

ONE HUNDRED FORTY-FOURTH STATED MEETING MINUTES OF SALEM PRESBYTERY November 16, 2024

The One Hundred Forty-Fourth Stated Meeting of Salem Presbytery, held on Saturday, November 16, 2024, at First Presbyterian Church, Reidsville was called to order by the Presbytery Moderator, Commissioned Ruling Elder Steve Braxton at 9:00 a.m.

ENROLLMENT:

Commissioners		Commissioned Ruling Elders	8
Elders	49	Lay Pastors	1
Ministers	45	Executive Presbyter	1
		Presbytery Staff	1
		Presbytery Moderator	1
		Stated Clerk	1
		TOTAL:	107
		(+Visitors - 39)	146

The following were present for this meeting of Presbytery:

Ministers (45):

Asher-Lawson, Marybeth	Greene, Patricia	Milam, Travis
Beach, Kathy	Griffin, R.C.	Moffett, Diane
Beck, Fred	Harrison, Evan	Moss, Stephen
Blankinship, Joe	Hill, Julie	Perkins, Sam
Bussell, Matt	Hoyle, Felicia Stewart	Phillips, Jon
Campbell, Kathryn	Johnson, John	Pitts, Wes
Conley, Kevin	Jordan, Steve	Pruitt, John
Cowan, Newton	Lambeth, Jay	Smith, David
Dew, Frank	Lawson, Scott	Smith, Jay
Duffield, Jill	Lee, Charlie	Speaks, Christopher
Ealy, David	Leshner-Thomas, Troy	Steck, Stacey
Fearing, Stephen	Lingan, Jodi	Vazquez, Jorge
Finch-Burris, Carrie	Lunde, Jim	Williams-Berry, Nancy
Fruits, Dana	Martin, Susanne	Wilson, Alicia
Goodman, Kyle	Milam, Jud	Wilson, Emily

Ruling Elder Commissioners (49):

Alamance	Gonzalez, Betty Lou	Guilford Park	Hickling, William
Alamance	Brinkley, Becky	Guilford Park	Bruce, Mary
Asheboro 1st	Clark, Cathy	Hills	Martinat, Don
Bethel	Ashworth, Helen	Jamestown	Wright, Anne
Burlington 1st	Frazier, Katharine	John Calvin	Drinkard, Stephen
Burlington 1st	Adams, Mary Beth	Logan	Tatum, Ronda
Chapel in the Pines	Brekke, Monty	Madison	Wall, Anthony
Church of the Covenant	North, Barbara	Mocksville 1st	Davidson, Debbie
Clemmons	Hollomon, Bridget	Mt. Airy 1st	Rives, David
Elkin	Stewart, Susan	Mt. Tabor	Anderson, Kaye
Faith	Rule, Betsy	Mount Vernon	Hunter, Garett
Fellowship	Wood, Robert	North Wilkesboro	Bowman, Karolen
Grace	Faulkner, Kenny	Oak Ridge	Drugman, Dave
Greensboro 1st	Cook, Tim	Parkway	Tatum, Sheila
Greensboro 1st	Freeze, Catherine	Pine Ridge	Brinkley, Debbie
Greensboro 1st	Courts, Nancy	Pittsboro	Adcox, Martha
Griers	Morris, Bill	Reidsville 1st	Crutchfield, Dustin

Rumple Memorial	Mayfield, Michael	St. Paul, HP	Belo, Myra
Rumple Memorial	Scott, Gary	Third Creek	Hutchison, Chris
Salisbury 1st	Grubb, John	Thomasville 1st	Williams, Jennifer
Sparta	Henderson, David	Trinity, Salisbury	Green, Monica
Speedwell	Balsley, Wade	Vandalia	Davidson, Pat
Springwood	Ingle, Cynthia	Westminster	Andia, Suzanne
St. Andrews	Lambert, Bonnie		
St. James	McBryde, Lovie		
St. Paul, GSO	Lancaster, Gayle		

Commissioned Ruling Elders (8):

Beard, Jim	Crunk, Sid	Moore, Sue
Blankenship, Jerry	Harley, James	Purcell, Rick
Brooks, Rachael	McClain, Christopher	

Lay Pastors (CREs without current commission) (1): Bates-Harley, LaQreshia A.

Executive Presbyter (1): De La Rosa, Tony

Presbytery Moderator (1): Braxton, Steve

Stated Clerk, Salem Presbytery (1): Sink, Paul

Presbytery Staff (1): Ratledge, Christine

CALL TO ORDER AND OPENING PRAYER

The Presbytery Moderator, Commissioned Ruling Elder Steve Braxton, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and constituted the meeting with prayer.

MORNING WORSHIP AND CELEBRATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

Salem Presbytery was led in worship and celebrated the Lord's Supper under the leadership of Rev. Wes Pitts, Elder Tony De La Rosa, and the staff and leadership of First Presbyterian Church Reidsville. Rev. Diane Givens-Moffett was the preacher for worship and presented a sermon entitled "Expanding our Vision."

QUORUM

The Stated Clerk, Rev. Paul Sink, advised the Moderator that a quorum was present for conducting the business of Presbytery, and the Moderator declared a quorum present.

APPROVAL OF DOCKET

The docket was presented by the Moderator of Salem Presbytery, Commissioned Ruling Elder Steve Braxton.

ACTION:

1. Presbytery approved the docket as amended to reflect a report from the Committee on Representation.

WELCOME AND REPORT FROM THE MODERATOR AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Moderator welcomed Salem Presbytery to the meeting and extended a special welcome to Elders attending a Presbytery meeting for the first time. Visitors and guests were also welcomed and recognized.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

A Land Acknowledgement statement was offered by Elder Beth Hooten, to recognize Indigenous Peoples who are the original stewards of the lands on which we now live.

CHURCH GROWTH AND TRANSFORMATION

Rev. Liz Troyer, Moderator

Rev. Emily Wilson shared that earlier this year the Church Growth and Transformation Committee put on pause grant applications. After a year of collecting applications and reviewing the intent and purposes for these innovative grants they have reviewed the application process to increase the number of grants to be disbursed and a revised grant application will be available soon on Salem's website.

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

Rev. Kyle Goodman, Co-Moderator

Rev. Kim Priddy, Co-Moderator

Rev. Kyle Goodman reminded Salem Presbytery of the necessity of filling out and turning in pledge cards for the upcoming year.

REPORT FROM EXECUTIVE PRESBYTER

CRE Tony De La Rosa, Executive Presbyter

Dear Friends:

I write this report to Salem Presbytery on All Saints Day (Nov. 1st) in preparation for our fall meeting at First Reidsville two weeks from now.

Election Thoughts

I live into the earnest hope that by the time we convene, the finalized results of our national election will be known to us all and that we will have a clearer picture of course of our country during the months and years. To say there is palpable anxiety about the election is to vastly understate what we are experiencing all around us. I shall continue to hold in my prayers all voters, election workers, security personnel, and voting places, especially those located in our churches throughout our presbytery during this delicate and trying time.

As a church, though, we should always live into hope. Sometimes that hope is challenged and frayed, and other times hope can fly authentically, freely, and without limits. I am inviting friends and church leaders from our presbytery in the greater Triad area to join Michael and me at our home in Greensboro to view Election Night results in a quiet and supportive atmosphere on the evening on November 5, beginning at 7:00pm. If any of you would like details and directions, please be sure to reach out to Parish B Engagement Pastor, Rev. Frank Dew, for information.

As mainline churches have always done—and especially Presbyterian ones—our involvement in elections has been one of tempered and thoughtful moderation. We certainly honor and value our freedom to make our own electoral choices as individuals, but as a big tent church that encompasses many viewpoints, we do so with deepest mutual respect and Christian love directed to those who think differently. No matter what the results reveal, we live into our higher nature by avoiding the painful scourge of triumphalism should our favored candidates prevail and continually praying for those fearful of the adverse outcomes in any event. It is said that mainline Protestantism is one of the very few institutions left in American society where left and right ideological elements peaceably

engage with one another in shared endeavors. My hope is that the air of mutual deference and camaraderie will both continue and grow well after the last vote is cast this month. 4

Benefits Thoughts

As if we do not have enough stressors on church life, these past few months have been doubly tense as the Board of Pensions rolled out its changes to the Benefits Plan for 2025, including the de-linking of medical coverage for pastoral dependents for the mandated portions of the plan for installed pastors. As we now near the end of the open enrollment season for church employee participants in the Board's benefits plan, I am pleased to inform you that most beneficiaries and churches in our presbytery appear to have navigated the transition well and with mutually satisfactory outcomes. This is not to say that all are pleased with the changes or that all parties are happy, but the difficult conversations about coverage decisions have been undertaken with grace and creativity.

We have achieved this milestone thanks in major part due to the outstanding work of the COM's Task Force on Policy, Benefits, and Compensation, whose members include:

- Rev. Newton Cowan, Moderator,
- Rev. Dr. Erin Bowers,
- Elder Billy Coleman,
- Rev. Neil Dunnavant, and
- Rev. Felicia Stewart Hoyle.

They have overseen the extensive communication and in-person programs that sought to provide all parties with accurate and relevant information at key stages this summer and fall. Please be sure to extend your appreciation to them for their hard work, and please know that both we are available to help address any residual concerns in coming months, particularly when the first invoices are generated in the new year.

Disaster Recovery Thoughts

Yesterday, I was pleased to accompany members of a delegation from Presbyterian Disaster Assistance headquarters and the Presbyterian News Service in visiting with church leaders in the areas of our presbytery hardest hit by Hurricane Helene in late September. Seven congregations in Ashe and Watauga counties are now at the forefront of recovery efforts in their affected communities of mission and witness, with one church, Lansing Presbyterian, having suffered the most damage to their facility. Despite the devastation all witnessed and experienced from Helene, the stories shared by the gathered church representative offered consistent rays of hope and generosity. Time and time again, our connectional church and even total strangers offered help and assistance to an overwhelming and inspiring degree.

A core message, however, from the gathering was the region's recovery efforts will be a years-long endeavor and that needs will be ever evolving. The impending winter season will be a critical test for recovery networks as residents in damaged housing find themselves without life-sustaining heat in their homes. Timely restoration of critical infrastructural to outlying, poorer, less-populated regions of the mountains without the political influence of larger towns will be a serious challenge in the coming year. Lack of affordable housing for longtime residents of the mountains—already a serious problem before the storm—has only been exacerbated by the destruction and will require years of advocacy and hands-on labor to address in any meaningful way.

Our continued prayers and support continue for all our affected congregations in Ashe and Watauga, and for Parish E Engagement Pastor, Rainey Ratchford, as she works with these seven congregations (Baird's Creek, First Boone, Glendale Springs, Lansing, Laurel Fork, Mount Jefferson, and Rumble Memorial) to rebuild what has been lost and bring the love of Christ to all in need.

Final Thoughts

I am in awe of the presbytery's extension of the love of Christ to one another in these stressful and challenging times. The stories are so many and so multi-faceted that I cannot share them all with you, but I see in my overview as Executive what most only experience one-on-one. I am so grateful to know how much we labor as a presbytery with care for one another as well as care for the hurting world around us. I am perpetually grateful to be a part of your witness as a glorious company of saints this Day of All Saints, exhibiting the Kingdom to those whose lives hunger for hope, respite, and renewal. May our hope in Jesus the Christ and the day of the Lord's Coming anew never flag nor fail us!

In Christ,
Tony De La Rosa, Executive Presbyter

REPORT FROM DESIGNATED PRESBYTER
Rev. Jodi Lingan

Presbytery Siblings,

The reading for the first Sunday in Advent this year is ominous (as always): darkness, roaring seas, anguish, terror. But the whole point, as we approach the beginning of a new church year, is that this is *not* the end of God’s story. Because **hope is coming**, riding on the clouds, shining like the sun and out of the darkness salvation comes (borrowed shamelessly from Robin Mark’s *Days of Elijah*).



Since we were together last, Flat Rock Presbyterian held its final worship service on September 29th and Dogwood Acres Presbyterian will hold its final worship service on January 12th. There are a dozen churches who are a heartbeat away from dissolution due to aging membership (<10 members). The majority (58%) of our Presbytery churches have temporary clergy relationships (see G.2.0504). **We know the darkness. This is not, however a declaration of despair**; it is a healthy acknowledgement of our reality.



In the midst of the darkness the Light will always shine. The Flat Rock Presbyterian property will be sold to Shepherd’s House, a homeless and transitional living center, which will be used to house homeless men. Your COM is working tirelessly to understand where the edges are in trying to fit the square peg of being church today into the round hole of our PCUSA polity. The Church Growth and Transformation Committee is focusing

on so much more than simply surviving; they are looking to lead our churches to thriving. *Jesus is smiling.*

All of these conversations highlight the **need for us, at every level**, to consider not just managing what we have, but leaning into the future as we are provided glimpses of opportunities to **move beyond business-as-usual**. Being Church is challenging– but we have been there before, in every generation. And, never to be forgotten, is that the **Spirit has been, is, and always will be with us!**



These are sacred conversations that acknowledge reality while embracing our spirituality. *Of listening. Of letting go. Of putting one foot in front of the other. Together.* These are not meant to be tragic or fear-filled proclamations – how can they be when all is a part of the magnificent story of God’s abiding love? So, the new year is upon us. Grab a hand. **It’s time to see what the Church can**

become—and we are the ones blessed to be called as this generation’s great cloud of witnesses! Advent, after all, is the season of hope and expectation!

With a grateful heart to be serving with you, jodi

STATED CLERK REPORT
Rev. Paul Sink

For Information:

Approved the Administrative Commission to Install Rev. Dr. Carrie Finch-Burriss as Pastor at Fieldstone PC.

Session Minutes Reviews

I aim to schedule regional gatherings of clerks of Session for the purpose of reviewing 2024 Session minutes. If you are willing to host such a gathering this winter (one hour, no refreshments, prefer Sunday afternoons/evenings) please send me an email.

For Action:

First Presbyterian Church of Mt. Airy requests permission to sell a piece of real property owned at 126 West Church Street, Mt. Airy. This is not a primary ministry location.

ACTION:

2. Salem Presbytery approved First Presbyterian Church of Mt. Airy to sell a piece of real property located at 126 West Church St., Mt. Airy.

SYNOD OF THE MID ATLANTIC 254TH ASSEMBLY REPORT
Rev. Felicia Stewart Hoyle



A Digest of the 254th Assembly (PCUSA)

Greetings from Rev. Warren Lesane, Jr, Synod Executive/Stated Clerk



To the Mid-Atlantic Community and Beyond!

We are pleased to announce that the 254th Assembly marked a milestone of progress and achievement for the region. Over the last ten Synod Assemblies, Matthew 25 has served as the guiding vision, inspiring transformative efforts across our community. Thanks to the dedication of commissioners, committee members, chairs, and presbytery leaders, we have reached a point where we can celebrate several significant accomplishments:

- ✚ The *Next Generation Initiative* (NGI) has now been established as a permanent Synod committee with secured funding support.
- ✚ Our focus on *Atonement, Repair, and Reparation* was powerfully led by the Rev. Dr. Rodney Sadler, whose enthusiastic leadership energized the Assembly.
- ✚ RE Rick Ufford-Chase and TE Ashley De Brit guided the plenaries, helping the Synod delve into the history that provides context and theological grounding for the NGI.
- ✚ Members of the NGI team were present, and we proudly introduced a new NGI video.
- ✚ We honored the Rev. Dr. Bronwen Boswell for her groundbreaking role as the first female Stated Clerk of the PC(USA).
- ✚ \$50,000 in awards, scholarships, and grants were distributed to four congregations, two presbyteries, three college and seminary students, and one conference center.
- ✚ The Synod's Kate B. Reynolds Fund Certification Committee awarded \$650,557.62 in support to retired ministers across the five North Carolina Presbyteries.
- ✚ We joyously celebrated leadership transitions: the Rev. Dr. David Cho moved from Moderator to Past Moderator, TE Barry Parks transitioned to Moderator, and Rev. Leah assumed the role of Vice Moderator.
- ✚ **Synod per capita will increase from \$1.15 to \$1.50 in 2026. Inform your financial officers.**
- ✚ **The Annual Presbytery Minutes review will now take place in person. Clerks will be doodling poll to establish the best date and location.**
- ✚ **The Synod has a partnership with the *Center of Jubilee Practice* to further support the NGI, presbyteries, and congregations open to exploring Atonement, Repair and Reparation.**

We encourage commissioners and all members of the community to share this exciting news with presbyteries, congregations, sessions, and beyond. God is clearly at work, and the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic is honored to be part of this divine movement. We invite you to join us in this mission as we continue to build a vibrant and just future!

Warren J. Lesane Jr.

CELEBRATION: This 254th Synod Assembly In lovingly honor, the 254th Synod Assembly



celebrated TE Bronwen Boswell, who is the Executive and Stated Clerk for Shenandoah Presbytery. Bronwen took a one-year leave of absence from the Presbytery to become the FIRST female Stated Clerk of the Presbyterian Church USA. She served as an interim from August 2023 to August 2024. Bronwen was heralded for her ability to use Presbyterian Polity to glorify God and to hold the PCUSA, its councils accountable. Synod Commissioners and presbytery staffs from ABI, AKAP, BAL, CHA, CCC, EVA,

JAM, NAT, NEW, NHO, SAL, SHE, WNC Presbyteries as well as the SMA presented gifts and expressed words of appreciation for her contributions. We welcomed Dr. Boswell by to her position in Shenandoah Presbytery.

ATONEMENT PREACHED DURING THE OPENING WORSHIP SERVICE: Over the past 10 Synod Assemblies have focused on three foci of Matthew 25, namely: 1) Building Congregational Vitality. 2) Dismantling Structural Racism. 3) Eradicating Systemic Poverty. During the Assembly, Repair and Reparation was front and center as it relates to the foci of Building Vital Congregations. This set the stage for **Rev. Rodney Sadler, Jr. Ph.D.** who delivered a transformative sermon entitled, “Atonement, Seeking Shalom.” His sermon reminded all that “race is the scientific description of who God made you to be, who you really are.” However, “It is a societal prescription of what is socially acceptable for you in this world, what society will

allow you to do.” Biblical scholars have used scripture to substantiate racial inequality. To end the chaos of racial inequity, Dr. Sadler encouraged us to adopt a spirit of Shalom – the establishment of balance. This Shalom is more than



peace, the absence of war, the ending of chaos or to quiet the noise. This Shalom is one of providing repair and restoration (Atonement) by making things right, fixing what was broken, and restoring destructive order. He reminded us that racism offends people, and it highly offends God. “It is time to acknowledge the undeniable harm that racial and gender criticism has caused, it is time that we start seeking Shalom.” [Watch Dr. Sadler’s sermon here.](#)

LANDS AND SETTING THE STAGE: RE Donna Graves honored the Assembly by sharing the Sacred Land acknowledge of who settled that land on which the synod is meeting. It included that there are seven Tribal Nations in Virginia that have federal recognition. While sharing the locations of each tribe, she noted that her mother belonged to the Monacan Tribal Nation. The Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Presbyterian Foundation were acknowledged where donations can be sent to address property repair of Native American facilities. The Rev. Dr. Eunil David Cho (Moderator), Assistant Professor of Spiritual Care and Practical Theology and Boston University School of Theology, set the stage for the work of the Assembly by presenting the Synod’s journey over the past 8-Assembly. He discussed the past and enabled us to make the connection to a way forward.

THE NEXT GENERATION INITIATIVE (NGI): The NGI has now been established as a



permanent Synod committee with secured funding support. In 2018, NGI was introduced to the synod, but it was not until 2024, NGI was adopted as one synod priority ministries. To introduce the history, the current church climate and the future envisioned by the NGI,



Rev. Dr. Floretta Barbee-Watkins and Rev. Dr. Bruce

Grady delivered a major presentation to the Assembly. In bringing the “Where we’ve Been” of African Americans in the Presbyterian Church, Dr. Grady, using the image of a 400-year-old angel oak tree, depicted that “African Americans have been rooted in a faith, in Jesus Christ. A faith that affirms that – despite a dehumanizing system that, according to the Constitution, told us that we were three fifths human.” Dr. Barbee-Watkins provided an overview using current statistics to portray “Where we Are.” She pointed out that there are over forty-one million African Americans in the United States, 12%. In our denomination, there about 41,000 African Americans, representing 4.5%. Over half of the clergy in our denomination are sixty-five or older. Only 33% are in their twenty’s. Women outnumber men in every age group except for sixty-five and older. She pointed out the effects of the Reunion of 1983 and how that merger wreaked the most havoc in African American Congregations. The movement led to dispersion of congregations that at one time were flourishing. Other factors contributed as well; a decline of industrial jobs in urban centers, the rise of non-denominational churches, churches offering a more dynamic worship experience and churches with greater community engagement. In her setup for “Where We’re Going,” she said that “we aren’t asking for a seat at the table – we built the table and that’s the reason the NGI is so important.” “We’re constructing a beacon of light for the entire denomination – a fortress of hope for the next generation and generations to come.” Rev. Grady illuminated the necessary of the vision of NGI. Conditions of our world are not that different from the 1850’s – just before the Civil War. In these times of division and disunity, Community Engagement led with a spirit of Shalom is what is necessary. Rev. Barbee-Watkins added that “moving forward, the NGI is looking at identifying and recruiting clergy, creating the possibility of having healthy, vital African American congregations.” In the next 5 to 7 years, statistics show that 1600 congregations will close unless mergers take place. NGI asks, “What do we need to do to prepare leaders for now?” Adaptive change is necessary – transferring innate talents from one discipline to another. Take mentoring seriously. We must learn to speak to a generation that listens, learns, thinks, and speaks differently than we do, for the future of the African American Presbyterian Church – for the entire Presbyterian Church. At the end of their presentation, they showed a video of voices from throughout the Synod, addressing the need and value of the NGI. [View the video here.](#)

NGI REPAIR AND REPARATION:



The Assembly welcomed RE Rick Ufford-Chase and TE Ashley De Brit, co-directors for the Center for Jubilee Practice. Ashley joined us via Zoom and Rick was in attendance. In addition to serving as co-director of the Center for Jubilee Practice, Rick has served as a director of Border links in Arizona at the Sonora Borderlands. He was the first full-time director of the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship. He was the moderator of the 216th General Assembly of the PCUSA. Ashley is a former member of the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee as well as a former member of the Disparities Experienced by Black Women and Girls Task Force for the PCUSA. In Ashley's presentation, she shared that The Center for Jubilee Practice was started in 2021 with the goal of working on concrete action towards restorative justice and racial healing and repair. They realized that issues of racism are historic, systemic, and intersectional, and cannot be properly addressed without taking some kind of action step towards healing, reparations, and atonement. They also seek to hear stories of, and to offer support to non-dominant communities within the church. Their mission statement is that "We accompany religious communities as we confess the harm we have caused and foster the healing of our communities through concrete practices of full inclusion, reparations and care for creation." They accomplish this through having conversations with groups, congregations, and organizational meetings like this Assembly. They listen for values communities claim to have versus what have. They conduct historic research, especially when it comes to racial and cultural issues and create affinity groups for those in need of support. They conduct regular consultation with the groups they work with and help them to plan their next steps. It was with these gifts, that the Center for Jubilee Practices were invited work with the NGI as they plan a new way forward. Rick then facilitated the plenary that focused on helping the Synod to understand the history that provides the backdrop, impetus, and theological rationale for the Next Generation Initiative. He used a Fishbowl exercise with NGI members in a circle to respond to questions such as, what excites them, how we can take the initiative Synod-wide, what is our organizing strategy, what do we need to be successful, and what are the immediate next steps. Rick then instructed breakout groups by Presbytery to answer the same questions. Each group's answers were shared after an hour of lively discussion.

STATED CLERK'S REPORT: The Rev. Warren Lesane, Jr., acknowledged the celebration for TE. Bronwen Boswell and commended the planning team and all the Presbyteries who contributed to an amazing 154th Synod Assembly. He highlighted the following items during the report:

- 226th GA: Warren participated in the reading of two years of minutes with other Synod Stated Clerks. The minutes of the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic were approved without exception. Warren also presented a one-page report at the GA to our mid council committee. They Synod office collaborated on the General Assembly training that was done in collaboration with the office of the General Assembly. The Synod hosted a dinner for about seventy-five of our Commissioners at the General Assembly to enjoy authentic Mexican food at the Blue Iguana Restaurant.



- Presbytery and Ecumenical: National Capital Presbytery was commended for responding well to the Synod's request. They have the largest delegation here at the Synod Assembly! Warren serves as the Ecclesiastical Officer for the Mid-Atlantic Region for Ecumenical Involvement with the Virginia Council of Churches. Some of their accomplishments include a \$2,000 Synod contribution to underwrite the cost of the program. In collaboration with Maryanne Glover, General Minister, we were able to offer post Covid grants to a few congregations who had suffering youth programs, to get them restarted.
- Montgomery Immersion Experience: In 2018, leaders from 12 Synods met in Montgomery, Alabama to visit the Equal Justice Initiative. The past synod moderator Suzanne Taylor and Warren represented the SMA. From this visit, a design was created which allowed Suzanne to lead a delegation of around forty-two people from nine Presbyteries in 2019. The impact of that visit was that several Presbyteries created the Montgomery Immersion Experience. Newcastle Presbytery has been funding the Synod since before Warren's arrival at amounts ranging from \$30,000 to \$50,000 annually. These funds enable the Synod to do far reaching ministries.
- Presbytery Leadership: The Stated Clerk stated that even with a few retirements, presbytery leadership is stable. He also recognized the Rev. Dr. Melissa Sumner Long, who is the new Transitional General Presbyter in the Presbytery of Eastern Virginia. The Rev. Paul Sink is the new Stated Clerk for Salem Presbytery. TE David Vaughn from Salem Presbytery has retired and Cameron Murchison from Western North Carolina Presbytery.
- Presbytery Minutes Review: All 14 Presbyteries submitted their minutes, and they have all been certified. Those noted with exceptions will be notified by the Stated Clerk. In 2025, the Presbytery Stated Clerk will conduct the annual review in persons.

Executive Committee: Moderator Cho David stated that this has been an exciting ride for the Executive Committee for the past couple of years. They have had some "heavy lifting" with the Assembly a year ago. They are grateful for the partnership with the Synod Staff and thanks them for taking the time to join them. He also thanks the committees for their flexibility and patience as they found time to meet. The committee approved a \$5,000 disaster relief grant from Western North Carolina to partner with the local Habitat for Humanity and Eastern Mennonite disaster Relief to rebuild a bridge that collapsed from a flood; Approved the Jubilee Fund Committee's \$2,500 grant to Baltimore Presbytery to provide safe and healthy places for youth to interact and learn; Authorized the Synod Executive to pay for lunch for our commissioners who gathered at the 226th General Assembly of the PCUSA in Salt Lake City, Utah; and Approved a one-year contract with The Center for Jubilee Practices to impact the work of NGI.



Administration: Chair TE Felicia Stewart Hoyle acknowledged the members of the Administration Committee: Alice Freeman from Abingdon, Helen Hall from Western North Carolina, Kate Rasko from Shenandoah, Carl Wilton from Baltimore, Miriam Dewhurst from National Capital, and their newest member Matt Miller from National Capital. Actions of the committee include; Support of synod staff; Evaluating synod assemblies and addressing synod policies. Recommendations include the approval of the following: (1) Change the synod standing rules to include a section for the Next Generation Initiative committee; (2) A change in Massanetta Springs Article of Incorporation; (3) Approval of the Annual Presbytery Minutes Review.



Emerging Ideas (EI): Co-chair RE Amanda Pine shared that they are the “idea incubator.” They provide funding for innovative ideas in a way that is different than grants. They function in a way designed to inspire partnership for transformation and action. The committee is currently considering a partnership with Larissa Kwong for NextChurch. She has shared information about the work that they have been doing. They are looking for partnerships with our Synod, and they are investigating ways in which they can support CREs in the Presbyteries.



Finance: Chair RE Cherry Peters acknowledging her committee and the hard work they have done. There is a great deal of excitement afoot and the interests that have emerged are filled with enthusiasm. In addition to the interests, the budget is and per capita is due to declining membership. The synod receives money from Presbyteries based on population. Revenues are down and expenses are up resulting in a negative impact. Two permanent committees have been added to the mission and operating budget, namely, Emerging Ideas and NGI. Personnel costs are going down because of turnover, etc. The resulting increase in spending means that the draw from reserves must increase this year. We do not draw more than is returned to us by our investments in the form of interest and dividends. We thank those who came before us. The following recommendations were approved: (1) the 2025 operating budget was approved; (2) Per capita will increase in 2026 from \$1.15 to \$1.50.



Grants: Co-Chair TE Chip Stapleton presented the Grants report. The synod is receiving 3-times more grant applications than it can fund. The following Small Church Grant were funded: (1) The Bridge PC (CCC), for Architect Costs \$5,000.00; (2) The Grove PC (CHA) for Community Food Garden \$5,000.00; (3) Cornerstone PC (NHO) for Women's ESL Classes \$4,410.00; and (4) Amherst PC (PEA) for Preschool Tuition Subsidy \$5,000.00. Peacemaking Grant from New Hope Presbytery for COM Systemic Team Training \$5,000.00. Visionary Grant was awarded to the Presbytery of the Peaks for Justice & Mercy Trip \$4,000.00. Stultz College Scholarship was awarded to Isaiah Grady for \$5,000. Euler Seminary Scholarships were awarded to Donna Graves and Andrew Hall each in the amount of \$3,275.00. A Presbytery Initiative Grant was awarded to Massanetta Spring for a Keep Awake Conference in the amount of \$10,000. Total amount awarded was \$49,960.00.



Committee on Representation: Co-Chair RE George Hall acknowledged its work of focusing diversity and inclusiveness. The goal is to have adequate representation from each of the 14 Presbyteries in the Synod. The composition and membership should include male, female, and BIPOC persons (Black, Indigenous and People of Color). Everyone should be involved in the decision-making processes of the committee. The Committee on Representation was formed when the Northern and the Southern Churches united. In that unification, it was established that the new merged group would have a strong commitment to full participation in the church's decision-making process. They approved the minutes from their August 21, 2024, meeting and will conduct a Synod audit. This audit will measure how effective the Synod has been in maintaining diversity within its staffing, among its commissioners, among its committee members, and particularly on the PJC. They will also address the Synod's anti-racism policy. The committee has asked to be allowed to recruit a committee or task force to draft a policy statement. This policy needs to be different from that of a Presbytery.



Nominations: Co-Chair RE Doug Sensabaugh shared that their job is to fill vacancies of four permanent committees is ongoing. He presented the following recommendation. That Barry Parks be elected as Moderator and that Leah Epps be elected as Vice Moderator and that the slate of nominees be approved including the Next Generation Initiatives Committee. COR – Matlynn Yeoman; NOM – Barbara Gomez; NOM – Martha Strayhorn. The recommendation was approved. The inaugural slate of nominees for the NGI slate be approved: **Class of 2025 (1-year term)** David Cho – AMTE – AKAP; Renee S. Warthen – BFRE – WNC; Phanta Lansden – BFTE – SAL; Aaron Alexander – BMRE – CHA; Karen Brown – BFTE – BAL; Lakesha Bradshaw Easter- BFTE -NHO. **Class of 2026 (2-year term)** Guy Moody – WMRE – BAL; Donna Graves – BFRE – EVA; Chris Burton – BMTE – JAM; Sonya McAuley-Allen – BFTE – CHA; Bruce Grady – BMTE – NHO; James Harley – WMRE – SAL. **Class of 2027 (3-year term)** Cassandra Thomas – BFTE – CCC; LaQreisha Bates Harley – BFRE – SAL; Brian J Wells – BMTE – EVA - Vern Bolden – BMTE – PEA; Serenity Taylor – BFTE – CHA; Floretta Barbee Watkins – BFTE – JAM



REPORTS FROM THE AGENCIES:



RE Sy Hughes, Mission Engagement and Support, Southeast Region, shares that he works on behalf of the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency to raise funds for special offerings for shared mission support and to help interpret per capita. He travels and visits presbyteries to talk with congregations to share what is going on in the denomination. In the 10 years that he has been in position he has seen a lot of change. We as a church have anxiety and stress around change. “Everybody wants be a reformer until it’s time to reform.” As we consider what the future looks like through NGI, we want to partner with you. Any initiatives that the Synod is working on – they would like to be a resource. Let us help. Mission Engagement Services reaches out to every ministry are within the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Missionaries to collect information regarding the upcoming three months. They deliver this information to Presbytery leaders so they can push it through to their Presbyteries. Sy requested that Presbyteries would send this kind of information to him so that he can exchange information both ways. Sy acknowledged that this is the 25th anniversary of One Great Hour of Sharing offering. He also said that he would like to do something special for those congregations who have given for twenty-five consecutive years. He presented a banner to the Moderator for having the most congregations in a Synod that have consistently support the One Great Hour of Sharing Offerings.



TE Carrie Mitchell encouraged all to participate in the Board of Pensions. Should anyone need information about it, she has made herself available to answer all questions. She introduced the work of Rev. Dr. Jerry Cannon, who has been tasked with doing new things. He has taken over a program that was created several years ago – the 301 Grants. This grant provides three years of paid benefits for organizing pastors and evangelists. This grant provides two-thirds subsidy in the fourth year and one-third in the fifth year. They would like to get these grants out to new worshipping communities. They also started a new project called Shared Ministries. This project supports two or more congregations who want to join to have one minister. We will subsidize that for the first three years. They only require that they have two separate worship times to allow the pastor to go from one to the other. They will subsidize those benefits to \$10,000 each of those first three years. She encouraged Assembly attendants to take care of themselves participating in the many benefits offered. Think of the wellness programs that they have as a daily spiritual practice. They just gave a 4.5% increase to boost the power of your pension credits. This represents the 12th increase since 2013. The Board of Pensions offers Sabbath, Sabbatical and Clergy Renewal Grants for up to \$5,000 each. They also offer

emergency assistance. They want to help. They provide bridge coverage for Pastors moving from one ministry call to another. In times of life changes, you are encouraged to be in touch with our employer services and member services team. They can be reached at 800-773-7752. Annual enrollment runs between October 21st and November 8th.



General Minister Mary Ann Glover shared that the ministry and mission of the Virginia Council of Churches (VCC) is in response to the goodness of the gospel of Jesus Christ, that we manifest more fully, the unity of the Church of the body of Christ. The VCC and other state Councils of Churches received a \$100,000 grant from a private family foundation to address Christian Nationalism before the November election. The VCC is also working on racism with an anti-racism reconciliation team. Last year they conducted their first two and a half day training. The vision is for male, female, a person of color and a white person to partner with nomination teams, reconciliation teams or any other that will address systemic racism. The next training will be held in Richmond in May 2025. The VCC also received a grant which went to ten congregations to renew their youth ministries because of Covid. Next year they are looking at after school programs for the neediest of the needy. Every year, we give two awards to people in the state of Virginia. The first is a lifetime ecumenical award of a person who has retired and has focused on humanism for their entire ministry. The second is the Faith and Action award for a person who is still active in ministry, but their focus still has been a humanism focused ministry.

The recipient of the 2024 Faith and Action award will go to **TE Warren Lesane Jr** representing



the Presbyterian Church (USA) and this year's Lifetime Ecumenist award recipient is the Rev. David K. Shumate representing the Church of the Brethren. Please join them on November 7th at Mount Zion First African Baptist Church in Charlottesville, VA from 10a-3p to support Warren. I have secured the Holiday Inn Hotel, Charlottesville-Monticello, 1200 fifth. St. SW, Charlottesville, NC meeting room (no charge for the meeting room); the hotel's phone number is 434-339-0125. The meeting rooming is reserved for VCC from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Wednesday, November 6, 2024. The link to make a reservation at our special rate of \$119.00 is below; the deadline to make reservations has been extended to Friday, October 18. **Booking Link:** [Virginia Council of Churches](#) **Booking code: VOUE**. Please make your reservations by October 18; on October 19, 2024, this hotel rate is \$169.00. When you call to make your reservation, please state you are with the Virginia Council of Churches to receive the discounted rate. Mary Ann also wanted to spread the word that scholarships are available for any seminarian student from our congregations who is fifty and under – not only Presbyterian Churches – Every denomination that she visits.



TEs Clayton Rascoe and TE Colleen Earp expressed appreciation for approving the change to their articles of incorporation and for the grant to support their Keep Awake program this fall. They also extended gratitude to the Synod for its \$50,000.00 towards Massanetta's Spring Centennial Campaign. They have had a successful summer both with their programs and with their young adults on the summer staff – giving them meaningful work. Clayton announced that he will be on sabbatical for half of next summer. Colleen explained that the Keep Awake program is a Matthew 25 conference for high school students and their leaders. It is a “pay what you can” program which has brought in a lot of new youth programs and churches who we had not been able to welcome before. We expect two hundred participants this year. We focus on leadership skills in this conference specifically designed to benefit our Black churches and the church. The next conference is in November. The other program she brought to our attention is their 103rd Historic Bible and Church Music Conference which happens at the end of July. This conference is for Worship Leaders, pastors, and music directors of all ages. They offer scholarships for young adults and first timers. Clayton shared that this fall they are welcoming many Presbyterian Churches for church retreats. Remember them if you need a location for a retreat. They are available all year long. Massanetta Springs in partnership with Church World Service since 2016, welcome refugees for temporary housing on site. That work continues. The forward plan is to replace the “dorm suites” with hotel style housing. They have a goal of raising \$4.5MM to hire contractors, architects and start getting to work. So far, they have raised \$3.8MM against that goal. They are open to speaking with any outreach committee that would support their project.



Vice Moderator Leah Epps shared a passage from Luke 14: 7-14 which depicted a story where guests had been invited to a wedding feast as she preached the closing Assembly worship experience. Jesus noticed that the invited guests chose the best seats at the table. They were advised to not sit in the best seats because someone with greater honor might show up and the host would have to ask you to move, and you would suffer embarrassment. Take the lower seat and the host might ask you to sit at the table of honor and you will be honored by all the guests. TE Epps asked if there were times where we took the best seats at the table? Also, when were others not allowed a seat at the table at all. “Was it a feeling of superiority where there should be equality? It is arrogance when there should be compassion. Maybe it is fear or competition.” She continued, “What if in our world, there were no front road or back? No distinguishing by status, race, or age? No reservations required and no bad seats?” Jesus’ advice in scripture tells us, “When we have a feast, do not only invite only your friends, relatives and the ones with possessions who can repay you – instead, invite the poor, the blind, the crippled, who

cannot repay.” Rev. Epps charged us to “act in love, proclaim the divine truth and to make room at the table.” Well done, thy good and faithful servant! [Watch Rev. Epps Sermon here.](#)

Installation of New Leadership



Vice Moderator, Barry Parks was installed as the new Moderator of the Synod of the Mid Atlantic. Rev. Leah Epps was installed as the new Vice Moderator of the Synod of the Mid Atlantic. Eunil David Cho was honored by the Assembly as Past Moderator of the Synod of the Mid Atlantic.



Written and edited by:
Montressa Barbee-Watkins
Global Alliance Marketing, LLC
October 7, 2024

PEACE AND JUSTICE TASK FORCE
Elder Beth Hooten, Committee Member

Elder Beth Hooten gave a reminder about Salem Presbytery's Racial Equity Equipping Policy which was approved on May 17, 2022. It states that all members of the Presbytery have 3 years to attend an equipping or an approved alternate (current interval ends September 2025 - 3 years from the first offered equipping). The aim of the Racial Equity Equipping is for participants to understand that race is a social construct that impacts all areas of our society and that goes against God's intentions. Our role as leaders of the Church & people of faith is to reorient ourselves toward God's intention. There have been six sessions since May 2022 and there will be three upcoming sessions in 2025.

COM TASK FORCE ON EXAMINATIONS
Rev. Travis Milam, Co-Moderator
Rev. Debbie Layman, Co-Moderator

For information:

The Examinations Committee has successfully examined the following for service in Salem Presbytery. The COM has received them into membership in Salem Presbytery.

Faith Journey

Rev. Ginny Taylor-Troutman

My faith journey really began before I have memories. I've never known life without nurturing parents and supportive faith communities that embodied God's love and care for me. As a child, church was a place where I felt safe and welcomed and known. I grew up learning that God's love compels us to care for the world, for our neighbors, and especially for those who are suffering or struggling.

When I went to college at UNC-Chapel Hill, I found a new faith community at the Presbyterian Campus Ministry. It was there that I really began to explore my personal beliefs and first felt a sense of call to ministry. After graduation, I continued my discernment while serving as an intern in the Youth and Youth Adult Programming office at Montreat Conference Center.

A series of personal connections and what felt like nudging of the Holy Spirit compelled me to begin seminary at Union in Richmond, VA.

After completing my education, I had the joy and challenge of serving as a full-time hospital chaplain for two years. During that time I prayed at bedsides, listened in waiting rooms, and shared meals in the cafeteria with people in the midst of pain and tragedy. I was present because I believe that God shows up in those moments with love that is stronger than fear. The Word became flesh and still dwells among us.

Jesus' promise to be found among the poor, the homeless, and the outcast compels me to engage in social mission and to seek opportunities to serve with others. I have led both youth and college students on local and international trips to explore our call to respond to our neighbors in the margins. Whether it's partnering with Guatemalans working on environmental justice or advocating for affordable health care with our representatives in Washington, I have seen the transformational impact social mission has not only on individuals but also on communities and systems.

As the Presbyterian campus minister at Virginia Tech, I had the great honor of nurturing a community of curious young people just beginning to experience adulthood. We found new ways to worship, explored big questions of faith, and practiced being God's beloved in a unique season of life.

I have also had the privilege of serving as part-time Stated Supply Pastor for Bethlehem Presbyterian Church in Mebane. I began my ministry there just a few months before the COVID-19 pandemic upended our lives. It was a grace to lead worship, preach weekly, and care for this elderly community through such uncertain times. I visited folks in rehab centers and their homes who, though unable to attend services, have a deep well of faith. I strived to help foster a sense of belonging and belovedness for those saints of the church, even as they found themselves apart from the building. I led funerals, preached at holidays, and led the celebration of the 200th Anniversary of the church. My pastoral skills and identity continued to grow and deepen significantly as I served the faithful people of BPC.

Statement of Faith**Rev. Ginny Taylor-Troutman**

I believe in the One, Triune God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer, who is ever faithful to the original desire for goodness in all of creation because of God's abounding love.

I believe in a creative and dynamic God who made the world and all that is in it. As humankind, we are created equally in God's image, which calls us into relationship with one another and in utter dependence on God. But in our sinfulness, we seek to serve ourselves and we forget we are God's beloved. We abuse our power and exploit the earth and our neighbors. Yet God remains faithful.

I believe in Jesus Christ, the son of God, our Redeemer. As God's Word, which became flesh, Jesus is both fully human and fully divine. Through his life, death and resurrection, he reveals God's purposes and grace. He healed the sick, forgave sinners, blessed children, ministered to the broken hearted, to the poor and oppressed, and announced the coming reign of God's justice and compassion to all. Though holy and righteous, Jesus was condemned and crucified thereby suffering deep human pain. He was dead, buried, and on the third day, God raised him from the dead, testifying once and for all to the redemptive power of life over death.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, our Sustainer, the presence and power of the living God. The Spirit imbues the individual, the church, and the world with renewing creativity and life. Our faith in Jesus Christ is a gift of the Holy Spirit that leads, guides, comforts, and challenges us to serve.

The two Sacraments instituted by Christ are visible signs of invisible grace for us today. We are claimed by God in the waters of Baptism, a physical initiation into the church and a mystical entrance into the priesthood of all believers. This common faith is strengthened when we share the Lord's Supper. The bread of life and the cup of salvation unify us in fellowship with the risen Christ and point to his redeeming work on our behalf. The sacraments are God's gifts that nourish us for a life of faith.

We belong to God in the Church. The church is the covenant community of God called together by Jesus Christ. As the priesthood of all believers, we are sent out to represent the kingdom of God within our own communities. By preaching, teaching, and living the good news of Jesus Christ, we witness to God's mercy in Jesus Christ. We are called to be peacemakers and reconcilers. In participating in acts of justice and empowerment on behalf of those living in the margins of society, we glorify God.

In all things, the Holy Scriptures guide us as the living Word and a unique and authoritative witness to the Triune God. The Word of God is the source of our knowledge of Jesus Christ and the story of God's people that bears witness to God's steadfast and enduring love and mercy. Just as the Holy Spirit was operative in the writing of Scripture, we rely on that same Spirit to open our hearts and minds to God's Word for us today.

Faith Journey**Rev. Cindy Higgins**

My faith journey... one page to share a lifetime of grace!

My story began in my parents' arms where God placed me to be raised and nurtured by two who loved God deeply and consistently for 95+ years. For that I am eternally grateful!

In the fall of 2019, I held each of them in my arms, a different kind of grace, as I released them to their new and forever home with God, "eternal in the heavens!"

Oh, the circle of life!

The geometry of my faith is a circle, a grace-filled circle.

- The secure and nurturing circle of parent love, and our family love... not perfect by any stretch, but consistent and reliable and generous. We tried to create such a circle when our own boys were born. Both adopted, they entered our family circle by the clear orchestration of God, and even when tough love was needed, we held them close and still do. Our circle widened to welcome our amazing daughter-in-law Yasmine eight years ago...another of God's gifts.

- The "church" circle has held me always. Baptized and raised in a small Presbyterian Church, we were knit together with people of all sorts in a warm and inclusive community. Mrs. Crum planted in me a love for God's Word and Mrs. Peterson's "eye" from the choir loft could set me straight! The Mallinsons, pastor and wife? Their generous humility and love of missions grew my heart.

The three churches I served over my 38 years of ministry each formed a unique circle of grace, helping me spread my wings. Mentors and colleagues shaped ministry style: George with his outrageous warmth and laughter and his love for missions; Bob the visionary, drawing people into God-size dreams; David, my spiritual guru, introduced me to a deeper contemplative life; Frank “lives” servant leadership and pulls me along!and that’s just the tip of the iceberg.

- During the Pandemic and racial unrest of this past year, a diverse group of faith leaders formed a weekly zoom that has been incredibly rich in stretching our understanding and involvement. Not only have deep friendships formed, but together we have an ever increasing impact in the city, beginning with a Juneteenth Walk to the Emancipation Oak, uniting Christians from across the area to walk hand in hand in seeking justice as we follow Jesus.

- The circle of friends, deep-spirited friends: this circle has carried me through more challenges than I can name: tough times with struggling teenagers; health issues for family members; major decisions; the loss of my beloved parents. These friends also dance with me in the circle of celebration when gratitude to God is the only reasonable responses!

Above and beyond all of these is the love where I am embraced by God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. I am drawn to the image of perichoresis which hints of the triune forming a circle of welcome and joy and dance...a circle of grace. This circle continues to widen as we reach out and welcome others.

When I consider my life, as I enter into this new season, I find myself celebrating all God has done and will do in this imperfect world and my imperfect life. God is like that! All thanks be to God!

Statement of Faith

Rev. Cindy Higgins

I love God who breathed life into everything and everyone, including me. God delights in the beauty of his magnificent creation, inviting us to revel in wonder and awe. God especially delights in his children and call all of us “the Beloved”. We have a vast, loving, powerful God who is “at work within us, able to accomplish far more than we can ask or imagine.”

I love Jesus, God’s own son, who claims us and calls us through the waters baptism. Jesus nourishes us at his welcome table, his nail-scarred hands connecting us to himself and to one another. Jesus understands our hunger and thirst and feeds us always. He saves us even from ourselves and draws us closer to the heart of God. Jesus walked on earth in human flesh to be one of us, one with us. He came into the neighborhood, as the Message says, and he never left! Modeling for us an earthly life, Jesus saves us for eternal life, calling us to our forever home.

I love the Holy Spirit who comforts us in hard times, guides us in confusing times, lights the fire of an ever-deeper faith within us. The Spirit generates God’s promise and purpose, God’s power and praise within us. The Spirit fills the once empty places within me and all of us with God’s extravagant abundance. The Spirit fills us with God’s own life!

The community of faith is knit together as the church, to work and serve and live our faith, especially during these trying times. For all her imperfections, I love the Church. In this Spirit of community, God draws us to himself and one another. It is our place to belong, to be forgiven, to be nurtured, to be fed. In the church we discover Adam and Eve who satisfy their every desire, including forbidden fruit. We also meet Abraham and Sarai who pack up and just “go” because God calls them. We share the pews with the Israelites whose cry “not enough” echoes through the centuries, often our cry as well. Yet we also sing songs of praise with David, a person after God’s own heart. We confess our denials next to Peter, but we also lean into God’s calling to “feed my sheep”, “tend my lambs”. With God’s help, we strive to follow Jesus’ impossible commands to love our neighbors as ourselves, even our enemies.

I love the church as we call for justice until it flows down like water. I love the church’s calling to be the hands and feet of Jesus in the world.

In the Bible, God’s Word, we meet God’s Word and read of the people who failed repeatedly but God lifted them up and loved them always, just as God does for us today. 70 x 7, God forgives us and helps us to forgive others.

This is my story, this is my song... the tip of the iceberg of my statement of faith. For when all is said and done, To God be the glory, in the Church, in Jesus Christ, to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

COMMISSION ON MINISTRY
Rev. Felicia Stewart Hoyle, Co-Moderator
Rev. R.C. Griffin, Co-Moderator

I. COMMITTEE ACTION REPORTED FOR THE INFORMATION OF PRESBYTERY

A. SECURING A STATED SUPPLY

1. Concurred with the Session of **New Creation Community**, Greensboro, North Carolina, in securing a Stated Supply contract with **Reverend Gray Clark** for a period of six months beginning July 3, 2024.

B. STATED SUPPLY RENEWAL

1. Concurred with the Session of **St. Paul Presbyterian Church**, Greensboro, North Carolina, in renewing the Stated Supply contract with the **Reverend Jay Lambeth** for a period of one year beginning November 1, 2024.

2. Concurred with the Session of **First Presbyterian Church**, Greensboro, North Carolina, in renewing the Stated Supply contract with the **Reverend Maria Hanlin** for a period of one year beginning June 15, 2024.

C. SECURING A CONTRACT WITH AN INTERIM PASTOR/TRANSITIONAL MINISTER

1. Concurred with the Session of **Forest Hills Presbyterian Church**, High Point, North Carolina, in securing the contract with the **Reverend Jon Phillips** as Transitional Pastor for a period of one year beginning October 1, 2024.

2. Concurred with the Session of **First Presbyterian Church**, High Point, North Carolina, in securing the contract with the **Reverend David Smith** as Transitional Pastor for a period of one year beginning December 1, 2024.

D. RENEWING A CONTRACT WITH AN INTERIM PASTOR/TRANSITIONAL MINISTER

1. Concurred with the Session of **New Hope Presbyterian Church**, Lexington, North Carolina, in renewing the contract with the **Reverend Mason Todd** as Transitional Pastor for a period of one year beginning September 8, 2024.

E. SECURING A PARISH ASSOCIATE AGREEMENT

1. Concurred with the Session of **First Presbyterian Church**, Statesville, North Carolina, in securing a Parish Associate Agreement with the **Reverend Jacqueline Kunkle** for a period of one year beginning October 1, 2024.

F. RENEWING A PARISH ASSOCIATE AGREEMENT

1. Concurred with the Session of **First Presbyterian Church**, Greensboro, North Carolina, in securing a Parish Associate Agreement with the **Reverend Doug McLeroy** for a period of one year beginning June 15, 2024.

G. SABBATICAL PLAN APPROVAL

1. That the sabbatical plan for **Reverend Joshua Musser-Gritter** was approved.

II. COMMISSION ACTIONS TAKEN ON BEHALF OF PRESBYTERY

A. MODERATOR OF SESSION

1. That the **Reverend Scott Lawson** was appointed Moderator of Session for **Graham Presbyterian Church**, Graham, North Carolina.

2. That the **Reverend Mason Todd** was appointed Moderator of Session for **First Presbyterian Church**, High Point, North Carolina. 21
3. That the **Reverend Lisa Mullen** was appointed Moderator of Session for **Logan Presbyterian Church**, Statesville, North Carolina.
4. That the **Reverend Leigh Wisner** was appointed Moderator of Session for **Pilot Mountain Presbyterian Church**, Pilot Mountain, North Carolina.
5. That the **Reverend Jeremy Cannada** was appointed Moderator of Session for **Cleveland Presbyterian Church**, Cleveland, North Carolina.
6. That the **Reverend Dr. Will Eads** was appointed Moderator of Session for **Collinstown Presbyterian Church**, Westfield, North Carolina.
7. That the **Reverend Dr. Will Eads** was appointed Moderator of Session for **Francisco Presbyterian Church**, Westfield, North Carolina.
8. That the **Reverend Wes Pitts** was appointed Moderator of Session for **Madison Presbyterian Church**, Madison, North Carolina.
9. That the **Reverend Dr. Alberta McLaughlin** was appointed Moderator of Session for **Dellabrook Presbyterian Church**, Winston-Salem, North Carolina.
10. That the **Reverend Kaye Barrow-Ziglar** was appointed Moderator of Session for **Grace Presbyterian Church**, Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

B. COMMISSIONED RULING ELDERS (RENEWAL)

1. Concurred with the Session of **Pine Ridge Presbyterian Church**, Pilot Mountain, North Carolina, in renewing the contract of **Rachael Brooks** to serve as their Commissioned Ruling Elder for a period of one year beginning October 1, 2024.
2. Concurred with the Session of **Hills Presbyterian Church**, Pilot Mountain, North Carolina, in renewing the contract of **Rachael Brooks** to serve as their Commissioned Ruling Elder for a period of one year beginning October 1, 2024.
3. Concurred with the Session of **Siler City Presbyterian Church**, Siler City, North Carolina, in renewing the contract of **Richard LaDew** to serve as their Commissioned Ruling Elder for a period of one year beginning August 18, 2024.
4. Concurred with the Session of **Laurel Fork Presbyterian Church**, Laurel Springs, North Carolina, in renewing the contract of **Jeffrey Bumgarner** to serve as their Commissioned Ruling Elder for a period of one year beginning November 1, 2024.
5. Concurred with the Session of **Old Providence Presbyterian Church**, Cleveland, North Carolina, in renewing the contract of **Jeffrey Bumgarner** to serve as their Commissioned Ruling Elder for a period of one year beginning November 1, 2024.

C. RECOMMISSIONED RULING ELDER FOR VALIDATED MINISTRY

1. That the revalidation of the ministry of **Rick Purcell** at the Graham Police Department was approved for 2024.

D. DISSOLUTION OF PASTORAL RELATIONSHIPS WHERE BOTH PARTIES AGREE

1. Dissolved the Pastoral relationship between the **Reverend Peter Kim** and **First Presbyterian Church**, High Point, North Carolina, effective September 30, 2024.
2. Dissolved the Pastoral relationship between the **Reverend Travis Milam** and **Pilot Mountain Presbyterian Church**, Pilot Mountain, North Carolina, effective October 9, 2024.

3. Dissolved the Pastoral relationship between the **Reverend Kaye Barrow-Ziglar** and **Logan Presbyterian Church**, Statesville, North Carolina, effective August 31, 2024.

E. PULPIT SUPPLY LIST

1. Added the following individuals to the pulpit supply list:

CRE Jim Beard
Reverend Peter Kim
Reverend Olen Bruner

F. MINISTER TRANSFERRING INTO SALEM PRESBYTERY

1. That the **Reverend Cindy Higgins**, a member of Shenandoah Presbytery, was received by Salem Presbytery on September 26, 2024.
2. That the **Reverend Mary Virginia Taylor-Troutman**, a member of New Hope Presbytery, was received by Salem Presbytery on September 26, 2024.

G. MINISTER TRANSFERRING OUT OF SALEM PRESBYTERY

1. That the **Reverend Nicole Richardson** was transferred to **Florida Presbytery** effective September 26, 2024.

H. WAIVER FOR ROTATION OF ELDERS

1. That a waiver for rotation of elders be granted to Faith Presbyterian, Greensboro, North Carolina, effective October 3, 2024.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE ACTION OF PRESBYTERY

A. BENEFITS

1. To approve the updated version of Presbytery benefits policy:

**Salem Presbytery Policy
for Churches to Provide Benefits to
Pastoral Leaders and their families COM action November 2024**

1. It is the **goal** policy of Salem Presbytery that all installed Pastors, Pastors in Temporary Relationships, Commissioned Ruling Elders, Certified Christian Educators (collectively hereafter, “pastoral leaders”), and their families be covered by health insurance. This includes all installed pastor positions, all temporary pastoral relationships, all CREs and all CCEs contracted for 20 hours or more per week.
2. Pastors in installed positions, shall have their individual benefits—including medical insurance—fully paid for by their churches through the Benefits Plan of the Board of Pensions. For spousal and or family medical coverage of such installed pastors, churches may use the Board of Pensions’ Benefits Plan, or other benefits resources. Such alternative resources may include coverage secured through:
- spousal employment,
 - the Healthcare Exchange (healthcare.gov), or
 - separate health care coverage provided by the church to non-pastoral employees. Such alternate medical coverage options shall be reasonably comparable to the coverage offered to pastoral leaders through the Board of Pensions.

Pastors in Temporary Pastoral positions, CREs, and CCEs contracted to work 20 hours or more per week are required to include in the contract participation in the Board of Pensions’ Benefits Plan, or comparable coverage including medical insurance, a

defined benefit or defined contribution plan, life insurance, disability and temporary disability insurance. 23

3. When a qualifying event occurs during the year (i.e., divorce, marriage, birth) in the family of the pastoral leader, the church shall immediately arrange to revise benefits coverage to accommodate the change. Any additional costs associated with the qualifying event shall be borne by the church. These qualifying event modifications do not constitute a fundamental change in terms of call and do not require a congregational vote.
4. In the event that the pastoral leader is part of a pastoral leader couple and when both parties have medical coverage through the Board of Pensions, the COM may allow one of the employing organizations the flexibility not to cover their employed spouse so long as coverage levels are maintained for both parties and their family.
5. In the event that an employed spouse of a pastoral leader loses their coverage during year for any reason, then the church will immediately begin to arrange coverage for the formerly employed spouse and family members, if applicable.

We encourage consideration of retirement contributory match programs for pastoral leaders in Temporary Relationships whose coverage is outside the Board of Pensions benefits plan.

6. Board of Pensions' beneficiaries who are retired but working 20 hours or more per week in a church setting should consult with the Board to ascertain their ongoing benefits status.

B. ELDER TO CELEBRATE SACRAMENTS

1. That ruling elders Michael T. Wasson and Sarah Minkins be allowed to serve communion at Calvary Presbyterian Church, Statesville, North Carolina for a period of one year beginning September 24, 2024.
2. That ruling elder Ronnie Grimes be allowed to serve communion at Freedom Presbyterian Church, Statesville, North Carolina for a period of one year beginning December 1, 2024.

C. COMMISSIONED RULING ELDERS/LAY PASTORS

1. That **Chris McClain** be commissioned as the Commissioned Ruling Elder-Lay Pastor of Griers Presbyterian Church, Leasburg, North Carolina, for a one-year period beginning October 1, 2024, and be granted permission to celebrate the Sacraments and moderate the Session.

D. RE-COMMISSIONING OF ALL COMMISSIONED RULING ELDERS

1. That Salem Presbytery be led in a service of Re-Commissioning of the following individuals approved for 2024:

Marty Brim
Sidney Crunk
Richard LaDew
Wayne Robertson
Mae Weed

ACTION:

3. Salem Presbytery approved the amendment on the Presbytery benefits policy of using the term "policy" in place of the word "goal."

4. Salem Presbytery approved the Elder Michael T. Wasson and Elder Sarah Minkins be allowed to 24 serve communion at Calvary Presbyterian Church for a period of one year beginning September 24, 2024.
5. Salem Presbytery approved the Elder Ronnie Grimes be allowed to serve communion at Freedom Presbyterian Church for a period of one year beginning December 1, 2024.
6. Salem Presbytery approved the commissioning of Chris McClain as Commissioned Ruling Elder of Griers Presbyterian Church for a period of one year beginning October 1, 2024 and be granted permission to celebrate the Sacraments and moderate the Session.
7. Salem Presbytery approved the recommissioning of Commissioned Ruling Elders Marty Brim, Sidney Crunk, Richard LaDew, Wayne Robertson and Mae Weed.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
Rev. Jennie Hemrick, Moderator

The Executive Council met on September 25, 2024 and October 17, 2024.

The Executive Council received reports from Executive Presbyter Tony De La Rosa, Designated Presbyter Jodi Ligan and Stated Clerk Paul Sink. Committees and Commissions made reports as well.

Actions taken on behalf of Presbytery:

Approved the 2023 Audited Financial Statements.

Based on guidance from the 2023 Audit and Elder Tatum's explanation from our Audit report, approved creating a volunteer Treasurer position. It was further approved for Jud Milam to hold this role Oct 1, 2024 – Sept 30, 2025.

Reviewed and endorsed the Proposed Budget for 2025 as presented by Elder Tatum. This Proposed Budget will be presented to the Presbytery for approval.

After receiving a report and request from Massanetta Springs Camp & Conference Center and several members of Salem Presbytery regarding their Capital Campaign, and acting upon fund guidance from Budget & Finance, approval was granted for Salem Presbytery to "sponsor a room" at the level of \$35,000. This donation will come from the DP Foust Fund.

Business of Executive Council:

General Assembly amendment voting was discussed in connection with the Presbytery meeting schedule. Consideration was given to the fact that our high country congregations are still reeling from hurricane Helene. Given that dynamic, it was decided to hold the February Presbytery meeting in person and for us to consider the Constitutional Amendments at that meeting. This was seen as the fair and pastoral way to ensure all had time to consider the proposed amendments. The Stated Clerk will work to secure a location for the meeting.

Approved Minutes from previous EC meetings as well as the August 2024 Presbytery meeting.

Received report and updates from the Administrative Commissions for Flat Rock PC, Immanuel PC, Lloyd PC, and Oakland PC.

ACTION:

8. Salem Presbytery received a thorough financial report from Elder Rhonda Tatum and approved the 2025 Presbytery budget.
-

COMMITTEE ON REPRESENTATION
Rev. Sam Perkins, Moderator

COMMITTEE/COMMISSION NOMINATIONS for 11/16/24 meeting of Salem Presbytery

BUDGET AND FINANCE

Vicki McCain
Glenn Patterson

CHURCH GROWTH AND TRANSFORMATION

Jill Duffield
Emily Wilson

COM - TASK FORCE FOR TRANSITIONS IN MINISTRY (FOR INSTALLED POSITIONS)

Steve Matthews
Scott Lawson

COM - TASK FORCE ON CRE TRAINING AND OVERSIGHT

Sue Moore
James Harley
Betty Wasson

COM - TASK FORCE ON EXAMINATIONS

Nancy Williams-Berry

COM - TASK FORCE ON MINISTRY FOR THE CHANGING CHURCH

Suzanne Schafer-Coates
Paul Ridolfi
Susanne Martin
Tom Gillespie
Ken Broman-Fulks

COM - TASK FORCE ON POLICY, COMPENSATION, MEDIATION AND CHURCH OFFICER DEVELOPMENT

Kevin Conley
Ann Hill

COM - TASK FORCE ON THE CARE OF PASTORS AND RETIREES, MEMBERS AT LARGE/VALIDATED OVERSIGHT AND CERTIFIED CHRISTIAN EDUCATOR OVERSIGHT

Allison "Bubba" Simmons

COMMITTEE ON REPRESENTATION

Debbie Layman
Bryan McFarland
Avys Massey
Alberta McLaughlin

CPM - PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY

Peter Kim

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Monica Green
Jay Lambeth
Will Heyward

PERMANENT JUDICIAL COMMISSION

Wilborn Rives
Luellen Curry

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

ACTION:

9. Salem Presbytery elected the slate of nominees for committees.

INVITATION TO LUNCH AND PRAYER OF BLESSING

Rev. Wes Pitts led Salem Presbytery in a prayer of blessing for lunch.

ADJOURNMENT AND BENEDICTION

The Moderator announced the date of the next Presbytery meeting, February 11, 2025, at North Wilkesboro Presbyterian Church, North Wilkesboro. The Moderator adjourned the meeting with the benediction.

Recorded by:
Christine Ratledge, Administrative Assistant

Paul Sink, Stated Clerk



Appendix A

Ministers Absent from the November 2024 Presbytery Meeting (excluding HR, unless she/he is currently serving a congregation)

Austin, Taylor	Heyward, William Bailey	Porter, Timothy
Barrett-Todd, Katie	Higgins, Cindy	Priddy, Kim
Bates, Timothy	Hoffman, Kymberley	Puryear, Sam
Bates, William	Horan, Amanda	Ratchford, Rainey
Berry, Kent	*Jones-Johnson, Vicki	Rigel, Jessica
Boger, David	Joyce, Boyd	Ritsch, Frederick
Bowers, Erin	Kim, Ki Seok	Robertson, Wayne
Brim, Marty	Kim, Peter	Robison, Lee
Bumgarner, Jeffrey	Kim, Seulki (John)	Rummage, Brian
Burleson, Thomas	Kirby, Randal V.	Sandlin, Mark
Caldwell, Lynne	Kisner, Jeff	Sarvis, Michael
Cannada, Charles	Kunkle, Lynn	Schaick, Steven
Choplin, Patty	LaDew, Richard	Schooley, Kit
Collier, Richard	Langston, Shannon	Senior, John
Conner, Deborah	Lansden, Phanta	Simmons, Allison
Coppage, Jeffrey A.	Larsen, Eric	Smith, Jeffrey S.
Crews, Evelyn	Layman, Debbie	Stevens, Courtney
Davee Lomax, Amanda	Levens, Kristen	Stiles, Steven
Donovan, Jack	Martin, Jon	Sutphin, J. Grant
Durham, Larry	McCain, Vicki	Taylor-Troutman, Andrew
Eads, Will	McFarland, Bryan	Taylor-Troutman, Ginny
Freeman, Keith	McLaughlin, Alberta	Tickle, Blake
Freese, Scott	McLeroy, Douglas	Todd, Katie Barrett
Fulp, William	Mitchell, Pamela	Todd, Mason
Gaither, Otto	Moore, Robert	Troyer, Elizabeth
Gaska, Jonathan	Moore, Timothy	Tuttle, Carrie
Gipe, Will	Mullen, Lisa	Tysinger, Arlo
Glaser, Timothy	Musser Gritter, Joshua	Weed, Larry
Godbey, Sarah	Musser Gritter, Lara	Weed, Mae
Hankins, Stephanie	Newsome, Stedman	Wood, Virginia
Hanlin, Maria	Oliver, (Gregory) Jones	Wray, Tom
Harper, Kathryn	Peifer, Nathan	Zacarias, Rigoberto
Harris, Randy	Peters, Toddie	
Hazelrigg, Marti	Phillips, Caroline	*Notes an excused absence