(873,614)	N/A
OTHER ACTIVITIES					
Other Activities Income	-	-	-	-	N/A
Other Investment Income	(299,864)	(43,751)	-	43,751	N/A
Other Activities Expense	7,928	31,893	-	(31,893)	N/A
Change in Other Activities Net Balance	(307,792)	(75,644)	-	75,644	N/A
Combined Change in Net Balance	\$ (484,962)	\$ 78,479	\$ (15)	\$ (999,551)	N/A

The 326th Stated Meeting of National Capital Presbytery was called to order at 6:00 pm by the moderator Elder Jesy Littlejohn, via Zoom. Vice-Moderator Rev. Rachel Vaagenes offers opening prayer and gives instructions for the Stated Meeting. There were 222 participants registered and present.

The Vice Moderator Rev. Rachel Vaagenes noted that a QUORUM was present. The attendance roll was formed by pre-registrations and first-time commissioners were welcomed.

The Moderator recognizes Rev. Elissa Bailey to be seated as a corresponding member of the presbytery meeting. The motion moved forward. The motion was seconded. **The Presbytery approved the motion.**

OMNIBUS MOTION

From the Stated Clerk

- The Stated Clerk recommends the **APPROVAL** of the minutes of the NCP Stated Meetings held on January 27, 2026.
- The Stated Clerk recommends the **DISMISSAL** with thanks of the Commission to install the Rev. Joshua Narcisse as Pastor at Gaithersburg Presbyterian Church on February 7, 2026.
- The Stated Clerk recommends the **DISMISSAL** with thanks of the Commission to install the Rev. Lisa Martin as Pastor at Heritage Presbyterian Church on February 15, 2026.
- The Stated Clerk recommends the **DISMISSAL** with thanks of the Commission to ordain Andrew Thomas Hall as a Minister of Word and Sacrament on March 1, 2026.
- The Stated Clerk recommends the **DISMISSAL** with thanks of the Commission to ordain Kristin Franke as a Minister of Word and Sacrament on March 15, 2026.

From the Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee moves the following for nomination:

Committee on Preparation for Ministry

- Caitlin Culp (TE-Church of the Covenant), c/o 2029
- Craig Meek (TE-National), c/o 2029

Other Boards

- Crawford Brubaker (TE- Validated Ministry), Chesterbrook Residences Board, c/o 2028

Session Records

- Gene Eplee (RE- Laurel), c/o 2029

The Presbytery approved this motion.

The Moderator Elder Littlejohn recognized the General Presbyter and Co-Acting Stated Clerk Rev. John Molina-Moore to give updates and discuss events that were happening within the life of The Presbytery.

The Moderator Elder Jesy Littlejohn offered a moment to reflect and breathe. They gave a devotional of remembering to wait with hope that the morning still comes. Quoting the verses of Psalms 130: 1; 5-6 “1 Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord! 5 I wait for the Lord and my soul waits for the Lord and in his word I hope; 6 my soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning, more than the watchmen for the morning”

MINISTERS PRESENT (106):

Anderson	Denise	Gorrell	Carla
Austell	Robert	Gray	David
Bailey	Elissa	Greniven	Rebekah
Baker	Matthew	Hackett	J. Campbell
Batten-Carbaugh	Laura	Hamilton	Brian
Bellis	Alice	Harasty	Shelby
Benson	Glen	Harper	Mark
Bolton	Jacob	Hayward	Maggie
Brookens	Elizabeth	Hayward	Larry
Brubaker	Layne	Heck	Barbara
Brubaker	Crawford	Hendricks	Diane W
Byrd	Cameron	Herlin	Ann
Clark	Brian	Hodges	LeAnn
Clem	Donald	Hoffman	Glenda Simpkins
Collins	Blake	Hong	Troy
Core	Sharon	Horn	Emma
Counihan	Erin	Hunnicutt	Patrick
Culp	Caitlin	Jervis	Madeline
D'Andrea	Emily	Jokela	William
Diaab	Denise	Jones Lundeen	Allison
Douthett	Molly	Kapp	Deborah
Douthett	David	Kemery	Amanda
Eakin	Mark	Kim	Jung Sook
Fields	Jeri	Kiser	Shannon
Foster	Garnett	Klose	Megan
Fulp-Eicksteadt	Aaron	Kluttz	Billy
Futato	Pat	Larsen	Lisa
Gaskill	Mark	Lee	Sung
Goff	Ashley	Lee	Stella
Gonzalez-Block	Samantha	Lee	Jong

Lee	Hope	Pooley	Matthew
Longbrake	Derek	Ramsey	Scott
Manning	Peter	Rathje	Ken
Martin	Lisa	Ross	Katie
McAuliffe	Chris	Sarpong	Samuel
McElwaine	Patrick	Smith-Cobbs	Stephen
McIlwain	Shani	Spuhler McCabe	Tara
McMurtry	Kori	Stanford	Katherine
Meek	Craig	Teichert	Molly
Meeks	Don	Tilley	Carolyn
Melone	Bob	Trawick	Ben
Milam	Rev. Dr. David	Ulmer	Holly
Molina-Moore	John	Vaagenes	Rachel
Moorhead	Blair	van Gorder	Charles
Morse	Sterling	Walker	Elizabeth
Mulvihill	Kathleen	Walker	Elizabeth
Nabinger	Matty	Wellington	Robert
Narcisse	Joshua	Williams	Elisabeth
Neal	Nancy	Williams	Beth
Olson	Dana	Williams	Emilee
Park	Ill Jong	Wilson-Black	Juli
Patterson	Olivia	Wood	Shelly
Piedmonte-Silvoy	Mark	Yearick	Carrie

MINSTERS EXCUSED (14):

Baer	David	Greiner	Mark
Brinton	Henry	Hylton	Raymond
Brown	Jean	Kenkeremath	Lisa
Clark	Nancy	McDonald	Jim
Coyle	Jean	McKibben Dana	MaryAnn
Crawford	Adele	Pullen	Mary
Dunfee	Jennifer	Strednak Singer	Katie

COMMISSIONED RULING ELDERS PRESENT (3)

Richmond	Shawn
Maldarelli	Kris
Turner	LeQuan

ELDER COMMISSIONERS PRESENT(83)

Yancey	Charles	Adelphi	Pardo	Sheryl	Immanuel
Fogwe-Gwan	Shadrack	Berwyn	Pratt	Dana	Immanuel
Moudji	Alain	Berwyn	Koenig	Karen	Kirkwood
Oglesby	Jerri	Boyds	Taylor	Yvonne	Kirkwood
Gaffney	John	Bradley Hills	Websyer	Sandy	Kirkwood
Holcomb	Bonnie	Bradley Hills	Eplee	Gene	Laurel
Greenlaw	Steven	Bush Hill	Wentling	Mike	Laurel
Miller	Elaine	Bush Hill	Gale	Janet	Lewinsville
Darlington	Elizabeth	Capitol Hill	O Sandberg	Karl	Lewinsville
Nadig	Claudia	Capitol Hill	Mahoney	Julie	Manassas
McIntosh	Amy	Catoctin	Williams	David	Manassas
		Christ the	Bennett	Bill	National
Asinor	Dr Freddie	King	Glaser	Lewrene	National
		Church of the	Lewis	Peggy	National
Blackshaw	Hille	Covenant	Mack	David	National
		Church of the	Schottke	Dave	National
Fetter	Stan	Covenant	Smiley	Lucille	National
Basham	Jennifer	Clifton	Yamate	May	National
Williams	Karen	Clifton	Moran	Barbara	New Hope
Winkowski	Terry	Clifton			New York
Miller	Michael	Colesville	Dewhurst	Miriam	Avenue
Patrick	Susan	Colesville			New York
Rogers	Disne	Colesville	Ford	Kristin	Avenue
Summers	Janis	Darnestown			New York
Brooks	Laura	Fairlington	Robinson	Mackenzie	Avenue
Nixon	Tony	Faith			New York
Volpe	Michael	Falls Church	Shabman	Leonard	Avenue
		Fifteenth	Davis	Lorethea	Northminster
Montgomery	Willie	Street	Durden	Lou	Northminster
		Fifteenth	Stevenson	Mimi	Northminster
Whiting	Dr. Darrell	Street			Old
		First			Presbyterian
Mori	Sandra	Annandale			Meeting
		First	Olson	Will	House
Kobe	Kathryn	Arlington	Stunder	Mark	Other
		First United	Smouse	David	Patuxent
Chamberlin	Bob	Dale City	Daugherty	Nancy R	Pilgrims
		First United	Kepley	David	Providence
Porter	Sara	Dale City	Jordan	Jochebed	Redeemer
Fujikawa	Janet	Gaithersburg	Herzfeld	Michael	Rockville
Melberg	Evi	Gaithersburg			Rockville
		Good			United
Mandragos	Charlotte	Samaritan	Cooper-Martin	Elizabeth	Church
		Grace			Rockville
Amatuzzi	Nicholas	Springfield			United
Bishop	Lee	Greenwich	Hockensmith	Daniel	Church
Curry	Michael	Immanuel			

Fortune	Reginald	Sargent Memorial	Miller	PJ	Trinity, Herndon
Sims	Michele	Sargent Memorial	Allen	Charles	Vienna Warner
Walker	Johnny	Sargent Memorial	Eakin	June	Memorial Westminster,
McGeehan	Janis	Southminster	Chi	Samuel	Alexandria
Curran	Diane	Takoma Park			Westminster,
Rosenberger	Clare	Trinity, Arlington	Griffin	Adrienne	Alexandria
			Ring	Russell	Westminster, Alexandria

CHURCHES NOT REPRESENTED BY ELDER COMMISSIONERS:

Aldie, Arlington, Ashburn, Bealeton, Bethesda, Brambleton, Brentsville, Burke, Calvary, Chesterbrook Taiwanese, Christ Presbyterian, Covenant, Ebenezer, Emmanuel Indonesian, Fairfax, Furnace Mountain, Geneva, Georgetown, Grace Lanham, Greenwich, Heritage, Hermon, Hope, Idlywood, John Calvin, Knox, Korean Presbyterian Church of Rockville, Leesburg, Litchfield, Little Falls, Mizo, Mount Vernon, New Hope, Northeastern, Northern Virginia Korean, Oaklands, Poolesville, Potomac, Prince George’s Community, Riverside, Rock, Saint Mark, Silver Spring, Sixth, St. Andrew, St. Matthew, Taiwanese Presbyterian, United Korean, United Christian Parish of Reston, United Parish of Bowie, Western, Westminster DC, Wheaton

The Moderator Littlejohn recognized Rev. Mark Eakin Chair of Bills and Overtures Committee to present the motions from Bills and Overtures Committee.

Rev. Mark Eakin presented the first motion for the Overture 003 “On Confession, Repentance, and Renewed Theological Engagement Regarding HIV/AIDS and Human Sexuality” and introduced Elder George Kerr, III from Westminster DC who read the rationale of how this motion will impact people living with HIV/AIDS.

The Moderator recognized Elder George Kerr to speak.

ACTION ITEM#1 BILLS AND OVERTURES COMMITTEE

MOTION 1: The Committee on Bills and Overtures MOVES that the National Capital Presbytery CONCUR with Overture 003, “On Confession, Repentance and Renewed Theological Engagement Regarding HIV/AIDS and Human Sexuality”

Recommendation

The Presbytery of the Cascades overtures the 227th (2026) General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to:

Confess and repent that the church actively participated in the rise of the HIV/AIDS pandemic through harmful theological frameworks and heteronormative assumptions, participating in the isolation and stigmatization of people living with HIV/AIDS through rejection, judgment, and abandonment; seek forgiveness from siblings harmed and commit to repair through transformative theological and pastoral action.

Direct the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) and the Advocacy Committee for LGBTQIA+ Equity (ACQ+E) to develop a comprehensive theological framework addressing human sexuality and relationships in contemporary contexts, examining the full spectrum of relational and family structures and exploring ethical approaches to consent, mutuality, and care, developed in consultation with people living with HIV, LGBTQIA+ individuals, and theologians from historically marginalized communities, reporting findings to the 228th General Assembly (2028).

Rationale

Introduction

Our denomination has long sought to be a prophetic voice for compassion and justice. Building upon decades of faithful struggle with HIV/AIDS and recognizing that HIV remains a global and domestic public health crisis compounded by stigma, we now seek to deepen our confession and theological understanding to better serve human rights and human flourishing.

Our denomination responded through multiple resolutions—including our 1983 advocacy commitment, 1986 anti-discrimination provisions, and our pivotal 1988 "To Meet AIDS With Grace and Truth," which called us to confession grounded in Romans 8:38-39. Our 2010 "Becoming an HIV and AIDS Competent Church" policy deepened this biblical foundation, declaring that the church's Lord "preaches good news to the poor, proclaims release to captives" (Luke 4:16-19), calling the church to "the same radical inclusiveness as Jesus' ministry." While the PC(USA) took important steps—establishing HIV/AIDS competency standards in 2010 and approving people-first language in 2024—these responses did not adequately address the theological root causes. The HIV/AIDS epidemic did not occur in a theological vacuum. Theologies rooted in heteronormativity, purity constructs, and punitive views of sexuality created an environment where stigma thrived and people suffered in silence.

Deepening our 1988 confession, we now recognize that our theological frameworks surrounding sexuality have contradicted the biblical principles we claimed to uphold by negating the God-given identity of LGBTQIA+ individuals. This calls us beyond confession to constructive theological work. We must develop comprehensive frameworks that support the full spectrum of human relationships. We must move from exclusionary doctrines to ethical frameworks grounded in consent, mutuality, and care.

As a confessional church, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is called to "ecclesia reformata, semper reformanda"—the church reformed, always being reformed. This requires honest acknowledgment of failures and commitment to transformation. We actively participated in creating conditions that enabled the HIV/AIDS pandemic to devastate communities, particularly LGBTQIA+ individuals and marginalized populations, exacerbated by our failure to combat racism and gender inequality that disproportionately fueled the epidemic among women, children, and people of color.

This overture aligns with Matthew 25 commitments to dismantle structural racism, address systemic poverty, and build congregational vitality. It witnesses the church's willingness to name sin, repair harm, and offer healing through trauma-informed practices.

A Call to Deeper Understanding

The 2010 policy reminded us that "the crucified Christ, who cried out in the Garden of Gethsemane," joined us in our human condition (Luke 22:42). Many LGBTQ+ individuals wrestled deeply in their own Gethsemane moments, experiencing profound spiritual distress. Our theological frameworks inadvertently created conflict between people's authentic identity and their faith.

To understand how we can move toward healing, we must examine the specific theological constructs that contributed to harm during the AIDS crisis.

Historical Context: Theological Frameworks That Caused Harm

The Confession of 1967 reflects a theological framework that proved catastrophic. Paragraph 9.47d reveals problematic theology:

First, it defines legitimate relationships exclusively as those between "man and woman," inevitably positioning same-sex relationships as "anarchy" and "alienation from God."

Second, the confession frames medical advances in treating sexually transmitted infections as aggravating "confusion about the meaning of sex," positioning compassionate medical treatment as enabling immorality.

When HIV/AIDS emerged, this predisposed the church to view medical interventions with suspicion rather than as tools of mercy.

Third, the confession's language created a theological environment where siblings outside heterosexual marriage were categorized as spiritually disordered, making unconditional acceptance nearly impossible.

The Spiritual, Emotional, and Public Health Impact

This theological framework created profound spiritual trauma that directly increased HIV vulnerability. Living within oppressive religious contexts constitutes complex trauma, and this spiritual trauma became a key driver of the AIDS pandemic:

Spiritual Trauma and PTSD: The church's condemnation created lasting psychological wounds. People develop symptoms consistent with religious trauma syndrome and PTSD—hypervigilance, emotional numbing, intrusive thoughts about divine punishment—all impairing decision-making about health and safety increasing HIV vulnerability.

Trauma-Induced Risk Behaviors: Post-traumatic stress from religious rejection leads to increased substance use and risky sexual behaviors. When spiritually wounded and cut off from community support, people turn to behaviors providing temporary relief but increasing health risks.

Stigma and Shame: Spiritual trauma led to shame, fear, and secrecy around sexuality and HIV status, preventing open discussion, discouraging testing, and making individuals less likely to seek care.

Isolation: Religious rejection drove people from faith communities, severing vital social and emotional support, leading to increased risky behaviors and reduced access to prevention resources.

Internalized Homophobia: The church's teachings created internalized shame, making it harder to prioritize self-care or disclose HIV status.

Barriers to Prevention: The church's discomfort hindered comprehensive sex education and HIV prevention information, particularly devastating because many lived in relationship structures beyond traditional monogamy, but theological limitations prevented honest discussion.

Delayed Access to Care: Spiritual trauma and fear of divine punishment kept individuals from getting tested or adhering to treatment.

Understanding these impacts calls us to the ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18-20) and examining our own theological foundations. As Jesus taught, we must first remove the log from our own eye (Matthew 7:3-5).

The Gospel Imperative and Path to Healing

The Confession of 1967 itself reminds us that "no one type of confession is exclusively valid, no one statement is irreformable," providing the ground for our "duty and freedom to reform [ourselves] in life and doctrine as new occasions, in God's providence, may demand."

This theological re-evaluation is not rejection of our confessional heritage, but faithfulness to its core principle:

the church must always bear present witness to God's grace. The gospel calls us beyond apology to action:

listening to siblings who have been harmed, dismantling theologies that wound, and proclaiming relationships grounded in consent, mutuality, and care.

This overture provides the essential foundation for healing. Without confession, our transformation efforts remain incomplete. Surface-level programming cannot heal spiritual trauma or dismantle theological foundations that created harm. Only by confronting root causes can we create genuinely safe spaces.

The comprehensive theological framework development is equally essential. Genuine repentance requires systematic change. ACSWP and ACQ+E must examine the full spectrum of relational and family structures, exploring ethical approaches to consent, mutuality, and care. This will equip clergy and congregations with theological tools for pastoral care that affirms the full dignity of all people.

Forty-three years after the AIDS pandemic began, we have the opportunity to lead with theological integrity and pastoral compassion. Our siblings who died without the church's support, their families who grieved without pastoral care, siblings living with HIV who experience barriers to full inclusion, and LGBTQ+ individuals seeking healing from religious wounds deserve our commitment to confession, repent

This overture enables us to create communities marked by prophetic courage and extravagant compassion, dismantle stigma and discrimination we perpetuated, and provide spiritual support allowing all people affected by this pandemic to experience healing, flourish, and reclaim their inherent dignity as beloved children of God.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) can now demonstrate the transformative power of the gospel through the concrete actions this overture provides.

Official Church Documents

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Confession of 1967. Louisville, KY: Office of the General Assembly, 1967.

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). To Meet AIDS With Grace and Truth. Louisville, KY: General Assembly, 1988.

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Becoming an HIV and AIDS Competent Church. Louisville, KY: Office of the General Assembly, 2010.

Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP), Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). HIV/AIDS Policy Guidelines. Louisville, KY: Office of the General Assembly, 2010.

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). GA-MC-11, "People-First Language on HIV/AIDS." 2024.

Concurrence

Albany Presbytery

The Presbytery Approved this Motion.

Moderator Jesy Littlejohn recognizes Elder June Eakin from Warner Memorial Presbyterian Church to speak to the rationale of the second motion from Bills & Overtures Committee.

MOTION 2: The Committee on Bills and Overtures MOVES that the National Capital Presbytery CONCUR with Overture 034, "On Changing Course for a Green Future"

Recommendation

The Presbytery of Susquehanna Valley overtures the 227th General Assembly (2026) of the Presbyterian Church (USA) to:

1. Declare that the continued investment of PC(USA) funds in the exploration, development, extraction, refinement, transportation, and sale of fossil fuels is incompatible with the mission and goals of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and our call to serve as faithful stewards of creation.
2. Commend The Presbyterian Foundation and The Board of Pensions for reducing their fossil fuel and (aggregated) energy sector holdings (respectively).
3. Commend the many faith institutions, including the World Council of Churches, on their decisions to remove fossil fuel investments from their portfolios, answering "the prophetic call to care for our common home and stand in solidarity with those who suffer most from climate injustice."
4. Affirm that the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has satisfied the substantive requirements of The Divestment Strategy: Ethical and Institutional Context (1984)—and any successor policy which may be adopted by the General Assembly—for determining when divestment is warranted with respect to the fossil fuel industry.
5. Call upon all PC(USA)-related fiduciaries to:

Undertake the orderly removal of investments from all companies whose primary business (more than 50% of annual profit) is based on the extraction, refinement, transport, or sale of fossil fuels, with the goal of fully completing this divestment by 2030 or as soon thereafter as prudent management allows; Cease from initiating new investments in such companies; and Seek suitable opportunities in renewable energy sectors that meet established ethical and risk-return criteria.

6. Direct the Interim Unified Agency through its Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI), the Office of Faith Based Investing, and other components to:

Continue and expand the church's stockholder advocacy efforts to resist lending and insurance institution practices as directed in the "Green Future" policy adopted by the 225th G.A.

Encourage all Interim Unified Agency program components to advocate for a just global transition away from fossil fuels and toward ethically produced renewable sources of energy and to stand with local communities who suffer either from the harms of the fossil fuel industry and climate injustice or the dislocations of the energy transitions;

7. Direct the Stated Clerk to:

Inform all appropriate Church constituencies and church and public media outlets, and ecumenical partners of the passage of this overture;

Encourage governing bodies, institutions, congregations, and members to engage in theological reflection and advocacy concerning the harms of fossil fuel dependence and the need for a just energy transition; and

Provide pastoral care to any among our Presbyterian household who may experience dis-ease with the Church's decision or dislocation or other negative consequences which will result from the energy transition envisioned in this overture.

[1]The Divestment Strategy:Principles and Criteria, MINUTES, 196th GENERAL ASSEMBLY, PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.), May 29-June 6, 1984, Phoenix, Arizona. This policy clearly states that "divestment of holdings can be in a particular firm or class of firms and that this is both part of the normal management of funds andpotentially an occasion for Christian witness to God's call for justice and renewal of society. [emphasis added] (Paragraph 25.202.) Also see paragraphs 25. 204 and 261

[2] Between 2018 and 2025 PF moved from 5.14% to 2.24% of total investments and the BoP from 4% in 2019 to 1% of total energy sector investments as of September, 2025. The dollar value of these two combined is still a combined estimated total of around \$141,772,800.

[3] <https://oikoumene.org/what-we-do/care-for-creation-and-climate-justice/ecumenical-decade-of-climate-justiceaction>

Concurrence

Florida Presbytery

Cayuga-Syracuse Presbytery

The Presbytery Approved this Motion.

The Moderator Littlejohn recognized Elder June Eakin from Warner Memorial to speak to the rationale of Overture 035 “On Establishing the Green Future Fund”, also.

MOTION 3: The Committee on Bills and Overtures MOVES that the National Capital Presbytery CONCUR with Overture 035, “On Establishing the Green Future Fund”

Recommendation

The Presbytery of Susquehanna Valley overtures the 227th General Assembly (2026) of the Presbyterian Church (USA) to:

Declare that expressions of denominational (i.e. corporate) confession and repentance, as well as the Christian witness and example of the PC(USA), require corporate accountability and response.

Affirm that as recently as 2022, with the adoption of “Investing in A Green Future: A Vision for a Renewed Creation”, we confessed to our Church’s failure to live up to past commitments to cherish the earth entrusted to our care and expressed our intention to undertake actions involving our “treasure and vision” in the pursuit of restoration and healing.

Establish a permanent endowment fund created and held in perpetuity by the Presbyterian Foundation in their Fossil Free Investments on behalf of the General Assembly from which The Foundation will make spending formula payments available to the PC(USA), A Corporation to be disbursed in turn to the Interim Unified Agency or its successor to make grants for the following restricted purposes:

To support greenhouse gas emission reduction, renewable energy transition, and adaptation to climate change;

To support restorative processes in and to address harms suffered by marginalized communities and natural habitats within the U.S. and abroad as a result of extractive damage, environmental racism, and systemic climate change; and To address dislocation and community harms related to the transition to renewable energy sources.

Direct the Interim Unified Agency (or its successor), to assign a group of six people to a Green Future Fund Design Team (or simply DT), consisting of three staff representing programmatic (especially the Center for Repair of Historic Harms) as well as financial components of the Interim Unified Agency, and three at-large persons, meeting virtually over the course of the coming two years to design administrative protocols for a “Green Future Endowment Fund” and report back to the 228th (2028) General Assembly.

Request that the DT explore options for amount and method of capitalization of the fund.

Request the Design Team, Interim Unified Agency, and Presbyterian Foundation to consult and if feasible, proceed with establishing the fund account or a temporary account if advised, for the purpose of receiving contributions prior to the adoption of the DT report.

Request the DT consider recommending a “Green Future Grants Committee” housed within the appropriate office of the Interim Unified Agency, composed of five to nine persons including a representative of the denomination’s Center for the Repair of Historic Harms.

5. Direct the Stated Clerk to:

Inform all appropriate Church constituencies, church and public media outlets, and ecumenical partners of the passage of this overture;

Encourage governing bodies, institutions, congregations, and members to prayerfully consider making financial contributions to the fund; and

Promote connections with ecumenical and interfaith restorative justice efforts which may enhance the effectiveness of this initiative.

[1] IBID. Recommendation #3

[2] These sources should include possible contributions from Presbyterian Women, congregations, philanthropies, companies, etc as well as unassigned General Assembly funds and the sale of church properties, with the goal of beginning the granting process within ten (10) years of the fund’s establishment but not before the 228th General Assembly adopts the Green Future Fund Design Team report in 2028.

[3]The DT should plan to communicate the existence of the Green Future Endowment Fund initiative immediately following its formation so that potential contributors may begin to participate in its capitalization prior to the official establishment after the receipt of the Green Future Fund Design Team’s report to the next Assembly. The endowment fund will then be officially established by the Foundation upon direction from the Unified Agency that the work of the DT as set forth in this overture is complete.

[4] These individuals should possess the requisite skills for evaluating proposals, making and monitoring the grants and outcomes, and reporting back to the General Assembly in a manner to be determined. Ideally, we would recommend the majority of this committee should be elected members and not PCUSA staff and reflect the demographics of the communities who suffer most from climate change and other forms of environmental injustice, especially the original caretakers of this nation’s lands and wildlife, the Native American community.

Rationale

Repentance is a practice rooted in scripture. It is more than expressing sorrow for our past actions but includes the kinds of future-oriented changes in direction which John the Baptist called “the fruits of repentance”^[1]. Jesus also embraced this. In the Background Analysis for the Church’s policy document titled, “The Power to Speak Truth to Power”, Robert Stivers addressed Jesus’s statement about repentance found in Mark 1:14-15:

“Repentance in this situation means: 1) taking this confession seriously; 2) sensitivity to the world’s 800 million malnourished and impoverished; 3) awareness of the delicacy of ecosystems; and 4) a change of direction to more frugal energy consumption, justice, and greater sharing in community.”^[2]

The 225th (2022) General Assembly confessed the need for denominational repentance related to our complicity with climate change^[3]. Reflecting upon the failed efforts of the church in the two decades since the adoption of “Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice” they declared:

[We] “Confess that we have not sufficiently “responded to the cry of creation” and hereby recommit to a “turnaround decade” for restoring creation. We have failed to place the intrinsic value of God’s creation above the idols of the world, such as wealth, power, acquisition and status. We have failed to fully embrace the principles of stewardship and sustainability, of God’s concern for those experiencing poverty and their participation in processes and policies, of accepting for our own lives that which is sufficient (rather than the constant accumulation of more), and of solidarity with all creation. **We recommit our energy, our treasure and our vision to a future in which God’s creation is restored**, the human family lives together in balance and justice with each other, and the social and ecological destruction that our society inflicts on the world is reversed and repaired.” (emphasis added)^[4]

We should invest in a green future. Beyond seeking out investments in renewable energy projects, investing in a Green Future calls upon us to recommit to the “Polluter Pays” principle first lifted up in “Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice.”^[5] As we begin to take seriously our culpability for the harms our investments in fossil fuels and addiction to careless patterns of living have inflicted, we commit to use our financial resources to right these harms by establishing a fund from which grants would be made to address them in restorative and redemptive ways in accordance with the broadened vision of the “Green Future” document – ways which may represent a truly just transition.

Writing in the ACT Alliance Final Reflection on COP 30, November 26th, 2025, Elena Cedillo, Lutheran World Federation Program Executive for Climate Justice writes:

“A just transition is not just a technical change to energy systems, but a comprehensive transformation grounded in equity, participation, and human rights.” [A Just Transition will]

“ensure that the transition to a low-carbon, climate-resilient future is truly just and leaves no one behind.”

In “The Power to Change: U.S. Energy Policy and Global Warming”, the 218th General Assembly (2008) urged “the ‘Restoring Creation’ program to establish a Presbyterian Green Energy Fund, which would help congregations and other organizations in our church reduce their carbon footprint through investments in energy efficiency, renewable energy production, and Green-certified carbon offsets” (Recommendation 3.b).

So far as we are aware, no such fund was ever established. The Green Future Fund we are proposing, inspired by the broad vision of a just transition for society as well as the church, would be much broader than the one envisioned by the 218th General Assembly and would therefore require substantial investment of time, energy, contributions, and publicity for the realization of its purposes.

What we do as a denomination matters. To those who might complain regarding the use of scarce financial resources for such an undertaking, we would quote once more from “Investing in a Green Future”

“Instead of focusing on the difficulties or expense, we must lift up our vision and actions to create a revived environment, better health outcomes, employment opportunities that provide a living wage, clean air and water, wilderness preserved for its own sake, universal access to healthy food and the reconciliation of broken relationships.”

May this action become a small step toward the “fruits” which John the Baptist said all true repentance requires.

[1]Matthew 3:8

[2]The Power to Speak Truth to Power: A Public Policy Statement on Energy, Its Production and Use, Adopted by the 121st (1981) General Assembly, Presbyterian Church in the U.S., and by the 193rd (1981) General Assembly, United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.; with a Background Analysis, by Robert L. Stivers, Commended for Study in Connection with the Public Policy Statement. Section II, Theology.

[3] Investing in A Green Future: A Vision for a Renewed Creation; Recommendation 3

[4] IBID

[5] IBID. 8.e

[6]“Green Future” Rationale conclusion.

Concurrence

Cayuga-Syracuse Presbytery

Florida Presbytery

The Presbytery Approved this Motion.

The Moderator recognized Elder June Eakin to speak to the rationale of Overture 036, “On Regenerative Farming.”

MOTION 4: The Committee on Bills and Overtures MOVES that the National Capital Presbytery CONCUR with Overture 036, “On Regenerative Farming”

Recommendation

The Presbytery of Susquehanna Valley overtures the 227th General Assembly (2026) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to:

Call on Presbyterians to learn about and support regenerative farming practices, which restore soil, foster biological diversity, heal the land, embody our biblical mandate to care for creation, and advance the goals of previous General Assembly policy positions;

Direct the IUA to equip Presbyterians with a deeper understanding of the theological, scientific, economic, and social bases for public policy advocacy and lifestyle choices in support of soil care and regenerative farming;

Encourage Presbyterian congregations and members to model faithful soil stewardship in our own farms, gardens, and yards, and to support local and regional food providers, as a witness to values of earth care that may also help shape local, national, and international policies.

Rationale

The 221st (2014) General Assembly enacted the “Food Sovereignty for All” Overture, which envisioned affordable and healthy food, grown sustainably as the most faithful means for fulfilling the biblical mandate to ensure that people are fed.[1] In the intervening years since the adoption of that overture, farmers and scientists have continued to develop an approach to agricultural production called regenerative farming which has proven to be a means of addressing both the nutrition of humanity as well as an important step in the care for the web of life that is our planetary ecosphere. This approach was lifted up in the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) policy document: “Investing in a Green Future: A Vision for A Renewed Creation,” which was adopted by the 225th (2022) General Assembly. In regard to regenerative farming, this policy states

“8. h. Urge the U.S., state and local governments to:

a. Incentivize a shift away from fossil-fuel and chemical intensive industrial agriculture and invest in regenerative and agroecological farming, which have the added benefit of sequestering from the atmosphere large amounts of carbon into the soil.

b. Invest in food system conversion to help communities form thriving local food systems, which make healthy food more accessible and reduce the use of fossil fuels in the fields and in the transportation of food from farm to table.

In light of the worsening climate crisis and other factors which threaten our two- fold mission of earth care and neighbor love, the current overture is focused on how these agricultural practices may be matters not only for government action (i.e. public witness), as the policy now frames it, but also for PC(USA) members, congregations, camps and conference centers, and other church-related institutions.

Regenerative farming practices improve soil health, increase biodiversity, and work with nature to heal and strengthen the land for future generations. Regenerative practices, based in agroecology, have at least three important benefits. First, more carbon is sequestered in the soil, reducing the amount of carbon dioxide which traps heat in our atmosphere.[2] Second, they provide agroecological alternatives to conventional methods of tillage, fertilization, and pesticide use, which have degraded the soil, raising concerns about food security within a decade. Third, improved soil structure enables better water retention, reducing damaging runoff and floods. In all these ways, regenerative farming honors our responsibility to care for God's creation.

To meet global food demands after World War II, farmers increasingly came to depend on the use of large machinery and chemical inputs. These capital-intensive processes served to favor consolidation of increasingly larger tracts primarily operated by corporations to the detriment of smaller family farms, which had previously served as the backbone of American agriculture. Faced with an increasingly technological and capital-intensive model of agriculture, a growing number of farmers are turning to regenerative practices as a way to lower costs, strengthen soil resilience, and ensure the long-term financial sustainability of their operations. This shift deserves support as it promotes both sustainability and long-term food security. Decision makers should also craft policies that ease the pressures on rural communities and provide real support during times of agricultural transition.

Core Regenerative Practices include the following:

Minimum tillage: the less the soil is plowed and disked, the less erosion and disruption of communities of helpful soil microbiota.

Cover crops: after the cash crop is harvested, a mixture of species of cover crops will not only protect the bare soil from erosion and heat, but also exude surplus sugars through the roots

that attract communities of helpful bacteria and fungi; the remains of the cover crop then can serve as mulch, restraining weed growth and retaining moisture around future cash crops;

Applications of chemical pesticides are reduced or ceased; populations of damaging insects are restrained by their natural predator species, which maintain their vigor because of minimal use of insecticides that would disable them as well as the target insects;

Managed grazing by cattle, sheep, hogs, or chickens serves to restrain the cover crops from excessive growth, and their manure contains nutrients for the soil and bacteria that add to the diversity of the soil's microbiota. The increased biodiversity of soil microbiota enables them to supply micronutrients to the cash crops that make grain, fruit, and vegetables significantly more nutritious. [3]

Extensive research and real-world trials demonstrate that regenerative practices consistently achieve crop yields comparable to or exceeding those of conventional farming, particularly over the long term and during environmental stress like drought. But typically, it takes about four years for a farmer's field to regain similar productivity after they shift it from conventional practices to the practices highlighted above. Grants from the U.S. Department of Agriculture have enabled working farmers to withstand reduced income during the transition period. There is considerable farmer interest because regenerative practices that reduce input costs, and there has been a waiting list for those grants. In recent years, the Natural Resources Conservation Service has been training and enabling staff to assist farmers in shifting to regenerative practices. And because farmers trust the experiences of other farmers, peer-to-peer support is helpful and is being supported by non-governmental entities as well. We can hope that this overture, and possibly such expressions by other religious bodies, can help to enhance the perceived stature of regenerative practices in farming culture.

More extensive use of regenerative farming practices may help to reverse heavy U.S. reliance on imported produce because so much U.S. farmland is dedicated to commodity crops, principally corn and soybeans. Imported fruit and vegetable varieties have been bred to survive long transportation chains to the detriment of their nutritional value. Regenerative farmers, using diverse domestic varieties, would help expand domestic fruit and vegetable production, bringing prosperity for smaller/family farmers and improving human nutrition and health.

PC(USA) members and churches can testify to these values with how we tend to our own farms, gardens, and yards. Compost, soil inoculants, fewer pesticides, and minimal tillage can give our soils better texture and nutrients. With participation in community gardens, purchases at farmers' markets, and subscriptions to local sustainable farmers, we can support growth of regional food systems that are more resilient and environmentally-sustainable. Learning about and supporting regenerative agriculture provides a connection point with indigenous nations

that are recovering their traditional land-use practices. Finally, supporting regenerative agriculture would help our rural congregations that are trying to attract younger farmers and build a more sustainable rural economy.

Conclusion

In embracing regenerative agriculture, we answer God's call to be faithful stewards of creation nurturing the soil that sustains life and protecting the vulnerable among us by securing our shared food future. By supporting this vital shift, the Presbyterian Church (USA) can affirm its commitment to justice, hope, and care for God's earth, inspiring communities to cultivate flourishing lands, resilient ecosystems, and abundant harvests for generations to come. Let us rise together to this sacred responsibility and lead boldly toward a healed and thriving creation.

^[1]Leviticus 19:9-10, Zechariah 7: 9-10, Psalm 12:5, Matthew 14:13–21, Mark 6:30–44, Luke 9:10–17, John 6:1–14, Matthew 15:32–39 and Mark 8:1–9

^[2]Agriculture contributes around 30% of total atmospheric carbon emissions. Regenerative farming practices can potentially reduce that number by contributing less and sequestering more than the typical capital intensive, chemically based practices used by many U.S. farmers.

^[3]David Montgomery & Anne Biklé, *What Your Food Ate: How to Heal our Land and Reclaim our Health* (Norton, 2022).

Concurrence

Cayuga-Syracuse Presbytery

Heartland Presbytery

The Presbytery Approved this Motion.

Moderator Littlejohn recognized Vice Moderator Vaagenes to present the next order of business. Vice Moderator Rev. Rachel Vaagenes recognized the Commission on Preparation for Ministry Chair, Rev. Blair Moorehead to present the motion.

ACTION ITEM #2 COMMISSION ON PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY (CPM)

Expedited Candidate Process

MOTION: The Commission on Preparation for Ministry moves that Brianna Windhausen 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, in place in our Presbytery since 2021, simply removes this time requirement. Briana is scheduled to complete her Master of Divinity degree from Union Presbyterian Theological Seminary this spring, and she has passed the five ordination exams. CPM is recommending that we waive the one-year requirement of candidacy so that she can be certified ready to receive a call upon graduation. She is a candidate in good standing with Kirkwood Presbyterian Church and is under the care of the National Capital Presbytery’s Commission on Preparation for Ministry.

The Presbytery Approved this Motion.

The Moderator Elder Jesy Littlejohn recognized the Chair of the Commission on Ministry, Rev. Carla Gorrell to present the motion for the Commission on Ministry.

ACTION ITEM #3 COMMISSION ON MINISTRY (COM)

Waive a requirement for ordination

MOTION: The Commission on Ministry, pursuant to Book of Order G-2.0610, recommends that the Presbytery GRANT an EXCEPTION to waive the ordination requirement found in G-2.0607c for Rev. Christopher Lugo.

Background

In the summer of 2025, Rev. Christopher Lugo contacted NCP about transferring his membership from the Anglican Church in North America to the PCUSA. Our Stated Clerk and General Presbyter were in conversation with Rev. Lugo and COM regarding the necessary steps outlined in NCP's Policy to Receive Ministers from Other Denominations. We received all the needed documentation and began the process. Rev. Lugo cleared his *"preliminary examination for basic theological and collegial fit."* There was communication to COM and to Rev. Lugo from the Stated Clerk stating, *"In accordance with our [Policy to Receive Ministers from Other Denominations](#), I have verified that he will have been ordained 5 years early next year, and that **he meets the educational requirements** for ordination in the PCUSA (G-2.0607b,c)."* All that was left for him to complete was the national ordination exams and receive a final examination from the Examination Team of COM. He completed and passed all the national ordination exams as well as the final examination by COM.

After he began his process of transferring his ordination into the PCUSA, he entered the call process with Little Falls Presbyterian Church. After a full PNC search, Little Falls identified Rev. Lugo as their finalist for the pastor position. COM reviewed his transfer process and his call to Little Falls and unanimously supported both. Earlier this month, when it came time to approve his call to Little Falls, the Acting Stated Clerk reviewed all the steps in the process and discovered that Rev. Lugo did not take Hebrew in seminary.

Everyone in the system (COM, CPM, PNC, and Rev. Lugo) operated around the understanding that all the educational requirements were satisfied despite the oversight.

Rev. Lugo does have some training in Biblical Hebrew. Here is a note from him about that...

Approximately six years ago, I completed an introductory course in Biblical Hebrew through a local community-based program. Because it was a non-credit, no-cost course, there is unfortunately no official transcript or formal documentation available. I understand how this presents a challenge from COM's perspective, even though the learning itself was substantive and meaningful.

In addition, during the Biblical Exegesis exam, I engaged directly with the Hebrew language and resources in my preparation and interpretation. Although the selected passage was from the Gospel of Matthew, my work required consultation of Hebrew blessing formulas, linguistic patterns, and their translation both in the Old Testament and in their connection to the Septuagint. This process involved using Hebrew tools and translation resources as part of my exegetical method, reflecting the ongoing role Hebrew translation and interpretation have played in my ministry and ordination.

The Presbytery Approved this Motion.

New Business: There was no new business at the 03/24/2026 Stated Meeting

The 326th Stated Meeting adjourned at 7:34pm.