

THE PRESBYTERY OF CAYUGA-SYRACUSE

Presbyterian Church (USA)

Stated Meeting – May 18, 2024 at 9:30 am
First Presbyterian Church of Liverpool

Minutes.

ATTENDANCE

CONGREGATIONS: MINISTERS & COMMISSIONERS

CONGREGATION	MINISTER(S)	COMMISSIONER	CONGREGATION	MINISTER(S)	COMMISSIONER
AMBOY BELLE ISLE	A - Roosevelt Baums	Robert Armstrong	MARCELLUS, FIRST	Brian Copeland	Charlie Smith
UNITED MINISTRY OF AURORA	A - Barbara Blom		MEXICO, FIRST	E - Karen Green	Susan Sillman Smith
AUBURN, FIRST			MORRISVILLE, COMMUNITY		
AUBURN, WESTMINSTER	A - Pam Masten (CM)	Linda Russell	PARISH, NEW HOPE		
BALDWINVILLE, FIRST	A - Kirsty Dickson-Maret	Victor Jenkins	NORTHMINSTER	Karen Dimon	
CAZENOVIA, FIRST	Anna Gheen	Sharye Skinner	ONONDAGA HILL	Bob Langston	Ryan Collins
CHITTENANGO, FIRST		Charles Albee	OSWEGO, FAITH UNITED (PCUSA/UCC)	A - Andrew Hinman	
COLLAMER, UNITED (PCUSA/UMC)			OTISCO	(Shawn Reyburn)	Julienne Phelps
EAST SYRACUSE, FIRST UNITED (PCUSA/UMC)		Lynn Jacques	PARK CENTRAL	E - Sarah McTyre	
FAYETTEVILLE, UNITED (PCUSA/ABC)	Beth DuBois	Beth Krauss	PEBBLE HILL	A - Stuart Hayes	
FULTON, FIRST UNITED (PCUSA/ABC)	A - Leon Runner		PORT BYRON FEDERATED CHURCH (PCUSA/ABC)	A - David Movsoich	
HANNIBAL (PCUSA/ABC)	A - Adam Severeika (Elim Fellowship)		ROBINSON-ELMWOOD	A - Gary Ferner (UCC)	
ISAIAH'S TABLE	Nancy Wind RE	Karen Wolff	SCIPIOVILLE	E - Ben Fitzgerald-Fye	

JAMESVILLE COMMUNITY (PCUSA/UMC)	Karen Chamis		SKANEATELES	Michael Hill	Lisa Lincoln Wendy Checola
KING FERRY	Dan McCollister	Neil Rotach Mary Heather Harrington	SENNETT FEDERATED (PCUSA/ABC)		Barbarann Youmell
THE KOREAN CHURCH OF SYRACUSE	E - Yong Ju Jee		WEEDSPORT	(Brian Copeland)	Sandra Kremlin
COLUMBIAN	Shawn Reyburn		WHITELAW	Donna Chapman, CRE	
LIVERPOOL, FIRST	Garrett Anderson	Karen Fay			

MINISTERS IN VALIDATED MINISTRIES / MINISTERS AT-LARGE / HONORABLY RETIRED MINISTERS

Present: Kenneth Wonderland (HR) Susan Wonderland (HR) Kathy Dain (VM)
Gyeong Kim (VM) Monica Styron (HR) Deb Thomas (AL)

Excused: Jane Dasher, Linda Even

ADDITIONAL ELDER COMMISSIONERS (serving Presbytery as Staff, CRE, or Committee/ Commission Chair)

Present:
Donna Chapman, CP Whitelaw
Nancy Wind, CP Isaiah's Table
E - Anne Wiley
E - Shavonn Lynch

PRESBYTERY STAFF (Corresponding Member, granted voice)

Present:
TE Paul F. Rack (Geneva Presbytery)
TE Eric Adamcik

REGISTERED GUESTS (Current Meeting; granted voice)

Liz DaBoll (Isaiah's Table)
Judy Schuyler (Collamer)
Jim Schuyler (Collamer)
Bill Newell (Liverpool)

SUMMARIES FOR EACH MEETING 2024	Jan 22	Feb 29	May 18	Sept 16	Nov 16
Total Minister Commissioners Present*	22	11	9		
Total Elder Commissioners Present **	25	15	18		
Parity (expressed in terms of Elders, + or -)	+3	+4	9		
Total Registered Guests and Staff	6	3	5		
Total Registered Attendance***	54	29	32		

* Does not include Corresponding Members, with voice, not vote. Does include Validated, At-large, and Honorably Retired

** Includes Additional Ruling Elder Commissioners with voice and vote

*** Includes Corresponding Members without vote

A - Absent

E - Excused

TE - Teaching Elder or Minister of Word and Sacrament
RE - Ruling Elder
CP/CRE - Commissioned Pastor or Ruling Elder

GATHERING OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD

The Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of Cayuga-Syracuse was **called to order** at 9:34 am on Saturday, May 18, 2024, at the First Presbyterian Church of Liverpool, with **prayer** by the Moderator, Rev. Garrett Anderson. The Moderator made announcements and gave the arrangements for the meeting and facility, and declared that a **quorum** was present.

The presbytery **VOTED** to approve the **Docket** with several additions.

The presbytery **VOTED** to approve the seating of the Stated Clerk, Rev. Paul Rack (Presbytery of Geneva) as a Corresponding Member for the duration of his contract, and also seat Luke Choi (by video link) and Eric Adamchik as **Corresponding Members**. Guests and new commissioners from Skaneateles were introduced.

Rev. Anna Gheen presented the **Land Acknowledgment** that the presbytery was meeting on the unceded ancestral territory of the Gayugahone people, a member of the Haudenosaunee Confederation.

WORSHIP

The presbytery then gathered in a different room in a large circle to worship the living God according to a service influenced by the Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island, and led by Rev. Gheen. The readings came from the First Nations Version of the New Testament, and included a blessing of the four directions while singing the "Cherokee Morning Song." The presbytery celebrated the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper using traditional fry-bread.

BUSINESS RELATED TO CONGREGATIONS AND LEADERS

Treasurer

Elder Victor Jenkins reported for the Treasurer. The Treasurer's Report had been distributed in the papers for this meeting. Ann Wiley and Kristin are in the process of converting from a manual to an automated system. The presbytery currently has \$1,457,698 in total assets. They are working on enhancing the presbytery's ability to pay bills online.

Finance and property I

Elder Jenkins introduced a resolution from the Administrative Commission for the

Hannibal church which would turn the church's property over to the American Baptist Convention (with which denomination this is a Joint Witness), who will turn it over to the congregation. The congregation has provided session records to the presbytery for historical purposes. The presbytery **VOTED** to approve the following resolution.

**RESOLUTION OF
PRESBYTERY OF CAYUGA-SYRACUSE IN RE
HANNIBAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

WHEREAS, an Administrative Commission (“AC”) was constituted by the Presbytery of Cayuga Syracuse at a duly called meeting in which a quorum was present on September 16, 2023; and

WHEREAS, upon prayerful and due consideration by the members of the AC, the AC has determined that the best course of action is to transfer the Presbytery’s interest in the Hannibal Church’s real property to the American Baptist Church of New York State, (“ABCNYS”) with the knowledge and understanding that ABCNYS will/may then immediately transfer the same to the Hannibal Community Church; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Presbytery hereby approves the transfer of the interest of the Presbyterian Church (USA) in the real property of the Hannibal Church via quit claim deed to the American Baptist Church of New York State (ABCNYS) or such as its proper legal or corporate name may be; and it is

FURTHER RESOLVED that

1. The Chair of the AC is hereby directed and authorized to make application for approval of this transfer as the law requires and is authorized to execute any petitions, applications, affidavits and other documents necessary to complete the transfer; and
2. The Chair of the AC shall cause an application to be presented to either the Supreme Court of the State of New York or NYS Attorney General for such order or approval as may be necessary and proper to accomplish this transfer; and
3. Upon said approval the Chair of the AC is further hereby authorized to execute the deed/s and any other documents necessary in order to complete the transfer of the church property of the Hannibal Church to ABCNYS.

Synod Mission and Ministries Commission

Elder Linda Russell reported, referring to her distributed, written report. Laurie Cooney moderated the synod Administrative Commission that worked with Susquehanna Valley Presbytery, and gave a positive report about the progress made by that presbytery in that process. As a member of the Mission Working Group, Elder Russell saw that many Innovation Grants were applied for, including The Jeremiah Pottery Project in Susquehanna-Valley Presbytery, which uses pottery to build relationships and explore dreams and visions.

The Board of Pensions

Rev. Luke Choi appeared by video link, he has been stranded for 2 days in the Dallas-Fort Worth Airport with a broken laptop, precluding his planned Powerpoint presentation. Nevertheless, he introduced the new benefits plan from the Board of

Pensions, scheduled to take effect on January 1, 2025, and which may be reviewed at: seasonofrebuilding.pensions.org. The site also includes a 2025 decision guide for minister benefits, which is a place to determine eligibility and cost of all three possible versions of the plan. On June 13, at 7 pm & June 15, at 10 am, he is offering opportunities to join a Zoom meeting with him to talk about the new plan in detail.

In summary:

1. The Covenant Package: replaces Ministers' Choice, and covers everything except medical. This plan will be offered to any employee working at least 20 hours per week for the church. It is not open to Installed pastors.
2. The Congregational Pastors' Package: replaces Pastors' Participation and is required by the Book of Order for all Installed pastors, and offered too all pastors who are working at least 20 hours per week. This plan includes medical, pension, death & disability, temporary disability, and other kinds of coverage. It is also available also to Commissioned Pastors (CRE's). The non-pension dues for Pastor's Participation are currently 29% of Total Effective Salary; now this is reduced to 16%, but only covers the pastor. Additional dependent coverage is now optional with flat rates: children- \$8,950, spouse- \$11,000, family- \$20,600. Of course, this is 3-way conversation between the pastor, the session or congregation, and the presbytery, as with all Terms of Call.
3. Finally, there is a Transitional Pastor's Participation Package with a 3 year optional dues structure, starting with 33% for 2025. The medical rate will continue to go up.

Stated Clerk

Rev. Paul Rack introduced himself to the presbytery, noting that this was his first opportunity to serve as clerk at an in-person presbytery meeting since January, 2020.

Commission on Ministry

Rev. Shawn Reyburn reported, referring to the commission's distributed report as follows.

Greetings weary travelers over the last several months the COM has been busy doing the normal items that are required. We are working to help the Congregations who are in transition. Those will be mentioned below. We would like to remove some of these bodies from this list, but the search process is difficult and is taking longer than in years past. Some congregations are on the list because they have been asking questions or working through some process or temporary relationships. The congregations who are searching and working through CLC are Auburn Westminster, Collamer/East Syracuse (until Eric is installed), Jamesville, Fayetteville, Pebble Hill, and Sennett. The other congregations are trying to figure out next steps or just maintaining the status quo. Auburn First, Aurora, Cazenovia, Chittenango, Fulton, Morrisville, New Hope/Parish, and Park Central. Last month we met with Luke Choi from the Board of Pensions to discuss the changes to the benefits program that will start in 2025. There are people who are willing to discuss the changes and how a congregation or Pastor might make the changes needed. Just a note doing nothing will cost you (the pastor) and your congregation much more money in the long run. Please talk to Luke (LChoi@pensions.org) and he will schedule a time to discuss. The Wonderlands, Ken and Susan who are working as interpreters for this program. We have been hearing reports from the AC at Chittenango and are very excited for the progress there. COM is looking for some help with a moderator for the Parish/New Hope congregation and a mentor for Eric Adamcik. We have asked several people and have heard only crickets. If you could help out, please let Shawn Reyburn know. We also approved an extension to the Auburn First church to allow them to keep a Session member for another year as they began their

transition. We are trying to keep everything decent and in order. We ask that you share the information asked for when COM reaches out to you. We as a commission are required to interview candidates for pastoral roles, hold exit interviews, check on boundary training, and facilitate payment for continuing education events like EMI, sabbatical, terms of call, and transitional ministry. We also facilitate the process with CLC. We continue to be hopeful and prayerful for God's will to be done as the congregations who are searching seem to be close to the end. Thank you for everyone who participated in the examination of Eric, preparing him for ordination in his home Presbytery. We are praying and hoping that many of the congregations who are in transition would find a pastor with whom they can minister. We are working to comply with the policy, bylaw, and new format that the Presbytery is implementing. It is our hope to become more proactive to the needs and concerns of the Presbytery as we continue to do the necessary work of COM.

Interim Resource Presbyter

Rev. Kathleen Dain referred to her distributed written report, as follows.

See, I am doing a new thing!
Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?
I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.
Isaiah 43:19

It was just about a year ago that I stood before the Presbytery to begin my journey with you as your interim resource presbyter. Now, as I prepare to say, "goodbye," I look with fondness at the things we have accomplished together and with hope for what is still to come.

When I arrived, the presbytery was just leaning into a new structure. By my review, this was the fourth structural change in the last 15 years. As can be expected with any modification, unexpected omissions arose that required attention. Primary among those requirements were a need to review and update the Presbytery's standing rules and bylaws. Thanks to the efforts of our former temporary clerk, the Rev. Amy Loving Austin and moderator, the Rev. Garrett Anderson, a framework is now ready for the Presbytery's review and vote.

Bylaws are important. They tell those both within and outside the organization how we conduct business -- from who is eligible to vote at meetings to roles and responsibilities of committees and staff. Bylaws also help to ensure that we are operating within the constitution of the PCUSA. It is important to bear in mind that when our organizational structure changes, the bylaws must change, too.

Another important consideration for the presbytery is the prospect of a possible merger with Susquehanna Valley. As you are aware, members from Cayuga Syracuse have been in conversations with Utica and Susquehanna Valley on what a collaboration or merger might look like. These conversations are nothing new. Some might say we've been talking about this for decades, however, there now seems to be positive momentum on the benefits of working together. As the Isaiah passage illustrates, our calling is to discern what God is doing culturally and contextually within our region today. A merger of presbyteries offers the opportunity to build a new foundation that is both missionally and financially sustainable for years to come. The decision to merge, however, remains in your hands.

The future for our presbytery may seem quite daunting, yet our future is still waiting to be written. Already, we have welcomed a new pastor into our midst with hopes to welcome several more clergy before summer's end. We are being challenged and stretched to re-examine our beliefs and fears on race and racism; called and claimed to live fully as a Matthew 25 Presbytery. We are the Church, and whether here together or miles apart, we are called to serve.

So, as we say goodbye, I leave you with these words from John O'Donohue:

We seldom notice how each day is a holy place
Where the eucharist of the ordinary happens
Transforming our broken fragments
Into an eternal continuity that keeps us.

Somewhere in us a dignity presides
That is more gracious than the smallness
That fuels us with fear and force,
A dignity that trusts the form a day takes.
So at the end of this day, we give thanks
For being betrothed to the unknown
And for the secret work
Through which the mind of the day
And wisdom of the soul become one.

In Christ's Peace,
Kathy
Rev. Kathleen Dain
Interim Resource Presbyter

Nominating Committee

Elder Lynn Jacques presented the following slate of nominees for positions in the presbytery structure.

Moderator

Rev. Michael Hill – Skaneateles -TE 1st Term 2026

Commission on Ministry (COM)

Elder Bill Newell – Liverpool – RE 1st Term

Permanent Judicial Commission (PJC)

Elder Neil Rotach –King Ferry – RE 2nd Term 2029

Rev. Brian Copeland -Marcellus/Weedsport – TE 1st Term 2029

Rev. Karen Dimon – Northminster – TE 1st Term 2029

Vision

Karen Wolffe – Isaiah's Table - RE 2nd Term - 2027

Susan Smith –Mexico – RE 2nd Term - 2027

Rev. Karen Dimon – Northminster – TE 1st Term 2027

Nominating Committee (Nom)

Elder Sharye Skinner – Cazenovia – RE 1st Term 2027

Social Justice (SJ)

Rev. Ben Fitzgerald-Fye – Scipioville – TE 1st Term

Rev. Eric Adamcik – East Syracuse/Collamer – TE 1st Term

Human Resources (HR)

Elder Mark Kasdorf – Chittenango-RE 1st Term 2027

Committee on Representation (COR)

Elder Roger Dilmore – Westminster – RE 1st Term 2026

Elder/Candidate Shavonn Lynch –Westminster - 2nd Term 2026

Synod Assembly

Rev. Anna Gheen – Cazenovia – 1st Term 2026

The presbytery **VOTED** to close nominations and cast one ballot for the slate of nominees. Terms begin on June 1, 2024.

Vision and Strategy Committee

The presbytery **VOTED** to allow the Vision & Strategy Committee to elect their own chair from among their members. A written report was distributed, which follows.

Vision and Strategy Committee Report--May 18, 2024

Actions

Since the last presbytery meeting, the Vision and Strategy Committee has been focusing on 3 items.

1. Discussion with the presbytery moderator concerning how to narrow and re-focus the work of the committee in a way that will better serve the presbytery's needs. The committee is in unanimous agreement with the proposed changes coming before the May 18, 2024 meeting. These will allow us to focus on resourcing congregations, making connections between churches, increasing communication and developing relationships.
2. Holding our monthly meetings in-person at different churches around the presbytery, beginning with an informal discussion with the pastor and leaders of the host church to hear their vision for the presbytery and how the committee might work to accomplish the items in #1 above.
3. Beginning plans for a fall event to include educational workshops based on needs and desires that we have heard from pastors and leaders in our meetings. We are in initial discussion with the Social Justice committee to also provide a possible plenary session at this event on what it means to be a Matthew 25 presbytery. In addition, we are exploring the possibility of bringing in a guest speaker from the Restorative Actions Committee for another event in the spring of 2025. *See below for info on Restorative Actions.

Workgroups

The larger committee has formed several workgroups to function as subcommittees of the whole. They include other people within the presbytery as well as committee members.

a. Worship Workgroup

The worship workgroup continues to plan for presbytery worship with the goal of creating meaningful, educational and spiritually fulfilling worship that honors God. The year-long theme centers on resilience. Members of the worship workgroup are: Neil Rotach, (King Ferry) Mary Heather Harrington, (King Ferry) Karen Wolff, (Isaiah's Table) Lynn Jacques, (E. Syracuse) and Deb Thomas, (member at large).

b. Communication workgroup

The communication workgroup checks in with the presbytery communicator before the committee meets to (a) let us know of any needs or ways in which we can be of support and (b) learn of the progress being made on updating the website. Members of the communication workgroup are Karen Wolff (Isaiah's Table) and Victor Jenkins (Baldwinsville).

c. Fellowship Workgroup

The fellowship workgroup is focused on making connections between congregations and planning fellowship events. The fellowship workgroup is organized by Rita Hooper (Fulton). A "Presbytery Day at Syracuse Mets" outing at NBT stadium is currently being planned for Friday, June 21.

d. Events Planning Workgroup

The events planning workgroup develops educational and training presbytery-wide programs in response to congregational needs. (See #3 above for upcoming plans.) Members of the events planning workgroup are Ashley Gouger (Liverpool), Lynn Jacques (E. Syracuse), Rita Hooper (Fulton) and Deb Thomas (member at large) with help from other members of the larger

committee as needed. This committee is still in development of its membership and welcomes others to join us.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Debra L. Thomas, chairperson

* Further information about Restorative Actions from their website. (restorativeactions.org) *Restorative Actions is a grass roots voluntary initiative for churches, individuals, mid-councils, and agencies of the Presbyterian Church (USA) as well as other ecumenical partners and interested organizations, to take a leadership stance in opposition to racism and racial privilege. Its premise is that it would be right and fair for predominantly white churches and affiliated organizations to return benefits that have accrued to them directly or indirectly from systemic inequities. The act of gathering and turning back resources that would otherwise benefit others could be redressive to complicity, restorative to conscience, and could represent a good faith step toward broader reconciliation.*

Finance and Property II

Elder Jenkins reported. Elder Bob Davenport is the chair.

1. The presbytery **VOTED** to approve an \$80,000 loan from The Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program (PILP) to the Liverpool First Presbyterian Church for roof replacement on the Christian Education wing and pre-school.
2. The presbytery **VOTED** to approve a \$15,000 appropriated from the 2024 unused Resource Presbyter budget line and be given to Interfaith Works, CNY, for their Refugee Resettlement program. Monica Styron spoke on behalf of the Social Justice Committee.
3. The presbytery **VOTED** to approve \$2000 to be granted from the Vanderkamp Proceeds Fund to support the creation of a "Prayground" in the sanctuary of Westminster Presbyterian Church-Auburn. (No process was ever developed for applying for this money, but we didn't want to hold up Westminster's Plan. Their application was included in Presbytery Matters.).
4. The presbytery **VOTED** to grant approval to the Korean Church for sale of property they own near Syracuse University, proceeds to be used for continued mission work. No buyer has yet been identified.
5. The presbytery **VOTED** to approve the sale by First Presbyterian Church of Weedsport of a portion of their land to the neighbor on the north for a purchase price of \$80,000, with the money to be invested in the church's portfolio and used to support the ministry of the church, which may include any future major maintenance projects of their building. (This action is similar to and concludes a motion passed by the presbytery in 2019.)

Administrative Commission for Chittenango

Rev. Sue Wonderland reported. The presbytery **VOTED** to receive the final report of the Administrative Commission for Chittenango and dismiss them with thanks. The Moderator offered a prayer. (See Appendix.)

Amendment of Stated Clerk Contract

The presbytery **VOTED** to approve changes in the Stated Clerk Contract made by the presbytery at its Special Meeting of May 6, 2024:

The contract now reads as follows:

Stated Clerk Contract

This employment contract, dated May 1 in the year of 2024, is entered into by the Presbytery of Cayuga-Syracuse and Paul Rack. This document constitutes an employment agreement between these parties and is governed by the laws of New York State.

IN CONSIDERATION of this employment contract, the parties agree to the following terms and conditions. The contract shall be official upon a Presbytery affirmative vote.

1. Employment

The employee agrees to carry out the responsibilities and duties set out by this contract and the job description. The employee also agrees to comply with all Presbytery of Cayuga-Syracuse policies and procedures.

2. Position

It is the duty of the Stated Clerk to perform all essential job functions and duties included in the job description. Presbytery of Cayuga-Syracuse may add other duties within the scope of the employee's position. This position will be for a term of nine (9) months beginning May 1, 2024 through January 31, 2025, with options for renewal.

3. Compensation

The employee will be paid \$2,000 per month before applicable taxes for a 15-hour work week. Travel expenses, such as mileage (IRS rate) and office supplies related to performing duties of the Stated Clerk, can be submitted for reimbursement. Wages will be paid on the 30th of each month.

4. Benefits

The employer offers no benefits. There is \$250/year for professional expenses.

5. Termination

This working relationship may be terminated by either party for any reason with 60 days proper written notice or by mutual agreement.

BUSINESS RESUMES

During the lunch break the Moderator recognized the imminent departure of Rev. Dain as Interim Resource Presbyter, in June. He gave her (and her puppies) gifts from the presbytery and offered a prayer.

The Vice-Moderator was given the chair for this portion of the meeting.

Social Justice Committee

Rev. Monica Styron reported.

The presbytery **VOTED** to postpone consideration of the Harassment Policy until the next Stated Meeting.

The presbytery **VOTED** to postpone consideration of the Anti-Racism Policy until the next Stated Meeting.

A motion to approve and refer to congressional representatives, synod, and General Assembly a statement calling for a ceasefire in Gaza **FAILED** by a vote of 5-17.

Merger Conversations with Susquehanna Valley

Garrett Anderson reported on 17 months of conversations with other upstate New York presbyteries in terms of mergers and cooperation.

Our presbyteries are not sustainable on several levels. But this is not just about survival. What we want to do is have a new life as presbyteries; to thrive with new identity and mission. Working harder doing the same things hasn't gotten us anywhere. Our forms of being church aren't connecting with the needs of society. Some options: sharing staff, joint programs, some have been successful. What gained interest in two presbyteries is merger (the third did not). The leadership of Susquehanna Valley and Cayuga-Syracuse see the need to make a new thing. For new energy, hopefulness, synergy.... This is a first read of the merger proposal, using the document from the synod outlining the merger process. We don't seem to be at step one just yet. It begins with a commitment to merge. We want to make a new thing. We make this path by walking it. Open discussion on concerns and questions.

- The energy of getting together with more people.
- Will making a new, larger presbytery change the urban-rural dynamics?
- Such conversations about regional presbytery collaboration have been happening since at least June 2017.
- SV had a really good AC experience which makes them somewhat more prepared than we are.
- We're on the road to nowhere right now, so....
- The process itself will provide answers; we can't know everything in advance.
- How do we want to live?
- Do we need to review the history? Not to repeat what we have already gone over.
- These are new opportunities to build a new foundation. Not about what we lose, but what's ahead.

Presentation on By-Laws and Standing Rules Revision

Rev. Deb L. Thomas reported, moving the presbytery **VOTED** to approve the revision of Article III of the Presbytery By-Laws, as presented here:

Article III – Members and Other Participants in Meetings

Members of the Presbytery shall be:

- a. All Minister Members of the Presbytery
Teaching elders in good standing of the PC(U.S.A.), retired (R), members-at-large (AL), or serving in validated ministries (VM) are members of the Presbytery with voice and vote
- b. Temporary Minister Members of the Presbytery
Teaching elders in good standing in other governing bodies of the PC(U.S.A.) or in any Christian church who are currently serving congregations in temporary, non-installed

pastoral relationships, or in an installed relationship under the provisions of the Formula of Agreement, may be granted temporary membership (through examination and affirmative vote of the Presbytery) and have voice and vote.

c. Ruling Elder Commissioners elected by their sessions

Each church session (or board of a recognized New Worshiping Community) is permitted to elect ruling elder commissioners (1 commissioner for every 400 members) to participate in meetings of the Presbytery with voice and vote; names of elected ruling elder commissioners shall be reported to the Stated Clerk annually.

d. Additional Ruling Elder Commissioners

Additional elders may be appointed by the Presbytery as commissioners in order to maintain a balance of minister members and elder commissioners as required in the Book of Order and to allow elders who are committee chairs and others with similar responsibility access to the floor; additional elder commissioners will be appointed for one-year renewable terms as recommended by the Stated Clerk and approved by the Presbytery. These persons shall ordinarily include:

- i. Commissioned Pastors (CRE's) in active (commissioned) service
- ii. Certified Christian Educators and Certified Business Administrators in active (validated) service in the Presbytery
- iii. Ruling Elders currently serving as Officers in the Presbytery
- iv. Ruling Elder members of the Coordinating Committee
- v. Ruling Elders currently serving as committee chairpersons

Commissioned Pastors (CRE's), Certified Christian Educators, and Certified Business Administrators who are not serving in active (commissioned/validated) service in the Presbytery shall be granted voice without vote.

Corresponding Membership shall be granted to all teaching elders or ruling elders of other PC(USA) councils, to ordained ministers/priests of other religions and Christian Denominations, and to others as the Presbytery shall determine, and shall be granted voice without vote.

Attendees who do not fit one of the above categories, including elders who are not enrolled as commissioners are considered as visitors; visitors do not have the privilege of the floor and shall not vote.

The presbytery **VOTED** to approve the revision of the presbytery By-Laws Article V, so that it now reads as follows:

Article V – Meetings

Regular Stated meetings shall be held in accordance with G-3.0105 and G-3.-0301, as scheduled by the Coordinating Committee (see Standing Rule SR7). The Annual Meeting may normally be held in May.

The Moderator of Presbytery shall call a special meeting at the request, or with the concurrence, of two ministers and two elders from different congregations. The Presbytery shall also meet at the direction of the Synod of the Northeast (G-3.0304).

Notice of all stated and special meetings shall be communicated by mail or electronic mail to all members (as noted above) of the Presbytery and to clerks of session providing ten days' notice to all members. The date and hour of the stated meetings may be changed by presbytery or by the Coordinating Committee, provided ten days' notice is given to all members.

The docket for stated meetings and called meetings shall be prepared by the Stated Clerk in collaboration with the Resource Presbyter, Moderator, and Vice-Moderator. It ordinarily shall be mailed or electronically sent to all members of presbytery at least five days prior to the meeting.

The quorum for any regular (stated) or special (called) meeting of the Presbytery shall be a minimum of five ministers who are members of the Presbytery and five elders, from five different congregations.

All reports and recommendations to be presented on the floor of Presbytery shall ordinarily be submitted in writing prior to the meeting; these reports will be shared with the Presbytery at the same time as the docket.

The presbytery **VOTED** to approve revisions to Standing Rule SR5 so that it now reads as follows:

SR 5 – Administrative Action Commission

5.01 The Administrative Action Commission is a standing commission of the presbytery.

5.02 The members of the AAC shall be the Moderator, Vice Moderator, Finance and Property Chair, and the Chair of COM. In cases of co-moderation, both moderators shall be members. The Resource Presbyter, Stated Clerk, and Treasurer shall ordinarily serve on the AAC with voice.

5.03 The presbytery Moderator shall serve as the chair and convener of all meetings of the AAC

5.04 AAC is empowered by the presbytery to review, approve, and act on all urgent matters of presbytery business when there is not sufficient time to wait for the next stated meeting of the presbytery.

5.05 AAC is empowered by the presbytery to make budgetary adjustments and approve expenditures outside of the normal budget limitation in matters when urgent action is needed and there is not sufficient time to wait for the next stated meeting of the presbytery.

5.06 AAC shall report all non-confidential actions to the presbytery at the next stated meeting following the action.

The presbytery **VOTED** to approve the revised Standing Rule SR6 (which basically changes the name of the Vision and Strategy Committee to the Congregational Development and Presbytery Connections Committee), so that it now reads as follows:

SR 6 – Congregational Development and Presbytery Connections Committee (CONG)

6.01 Congregational Development and Presbytery Connections is a standing committee of the presbytery.

6.02 The CONG resources congregations for the mission of the Gospel, builds relationships and connections among churches and presbytery members, and creates learning and missional opportunities for the presbytery.

6.03 The CONG shall promote effective communication by working with our Presbytery Communications Coordinator.

6.04 The CONG promotes, reviews, and makes recommendations to Benevolent Care Grants.

6.05 The CONG shall make use of the gifts of leaders within the presbytery to create engaging worship at presbytery meetings, in coordination with the themes determined by

the Coordinating Committee.

The presbytery **VOTED** to approve the revised Standing Rule SR7, so that it now reads as follows:

SR 7 – Coordinating Committee

7.01 The Coordinating Committee (CORD) is a standing committee of the presbytery.

7.02 The CORD shall be composed of ruling and teaching elders as follows:

- The Moderator (ordinarily serves as chairperson of the CORD)
- The Vice Moderator (ordinarily serves as vice-chairperson of the CORD)
- The Chairperson or designee of the Congregational Development and Presbytery Connections Committee (CONG)
- The Chairperson or designee of the Commission on Ministry (COM)
- The Chairperson or designee of the Social Justice Committee (SJC)
- The Chairperson or designee of the Finance and Property Committee (FPC)
- The Chairperson or designee of the Human Resources Committee (HUM)
- The Chairperson or designee of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM)
- The Chairperson or designee of the Committee on Representation (COR)
- The Chairperson or designee of the Nominating Committee (NOM)
- Resource Presbyter (voice not vote)
- Stated Clerk (voice not vote)
- Treasurer (voice not vote)

Note: Any committee designee is expected to serve for a full year in that capacity.

7.03 The CORD is tasked with the following responsibilities:

07.0301 Determine the places and schedule of meetings for the presbytery; coordinate stated meeting agendas/dockets, themes, speakers, missional and educational focus; and promote transparent and clear communication between presbytery entities for the purpose of organizing and structuring stated meetings.

07.0302 Determine processes for the deliberation of business items including General Assembly overtures and concurrences.

07.0303 Provide orientation tools for presbyters to better understand and participate in meetings.

07.0304 Incorporate practices to increase our awareness of God's presence and voice in our midst.

07.0305 Monitor and evaluate the work of committees, ensuring accountability and implementation of the strategy and vision.

7.0306 Support the connectional relationship between the Presbytery of Cayuga-Syracuse, the Synod of the Northeast, and the PC (U.S.A.) General Assembly and promote positive ecumenical relationships.

07.0307 Function as a clearing house for concerns and opportunities by referring them to appropriate committees when possible.

7.04 The CORD shall provide a written report at all stated meetings of the Presbytery.

Congregational Development Committee

The presbytery **VOTED** to task the Congregational Development Committee (CONG) with 1) drafting the process and guidelines for the distribution of the Vanderkamp funds per the presbytery action of May 2021 minutes for the approval of the presbytery 2) including under the responsibilities of CONG to recommend to presbytery approval of applications for these funds

New Business

The presbytery **VOTED** to: instruct the Moderator to call a Special Meeting in June for the purpose of dealing with: the prospective merger with Susquehanna Valley Presbytery; approving the Minutes of the January and May Special and Stated Meetings; examining Shavonn Lynch for ordination to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament; forming an Administrative Commission to deal with oil and gas leases owned by the presbytery; and commissioning the presbytery's commissioners to the 226th General Assembly.

The presbytery **VOTED** to approve the requests for **Excuses** from attendance at this meeting received by the Stated Clerk.

Installation of Moderator and Stated Clerk

The presbytery concluded its work by officially installing the Stated Clerk and the newly elected Moderator, using the liturgy in the Book of Occasional Services, conducted by the Moderator.

PEOPLE OF GOD DEPART

The presbytery **VOTED** to **adjourn** the meeting with prayer by the Moderator at 3:16 pm.

Next Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of Cayuga-Syracuse will be held at the Northminster church on Monday, September 16, 2024, at 6:00 pm. This will be a "hybrid" meeting, both in-person and on Zoom.

Attest:

Rev. Paul F. Rack
Stated Clerk

APPENDIX

CHITTENANGO ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSION FINAL REPORT 4/23/24

The Administrative Commission for the First Presbyterian Church of Chittenango has been meeting since June 2023 and has worked through our charge for the past 11 months. In this final report we present a synopsis of our work.

We entered a situation where there was major discord between the Pastor and the Session, and the Pastor/Session and the Pre-School of fifty years. Awareness of these struggles had filtered into the congregation, and along with several other issues, was causing concern among some members. Key to the call for the AC was:

Four of the Six Session members, including the clerk of Session, had resigned by mid-April, and

The Pastor/Session and Preschool attempted to resolve the relationship; in spite of this, the Little Rainbows Preschool leadership and teachers resigned in mid-April. This led to the closing of the Preschool for the remainder of the year, creating issues around First Presbyterian in the larger community as well.

Rev. Justin Marple began his ministry in December of 2022, and discord began in January as Justin sought to deal with issues around the Preschool constitution and the Preschool's continuance. The Over the Rainbow Preschool had been a joint fifty-year ministry between First Presbyterian Church and St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church. As a result of the legal problems and bankruptcy of the Syracuse diocese, St. Patrick's had had to step away from the relationship with the Presbyterian Church and the Preschool. It was awareness of that reality, and ensuing learnings and assumptions about what this meant, visa vis a fifty-year old, outdated constitution, that led Rev. Marple to aggressively seek changes. From the perspective of the AC, the methods utilized to do this were not helpful or appropriately inclusive of all involved. Interviews with many of the individuals and groups related to the church and preschool, as well as research of congregational and preschool records and emails, led us to believe that an atmosphere of distrust, bullying, and non-collegiality had been created that was not repairable as fostered by Rev. Marple. In response to this inappropriate behavior the brokenness escalated. Additionally, alongside of these issues, some congregation members were struggling with the divisiveness of the pastor's theology and leadership that did not seem to leave room for them.

The COM conversation with Rev. Marple in June, encouraging him that this situation was irreparable, was extremely wise on the part of COM, and led, we believe, to better outcomes for both the congregation and the Marple family. Rev. Marple announced his resignation on June 18th, 2023

Since July, we have been working to:

- review all records available to us prayerfully and honestly in an effort to understand the struggles and places/people in need of healing
- support the congregation with presence through several congregational meetings as well as AC presence at key gatherings, modeling the grace of Christ to and with them whenever possible
- continue consistent work as the Session to keep the "wheels moving" and provide opportunity for rich worship and fellowship as we cycled through the church year
- be vocal about the relationship between the Chittenango congregation and the larger presbytery
- seek appropriate legal advice for necessary actions relating to the closing of the pre-school and a new relationship with that leadership

-support the pre-school leadership in their efforts to heal, renew and regroup, culminating in the “welcome back” of the new Little Rainbows Learning Center to the building for September 2024, as an independent nonprofit.

-elect a new Session in January who worked side by side with the AC for two months and have since taken on the leadership themselves. This new Session has had, and will continue, training around their leadership roles together and with a pastor, as well as what for them are key issues of hospitality and connection to the community.

-rebuild community presence through various kinds of publicity, intentional communications, and a transparent presence.

This AC worked hard, and I am so very grateful for their willingness to stick to all that was asked of them, especially early on. The group worked overtime through October, as we sifted through very painful accounts of what had taken place, and listened to brokenness that could not be ignored. The Session is aware that the need for healing and in some cases, forgiveness, continues. We have seen that the desire to be faithful disciples in this congregation is strong, and they are moving forward!

The AC struggled on several occasions to discern a way forward that would be life-giving to the congregation. Because of that priority, we chose not to pursue what we believed could likely become ecclesiastical or civil charges. However, should the need ever arise, we are lodging with the Stated Clerk a thumb drive that includes the paperwork which came to us as a part of this work.

Thank you for the trust you placed in us to represent you with First Chittenango; we covet your prayers for this congregation as it moves forward.

Respectfully submitted:

Donna Chapman Commissioned Ruling Elder (served through January 9, 2024)

Jane Dasher, Teaching Elder

Michael Hill, Teaching Elder

Mark Kasdorf, Ruling Elder

Pete Owens, Ruling Elder

Bill Porter, Ruling Elder

Susan Faye Wonderland, Teaching Elder, AC Moderator