148th Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of Western North Carolina
Tuesday October 27, 2026
First Presbyterian Church of Gastonia, NC

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GUIDE TO WORSHIP AND WORK

ONE-HUNDRED FORTY-EIGHTH STATED MEETING

Tuesday, October 27, 2026

First Presbyterian Church
Gastonia, NC

148th STATED MEETING
PRESBYTERY OF WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA
October 27, 2026
DOCKET

10:00 Call to Order — **Wanda Neely, Moderator**
Convene with Prayer of Invocation
Land Acknowledgment
Appointment of Standing Committees
Resolution of Thanks
Bills and Overtures
Tellers

Recognition of Elders Attending for First Time, Visitors, and Corresponding Members

Certification of Quorum — **Ann Philbrick, Stated Clerk**
Approval of Docket

Consent Agenda — **A**
(Consent Agenda is a consent motion. Any commissioner may pull any item from the Consent Agenda for any reason. Simply state the item to be removed from the Consent Agenda and it will be dealt with as part of the team report from which it was drawn.)

Report of the General Presbyter — **Byron Wade** — **GP**
Appreciation for Beverly and George Thompson

Stated Clerk's Report — **Ann Philbrick** — **B**
(Work of the Clerk, Presbytery Meeting Dates, Administrative Commission Reports)

Reports Submitted for Information and/or Included in the Consent Agenda
Nominating/ Representation Team — **I**
Finance Team — **BB**
Building Hope — **BH**
GA Commissioners Reports — **JJ**

10:40 Service of Worship
Worship leader: Dan Commerford, Pastor, First Presbyterian Church, Gastonia

11:30 Speak Out (*10 minutes*)

11:40 Coordinating Ministry *(25 minutes)* — **Ken Murchison** — **C**
(Work of the Team)
Anti-Racism Policy - First Reading
Disability Concerns Ministry Policy — **Carol Brown**
Election of 2028 Moderator

Executive of the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic *(10 minutes)* **Floretta Barbee-Watkins II**

Commission on Ministry *(20 minutes)* **Keith Grogg D**
(*Introduce new ministers and recommendations for Presbytery approval.)*
Harassment Policy - First Reading
Introduction of Minister Members: Paul Sink and Joe Welker

12:35 LUNCH

1:35 Reconvene

Commissioned Pastor Team *(10 minutes)*
Commissioning of Don Humphrey to Brittain Presbyterian Church

Report of Disaster Recovery Coordinator *(5 minutes)* **Anne Waple**

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance *(5 minutes)* **Kathy Lee Cornell**
Recognition of Bill Neely

Youth Ministry Team *(5 minutes)* **Sarah Grace Montgomery Y**

Nominating/ Representation Team *(5 minutes)* **Dwight Christenbury I**

Guatemala Partnership *(5 minutes)* **Doug Michael Q**

Malawi Leadership Team *(10 minutes)* **Kevin Frederick**

Horizons Stewardship *(5 minutes)* **Steve Lindsley**

The Insurance Board *(5 minutes)* **Farnaz Ansari**

Report of Bills and Overtures *(as needed)*

Prayers of Intercession **Risa Brandon**

Benediction and Adjournment

Calendar of Events

MEETINGS HELD BY ZOOM UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED

OCTOBER

27	**148th Stated Presbytery Meeting (1st Presbyterian of Gastonia)**

NOVEMBER

2	Examinations Team
3	Peace and Justice Team
3	Commission on Ministry
11	Coordinating Ministry
12	Faith Formation Team
19	Malawi Leadership Team
	Youth Ministry Team
23	Microloan Task Force
26-27	**PWNC Office Closed - Thanksgiving Holiday**
30	Examinations Team

DECEMBER

1	Commission on Ministry
2	Microloan Task Force
8	**PWNC Office Closed - Staff Christmas Party**
9	Coordinating Ministry
	Validated Ministry
14	Disability Inclusion Team
17	Malawi Leadership Team
24- Jan.1	**PWNC Office Closed - Christmas & New Year Holidays**

JANUARY

7	Presbytery Meeting Packet Deadline
11	Examinations Team
12	Commission on Ministry
13	Coordinating Ministry
20	Preparation for Ministry Team
21	Malawi Leadership Team
28	Faith Formation Team
	Youth Ministry Team
30	**149th Stated Meeting of PWNC (Virtual)**

To: Members of the Presbytery of Western North Carolina
From: Ann Philbrick, Stated Clerk
Date: October 19, 2026
Re: One-Hundred Forty eighth Stated Meeting of Presbytery

The quarterly stated meeting of Presbytery is quickly approaching! This meeting will be held Tuesday, October 27, at the First Presbyterian Church of Gastonia. **The meeting will start at 10 am,** with registration opening at 9 am.

This meeting has several important features and will necessarily continue after lunch. Lunch will be held in the fellowship hall and the meeting will reconvene in the sanctuary afterwards.

REGISTRATION Lunch plates will be $10 and will include spaghetti casserole (marinara sauce or meat sauce), salad, garlic bread, pumpkin cheesecake, and beverage.

OFFERING The offering taken will be designated to the Presbytery of Western Carolina, NC Mission Projects.

INTERCESSORY PRAYER All requests should be placed on the Stated Clerk's table before 11:00 a.m.

ELDER REPRESENTATION For the 2026 year, the following churches (G through N) are entitled to an additional elder. Please note that commissioner representation is based on active membership figures taken from the **2024** Annual Statistical Report.

0 - 250 members – 1	751 - 1250 members - 3
251 - 750 members – 2	1251 - 1750 members – 4

Gastonia, First	Good Hope	Grace Covenant	Grassy Creek
Green Mountain	Green Street	Greenway	Hayesville
Hendersonville, First	Hickory, First	Highlands, First	Ironton
Jacks Creek	Kenilworth	Lenoir, First	Long Creek
Love's Chapel	Lowell	Marion, First	Marshall
Micaville	Mills River	Montreat	Morganton, First
Morrison	Mount Holly, First	New Hope, Asheville	New Hope, Gastonia
Newdale	Newland	Newton, First	Northminster

FOR AN EXCUSED ABSENCE, e-mail Katie at kquinn@presbyterywnc.org or call the Presbytery Office at 828-438-4217 by Friday, October 23, 2026.

I look forward to seeing you all at the meeting.

DRIVING DIRECTIONS: FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF GASTONIA
1621 E Garrison Blvd
Gastonia, NC 28054, USA
Tel: (704) 864-2651

ELDER CONTACT: Charlie Grissom
Phone: 704.907.2993
Email: harref@msn.com

FROM US321

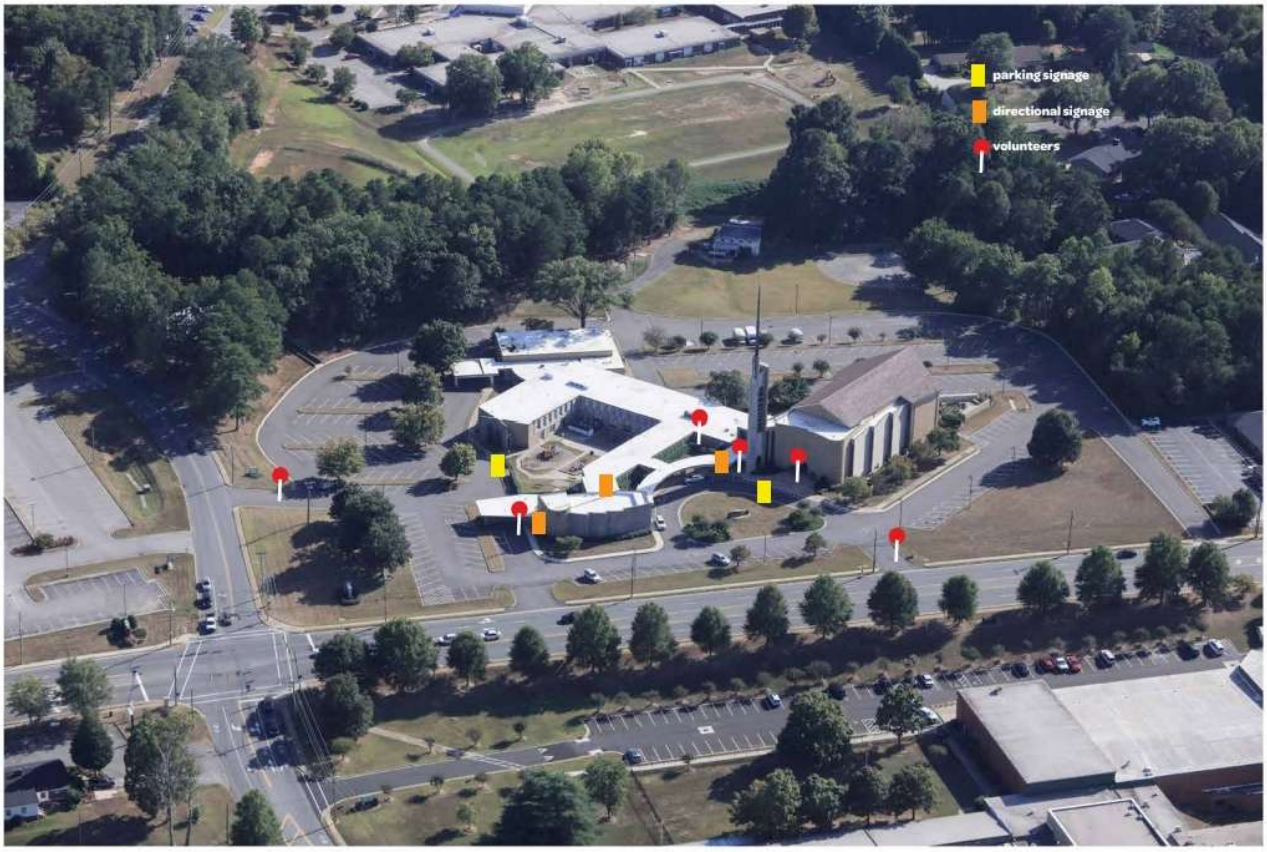
South on US 321 to Gastonia, Enter Gastonia, passing Gaston College. Continue SOUTH on US321. US321 splits into a one-way street at Airline Avenue. Keep SOUTH. Garrison Blvd. intersects US 321 at Ashley Arms Apartments. There is an elevated pedestrian crossing at that intersection. Turn LEFT on Garrison Blvd. Travel EAST on Garrison Blvd. You will pass the Library, Museum, and Grier Middle School. First Presbyterian is on the RIGHT. Turn RIGHT at the stoplight onto Burtonwood Drive, take the immediate RIGHT entrance, and enter the parking lot. An attendant will direct you to a parking spot.
SHOULD YOU MISS THE TWO PARKING ENTRANCES, Turn RIGHT at the light, Burtonwood Drive and take the next RIGHT turn entrance. Someone will direct you to a parking spot.

FROM INTERSTATE 85 (EITHER NORTH OR SOUTH)

Exit either North or South-Bound Lanes at Exit 20, New Hope Road. Turn RIGHT on to New Hope Road from the SOUTH-BOUND LANE Turn LEFT on New Hope Road from the North-Bound Lane. As soon as you are able, get into the RIGHT lane. You will be traveling SOUTH on New Hope Road. You will cross Franklin Blvd. There is a Wendy's on one corner and a Truist Bank on the other corner. Continue SOUTH until you arrive at Garrison Blvd. You will turn RIGHT on to Garrison and get into the LEFT lane. At the first light on Garrison after turning off New Hope Road, turn LEFT – this is Burtonwood Drive. Turn into the entrance, and someone will direct you to a parking spot.

Notes:

- There will be signs posted at the proper entrances for the Presbytery Meeting
- We will have at least 6 parking lot attendants. They will wear distinctive vests.
- First Presbyterian Gastonia volunteers will be available to show you which doors to use for entrance and registration, snacks and where restrooms are located. Please feel free to ask any questions; we are there to assist.
- Please call Charlie Grissom with any day-of transportation or logistical issues.


parking signage
directional signage
volunteers

CONSENT AGENDA

For the purpose of expediting some of Presbytery's decisions which are routine and non-controversial, a Consent Agenda will be used. These motions are included throughout the packet.

PLEASE READ THESE MOTIONS BEFORE PRESBYTERY!

Matters may be removed from the Consent Agenda when:

A. Any member of the governing body requests removal of an item included in the CA whereupon that item shall be removed and presented to the governing body as part of the report from which it originated.

B. When the Consent Agenda is presented on the floor, opportunity shall be given for members of the governing body to request, without comment or debate, for removal of specific items from the CA.

A FAVORABLE VOTE ON THE CA SHALL BE RECORDED AS A FAVORABLE VOTE ON ALL MATTERS INCLUDED IN THE MOTION. THEREFORE, PLEASE READ AND PRAYERFULLY CONSIDER ALL MOTIONS BEFORE PRESBYTERY.

****

THAT THE CONSENT AGENDA, INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS, BE ADOPTED:

RECOMMENDATIONS 1 thru 4 FROM THE STATED CLERK'S REPORT

(See Stated Clerk's Report (B) for contents of recommendations.)

CA. 1. THAT Wanda Neely, Ann Philbrick, and Katie Quinn be requested to prepare the minutes of this Presbytery meeting for approval at the January 30, 2027 Stated meeting of Presbytery.

CA. 2. THAT the minutes of the July 25, 2026 Stated Meetings of Presbytery be approved as submitted.

CA. 3. THAT the September 2026 report of the following Administrative Commission be received and entered into the permanent record of Presbytery: (Stated Clerk Attachments 1 and 2)

Administrative Commission on Churches Concluding Their Ministry
July, 2026
September 2026

CA. 4. THAT the minutes of the ordination and/or installation of the following be placed into the record of Presbytery: (Stated Clerk Attachments 3 through 5)

Jim Ewing
Sarah Dianne Jones
Jess Rigel

RECOMMENDATIONS 1 thru 11 FROM THE NOMINATING/REPRESENTATION TEAM

(See Stated Clerk's Report (I) for contents of recommendations.)

CA 1. Permanent Judicial Commission

Rev. Dr. Mark Achtemeier	Class of 2032
Rev. James Aydelotte	Class of 2032

CA 2. Finance Team

Rev. Dr. Jefferson K. Aiken, Jr.	Class of 2028
Mr. Tom Gibson	Class of 2029
Mr. John Heilman	Class of 2029

CA 3. Property Team

Mr. Steve Brittain	Class of 2029
Ms. Harriet Kirkland	Class of 2029

CA 4. Coordinating Ministry Team

Rev. Jim Ewing	Class of 2027

CA 5. Commission on Ministry

Dr. Gary Oakley	Class of 2029
Rev. Jody Welker	Class of 2029
Rev. Dr. Keith Grogg	Class of 2028

CA 6. Examinations Sub-Team

Rev. James Aydelotte	Class of 2028	
Rev. Sarah Dianne Jones	Class of 2028	Co-Chair for 2027
Rev. Kathleen Madigan	Class of 2029	
Rev. Dr. Margaret Torrence	Class of 2027	Co-Chair for 2027

CA 7. Preparation for Ministry Team

Mrs. Vickie Burgess	Class of 2029	
Rev. Kelley Connelly	Class of 2029	Chair for 2027
Mr. Roger Wise	Class of 2028	
Rev. Jess Rigel	Class of 2029	

CA 8. Validated Ministry Sub-Team

Rev. Clay Fouse	Class of 2029

CA 9. Commissioned Pastors Sub-Team

Rev. Merriam Alexander	Class of 2029

CA 10. Strengthening Congregations Ministry

Rev. Carol Steele	Class of 2027
Rev. Dr. Laurey Harrell	Class of 2028

CA 11. Engaging in Mission Ministry

Ms. Sue Johnson	Class of 2029

THE PRESBYTERY OF WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA
STATED CLERK'S REPORT
Ann M. Philbrick, Stated Clerk
October 27, 2026

The Stated Clerk presents the following:

CA. 1. THAT Wanda Neely, Ann Philbrick, Katie Quinn be requested to prepare the minutes of this Presbytery meeting for approval at the January 30, 2027 presbytery meeting.

CA. 2. THAT the minutes of the July 25, 2026 Stated Meetings of Presbytery be approved as submitted.

CA. 3. THAT the September 2026 report of the following Administrative Commission be received and entered into the permanent record of Presbytery: (Stated Clerk Attachments 1 and 2)

Administrative Commission on Churches Concluding Their Ministry
July, 2026
September 2026

CA. 4. THAT the minutes of the ordination and installations of the following be placed into the record of Presbytery: (Stated Clerk Attachments 3 and 4)

Jim Ewing
Sarah Diane Jones
Jess Rigel

FOR YOUR INFORMATION:

5. THAT the 149th Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of Western North Carolina will be held on Saturday, January 30, 2027 and will be a virtual meeting held via Zoom.

6. THAT the following Session Records for 2025 have been received, reviewed, and approved by the Stated Clerk, having been submitted by Clerks of Session using the provided checklist with documentation and returned to presbytery by October 1, 2026 packet deadline:

Arbor Dale
Asheville First
Banner Elk
Belmont
Brevard Davidson
Brittain
Brittains Cove
Burnsville First
Crossnore
Dixon
Fletcher
Franklin First
Good Hope
Grace Covenant
Grassy Creek
Hendersonville First
Lenoir First
Lowell
Marshall
Morrison
Montreat
Mills River
Mount Holly First
New Hope
Newdale
Pineola
Quaker Meadows
Ruthfordton
Shelby
Sherrills Ford

Soloam	Trinity	Waldensian
Southminister	Tryon	Warren Wilson

7. THAT the following Session Records for 2025 <u>have not been reviewed</u> and have not yet met the requirements of the Book of Order. For churches to meet the requirements of the *Book of Order* and be in compliance, please send in the filled in check list or contact Stated Clerk, Ann Philbrick, for further instructions.

	Hayesville	Olney
Black Mountain	Hickory First	Pine Street
Bridgewater	Highlands First	Reems Creek-Beech
Bryson City	Ironton	Ridgeview
Buladean	Jacks Creek	Robinson Memorial
Calvary	Kenilworth	Ryburn Memorial
Canton	Long Creek	Shiloh
Cherryville First	Love's Chapel	Spruce Pine First
Columbus	Marion First	Sweetwater
Dallas First	Michaville	Sylva First
Dorland Memorial	Morganton First	Third Street
Dulatown	New Hope Asheville	Union Mills
Etowah	New Hope Gastonia	Unity
Forest City First	Newland	Vians Valley
Gastonia First	Newton First	Walnut
Green Mountain	Northminister	Waynesville First
Green Street	Oakwood	
Greenway	Old Fort	

8. THAT as of the October 1, 2026 packet deadline, the following people are overdue on their Book of Order required Sacred Boundaries training:

Alexander, Terry	Harkey, M. Luther	Patchel, Marla
Amos, Kevyn	Hazelrigg, Marti	Patterson, Randy
Ashley, Phillip	Jones, Franklin S.	Purtill, Allan
Bledsoe, Clara Lynn	Justice, Kimberly	Robinson, Mary Katherine
Bowman, Lee W.	Kang, Dong Uk	Robinson, William 'Billy"
Brakemeyer, Ryan	Koone, James	Sink, Paul
Christian, William	Koone, Peggy	Smith, Chad
Coleman, Evelyn	Linton, Eugene B	Smith, Paul S.
Commerford, Daniel	Lloyd, Jamie	Stansell, Margaret B.
Davis, Holly K.	McClinton, Sandra	Stitt, Daniel G.
Ewing, Jim	Millsaps, James	Tompkins, Kathleen V.
Florence, David Carter	Moseley, Jim	Warthen, Renee

9. THAT the 2025 minutes of the Presbytery of Western North Carolina were submitted to the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic for review and were received. They have been reviewed and found to be in order. (Stated Clerk Attachment 6)

Administrative Commission for Churches Concluding Their Ministry
July 2026 Minutes
Present: Milt Morgan (Chair), Bobbi White, Don Scofield, David Hosick, Roger Holland, Tom Efird; Ex-Officio: Ann Philbrick, Rebeka Gurney
Absent: Becky Stanley, Don Scofield

The Administrative Commission met on July 28, 2026 by zoom. The purpose was to review the situation at Brittain's Cove Presbyterian Church. This dissolution was assigned to the commission by the Coordinating Council.

Milt gave a run down on who he had talked to and what had been done regarding the securing of the building and the handing over of financial records and documents. Milt will be talking with Lisa regarding financial issues, including the transfer of remaining assets, utilities, insurance etc. There is around $35,000 remaining in the church's bank account.

Milt reported that the church has been very diligent and responsible. Insurance is paid up through June 2027 and the grounds keeper is paid up through September 2026.

The Commission will hire Mike Begley to do the customary legal work in terms of incorporate and deeds etc.

Rebekah asked a question about the hopes for the building. The Commission members expressed their commitment to finding the best new owner that will continue the legacy of service to the community. Rebekah also reported a few of the former members were attending at the church she serves (Reems Creek Beach PC). She offered to be in conversation with them about their intentions for their future involvement and how the commission might guide former members in their decisions about where they might go.

Ann will research how to process former members membership and look into some kind of communication with each of them regarding their options.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann M. Philbrick

Administrative Commission on Churches Concluding Their Ministry
September 2026 Minutes

The Chair, Milt Morgan, sent out an email on August 27, 2026 to the members regarding a listing agreement with the Wesley Community Development Corporation after he, Tom Efird, Roger Holland, and Cam Murchison met with them regarding help with finding a buyer for the Brittain's Cove property. The representative of Wesley was Ivan Henrickson.

Following corrections to the agreement to be sure the contract was between the Wesley Community Development Corporation and the presbytery (with the Commission acting as the presbytery's agent), members voted by email and the vote passed unanimously.

Milt then had the contract executed. Ann and Milt contacted Mike Begley to hire him to do the legal work needed to be get the property legally in the name of the presbytery.

Milt and Lisa Pressley also reported via email that the church's funds had been transferred to the presbytery. Lisa reported the Duke Power invoices were now coming to the presbytery office and any other on-going or needed expenses were to do the same.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann M. Philbrick
Stated Clerk

STATED CLERK ATTACHMENT 3

MINUTES OF THE PRESBYTERY COMMISSION TO (ORDAIN AND) INSTALL
(Return immediately to Presbytery Stated Clerk)

Rev. James Ewing

As Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, Newton Church(es)

The Commission, according to the appointment of Western North Carolina Presbytery met at the FPC Newton Church at 2:45 pm AM/PM on March 22 20 26.

Present were: Ministers George Thompson, Beverly Thompson, Byron Wade

Elders Jim Payne, Ann Sperry, John Pritchard

Ministers/Elders invited by Presbytery to serve on the Commission:
Rod Stone (Teaching Elder); Mary Martin (Ruling Elder)

A quorum was present, and the meeting was opened with prayer, led by the Presbytery appointed Moderator, Byron Wade. Jim Payne was elected/appointed to serve as Clerk.

The assigned parts and the Order of Worship were reviewed, and a motion was made and passed that the worship service be approved as carrying out the Commission's assigned responsibilities.

In the service of worship that followed, Mary Martin assisted in the leadership of worship; Rod Stone preached the sermon A Wedding, A Calling, and Extraordinary Grace from the text John 2:1-11; Ann Sperry reminded the congregation of the meaning of this service and proposed the Constitutional questions to the minister; John Pritchard proposed the Constitutional questions to the congregation.

These being answered in the affirmative Jim Ewing was (ordained with prayer and the laying on of hands, and) installed as pastor of the FPC Newton Presbyterian Church(es) agreeably to the Word of God and the *Book of Order*. The charge to the pastor was delivered by Beverly Thompson, and to the congregation by George Thompson. The newly installed pastor pronounced the benediction.

Following the service, the Commission reconvened, read and approved the minutes, and adjourned with prayer, a motion was made, and approved, to let the moderator and clerk approve the minutes and be adjourned with the benediction.

Moderator Byron A. Wade Clerk James W. Payne

STATED CLERK ATTACHMENT 4

MINUTES OF THE PRESBYTERY COMMISSION TO (ORDAIN AND) INSTALL

(Return immediately to Presbytery Stated Clerk)

Rev./Ms./Mr. Sarah Dianne Jones

As Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church(es) Hendersonville, NC

The Commission, according to the appointment of Western North Carolina Presbytery met at the First Presbyterian Church at 2:45 AM/PM on Aug. 8, 2026.

Present were: Ministers Anne Apple, Bill Buchanan, ~~Ashley-Anne Masters~~ Sarah Grace Montgomery, Richard Boyce, Byron Wade, ~~Lisa McLennan~~

Elders Janice Kominski, Noland Ramsey, Hunter Marks

Ministers/Elders invited by Presbytery to serve on the Commission:

Lisa McLennan, Katherine Randall, Ashley-Anne Masters

A quorum was present, and the meeting was opened with prayer, led by the Presbytery appointed Moderator, Bill Buchanan. Anne Apple was elected/appointed to serve as Clerk.

The assigned parts and the Order of Worship were reviewed, and a motion was made and passed that the worship service be approved as carrying out the Commission's assigned responsibilities.

In the service of worship that followed, Janice Kominski, Richard Boyce assisted in the leadership of worship; Anne Apple preached the sermon "A House Built for God" from the text Genesis 28:8-20; Byron Wade & Ashley Anne Masters reminded the congregation of the meaning of this service and proposed the Constitutional questions to the minister; Hunter Marks proposed the Constitutional questions to the congregation.

These being answered in the affirmative Sarah Dianne Jones was (ordained with prayer and the laying on of hands, and) installed as pastor of the First Presbyterian Church(es) agreeably to the Word of God and the *Book of Order*. The charge to the pastor was delivered by Katherine Randall, and to the congregation by Noland Ramsey. The newly installed pastor pronounced the benediction.

Following the service, the Commission reconvened, read and approved the minutes, and adjourned with prayer, led by _____, or a motion was made, and approved, to let the moderator and clerk approve the minutes and be adjourned with the benediction.

Moderator William S. Buchanan Clerk Anne B. Apple

STATED CLERK ATTACHMENT 5

MINUTES OF THE PRESBYTERY COMMISSION TO (ORDAIN AND) INSTALL
(Return immediately to Presbytery Stated Clerk)

Rev./Ms./Mr. Jessa Rigel

As Pastor of the Warren Wilson Presbyterian Church(es)

The Commission, according to the appointment of Western North Carolina Presbytery met at the Warren Wilson Presbyterian Church at ~~6:00~~ 5:30 AM/PM on 23 Sept, 2026.

Present were: Ministers Wanda Neely, Megan Mc Millan, Keith Grogg, Byron Wade

Elders Rodney Lytle, Jil Meadows

Ministers/Elders invited by Presbytery to serve on the Commission:

Rev. David Black, Chicago

A quorum was present, and the meeting was opened with prayer, led by the Presbytery appointed Moderator, George Thompson. megan mcmillan was elected/appointed to serve as Clerk.

The assigned parts and the Order of Worship were reviewed, and a motion was made and passed that the worship service be approved as carrying out the Commission's assigned responsibilities.

In the service of worship that followed, Shannon Spencer, Jil Meadows, assisted in the leadership of worship; David Black preached the sermon (no title) from the text Romans 12:4-18; Wanda Neely reminded the congregation of the meaning of this service and proposed the Constitutional questions to the minister; Rodney Lytle proposed the Constitutional questions to the congregation.

These being answered in the affirmative Rev. Jessica Rigel was ~~(ordained with prayer and the laying on of hands, and)~~ installed as pastor of the Warren Wilson Presbyterian Church(es) agreeably to the Word of God and the *Book of Order*. The charge to the pastor was delivered by Megan Mc Millan, and to the congregation by Keith Grogg. The newly installed pastor pronounced the benediction.

Following the service, the Commission reconvened, read and approved the minutes, and adjourned with prayer, led by George Thompson, or a motion was made, and approved, to let the moderator and clerk approve the minutes and be adjourned with the benediction.

Moderator George Thompson Clerk Megan McMillan

STATED CLERK ATTACHMENT 6

Presbytery of Charlotte
2831 N. Sharon Amity Road, Suite A, Charlotte, NC 28205-6605
704-535-9999 Fax: 704-537-3476
www.presbyofcharlotte.org

June 8, 2026

Rev. Dr. Floretta Barbee-Watkins, Executive/ Stated Clerk
Synod of the Mid-Atlantic
1102 Westwood Avenue #202
Richmond, Virginia 23227

I am writing to certify that I have reviewed the 2025 minutes for the meetings of Western North Carolina Presbytery. As the attached checklist shows, references to each of the items were found in order and were either included in the minutes, or references made that were included in their permanent records.

The minutes of Western NC Presbytery have met the requirements as outlined by the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic. The 2025 Stated Clerk, Ann Philbrick, is to be commended for maintaining detailed, accurate minutes.

Please let me know if there is anything else needed from me in this matter. Thanks for your faithful leadership in the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic.

Respectfully,

Tamara C. Williams

Tamara C. Williams, Stated Clerk, Presbytery of Charlotte

COORDINATING MINISTRY
Ken Murchison, Chair
October 27, 2026

SECTION ONE

The Coordinating Ministry has the following RECOMMENDATIONS to Presbytery for action at the October 27, 2026 meeting:

1. **That the Presbytery elect the Rev. Dr. Richard Boyce as Moderator of the Presbytery for 2028, serving as Vice-Moderator of the Presbytery in 2027, and Chair of the Coordinating Ministry in 2029.**

2. **That the Presbytery debate and approve the Disability Inclusion Policy developed by the Disability Inclusion Team. (Attachment 1)**

3. **That the Presbytery have the first reading of the Anti-Racism Policy to answer questions regarding the proposal. (Attachment 2)**

.

SECTION TWO

The Coordinating Ministry informs Presbytery regarding the following matters:

1. **That the Presbytery docket includes a list of upcoming events.**

2. **That the Coordinating Ministry approved the created "Minute for Mission" script regarding disaster recovery efforts in western North Carolina, including a request for additional funds, to be sent to churches in the Presbytery, and churches and groups outside our Presbytery that have sent teams and/or contributed financially to the disaster recovery efforts in western North Carolina.**

3. **That the Coordinating Ministry approved the request of the Ryburn Presbyterian Church Session to lease the church sanctuary for use by Bishop Charles Hogue of Refuge Tabernacle Church for six months.**

4. **That the Coordinating Ministry approved a request from Marshall Presbyterian Church for $8,000 to provide housing support for the church's new pastor until the manse becomes available at the end of the year.**

5. **That the Coordinating Ministry approved the recommendation of the Personnel Team that no change should be made in the current policy of paying no benefits for part-time employees of the Presbytery.**

6. **That the Coordinating Ministry approved the recommendation of the Personnel Team to increase the compensation of the Disaster Recovery Coordinator by $15,000, with the increase to be funded from the grant from the Dogwood Health Trust.**

7. **That the Coordinating Ministry decided that the Presbytery meet in neighborhoods every other year beginning in 2028.**

8. **That the Coordinating Ministry approved changes in the policy for the Building HOPE Vital Churches Fund designed to simplify the grant application process and to increase the funds distributed annually. A copy of the revised policy is an attachment to this report. (Attachment 3)**

9. **That the Coordinating Ministry approved the payment of $13,636 to First Presbyterian Church of Lenoir from the moneys received from the former First Presbyterian Church of Lenoir.**

10. **That the Coordinating Ministry approved the docket for the October 2026 meeting of Presbytery.**

11. **That the Coordinating Ministry approved the following hunger grants from the Daily Change offering:**

Regional Requests

Agency	Requested Amount	Approved Amount
Heartlife (sponsored by FPC Morganton)	$2,500	$2,500
Macon County Food Council (sponsored by FPC Franklin)	$5,700	$5,700
Reconciliation House Food Pantry (sponsored by FPC Burnsville)	$5,000	$5,000
Saluda Food Pantry (sponsored by Tryon Presbyterian)	$7,000	$7,000

International Requests

Agency	Requested Amount	Approved Amount
Proyecto de Salud-PWNC Guatemala Partnership Health Project (sponsored by the PWNC Guatemala Partnership Team)	$19,000	$19,000
Nkhoma Hospital-Malawi (sponsored by Waldensian Presbyterian and the Malawi Leadership Team)	$30,000	$30,000

Total Funds Granted **$69,200**

12. That the Coordinating Ministry approved $2500 to allow members of the Peace and Justice Team to attend the Racial Equity Institute training.

DISABILITY CONCERNS MINISTRY POLICY

Presbytery of Western North Carolina

- One in five Americans lives with a disability that significantly limits one or more daily activities.

- It is anticipated that many members of our Presbytery will, at some point, have a disability, especially as they age.

- Persons who have a disability and who have valuable gifts to serve the Church, presbytery, and congregations, are prevented from participating fully in the life of the Body of Christ.

- The attitude of our society has changed toward full inclusion of persons who have a disability since the national Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004.

- However, numerous barriers still exist that reflect a lack of sensitivity or understanding that denies those who have a disability the dignity and respect they deserve, including:
    - Architecture
    - Communication
    - Attitudes

- Our call to share our faith alongside the many people who have a disability can be accomplished only as we become accessible to all both in space and attitude.

- The life of Jesus, his works, and his teachings, provide a clear basis for our Presbytery's commitment to participation and inclusion.

- We believe that God requires the Church to reflect these rights in its preaching, teaching, and practice.

COORDINATING MINISTRY ATTACHMENT 1

The Presbytery of Western North Carolina and its Disability Inclusion Team commits to support each congregation, committee, facility, and gathering of the Presbytery to enable all people to participate fully in all ministries of the Presbytery through:

- Ensuring that all may attend, worship, serve, be served, learn, and grow as valued members of the Christian community, recognizing the need for family assistance and support,

- Examining barriers, both physical and attitudinal, that prevent persons with a disability to live fully in church community and striving to rectify such barriers,

- Communicating barriers to accessibility at presbytery, congregational, conference center events and offering solutions to assist those with disabilities to participate fully

- Modifying or designing existing and future sites within the presbytery as much as possible, so that they adhere to the guidelines of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and

- Providing educational resources and training to assist in fulfilling these commitments.

With gratitude to the Presbytery of the Twin Cities for permission to adapt their disability inclusion policy

COORDINATING MINISTRY ATTACHMENT 1

PWNC Disability Inclusion Team
Core Members

Contact Information

Ms. Carol Brown - Ruling Elder and Deacon within PWNC
Cell: 828-206-5796; Email: ckbrown3105@gmail.com

Rev. Beth Ann Miller - Retired Minister member of PWNC
Cell: 828-403-5669; Email: bethannmillervinay@gmail.com

Rev. Tamara Puffer - Minister member of PWNC
Cell: 828-254-0507; Email: tamara@noggin-notions.com

Rev. Christina Tutterow - Minister member of PWNC
Cell: 828-458-4158; Email: cbtutt@gmail.com

Other team members:

Rev. Jim Taylor (Presbytery liaison) - jtaylor@presbyterywnc.org
Mary Jo Clark - maryjoclark57@gmail.com

Biographical information

Carol is the mother of a son with Down Syndrome. In addition, her first son was born with Trisomy 13 and her husband was diagnosed with dementia, most likely Alzheimer's. Both are now deceased. Carol has chaired Presbyterians for Disability Concerns, and has been part of that group since 2012 . A graduate of the Church Leadership School, Carol is an ordained Elder and Deacon. She is available to speak about including children and adults with various disabilities in the life of the Congregation.

Beth Ann is mother to a son with Down Syndrome. She has years of experience with navigating access for her child in the day-to-day activities of church life. She is very willing to speak with people about the need for greater inclusivity, especially concerning those living with developmental challenges. She is available to help congregations complete the Congregational Audit of Disability and Inclusion.

COORDINATING MINISTRY ATTACHMENT 1

Tamara lives with a traumatic brain injury sustained in 1996 in a car accident. She was co-chair of the disability sub-committee for the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta when she lived there twenty years ago. She has served as the Minister of Vulnerability in a previous congregation. She is the co-author of the book Forgetting The Former Things: Brain Injury's Invitation to Vulnerability and Faith. She is available for conversation about her own experiences as well as those of other brain injury survivors.

Christina lives with a neurological condition that impacts her mobility. She has led two presentations for Montreat Presbyterian Church: the first on the importance of accessibility and the second on communicating inclusivity to and with those with disabilities. A subsequent Lunch and Learn event provided practical information on improving accessibility for people with various disabilities. Christina is eager to speak with congregations about auditing congregational spaces/practices and also making physical spaces more accessible.

All core members are available for presentations, worship involvement, and/or preaching. Please be in touch directly to discuss availability.

WESTERN NC PRESBYTERY POLICY ON ANTI-RACISM

A Proposal and Recommendation

June 16, 2026

From the Anti-Racism Task Force of COM *Task Force: Katie Adams, Cindy Combs, Laurey Harrell, Jody Welker, Emily Willmarth | Staff: Ann Philbrick*

I. OUR FAITH BACKGROUND

This policy is grounded in scripture and our theological heritage. Because humankind is created in God's image, Christ calls us to be reconcilers, leaving no room for racism.

A. Biblical Foundations

- **Micah 6:8:** Requires us to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God.
- **Matthew 22, Mark 12, Luke 10:** The greatest commandments: love God and love your neighbor as yourself.
- **2 Corinthians 5:18:** God reconciled us through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.
- **Galatians 3:26-28:** We are all children of God through faith; all are one in Christ Jesus.
- **Ephesians 2:14-16:** Christ is our peace, breaking down the dividing walls of hostility to create one new humanity.

B. Confessions of Faith

The *Confession of 1967* affirms "God's reconciling love breaks down every form of discrimination based on racial or ethnic difference."

The *Belhar Confession* affirms that God's life-giving Word and Spirit conquer the powers of sin, irreconciliation, and hatred, enabling the church to live in new obedience.

II. OUR COMMITMENT

The Presbytery of Western North Carolina believes in, stands for, and works for human dignity, diversity, equity, and inclusion, aspiring to an "abundant life" for all God's children.

To clarify this commitment, the terms used here of race, racism, and racial discrimination must be clearly defined to be applied fairly. Here are our working definitions:

Race: A socially constructed term, not a scientific designation based on perceived differences. Genetics show humans share approximately 99.9% of their DNA.

- **Racism:** An institutional, structural, and individual system of prejudice exerted by those in power. It benefits the dominant culture while disadvantaging people of color and people from minority cultures or ethnic groups.

- **Racial Discrimination:** Manifested overtly (slurs, hate crimes) or covertly through ingrained, subconscious institutional biases.

We acknowledge racism can exist among any group and is not limited to those in power. However, those in power bear special responsibility to address the issues of racism in their community.

For all persons, racism corrupts the image of God. Through personal intervention and institutional transformation, we can work to dismantle systemic racism.

III. DISMANTLING RACISM

Dismantling racism is a collaborative partnership effort that involves all levels of the church. The Presbytery with our congregations will seek to go about the work of dismantling racism in our faith communities.

The Presbytery and congregations are called to be committed to addressing racism in a variety of ways:

1. **Dialogue:** Must begin honestly within existing groups, adhering to ground rules that preserve human dignity of people in the dialogue.

2. **Root Causes:** Conversations must move past surface-level bigotry to address structural causes through confession, forgiveness, and transformation.

3. **Vision & Benchmarks:** Dialogue should lead to a vision of what can and ought to be with measurable goals, identifying obstacles, and assessing progress annually.

4. **Implementation:** The implementation of this policy for Presbytery will be created with oversight by the Peace and Justice Team of the Presbytery. The Peace and Justice Team will serve as a resource for the local congregation. Sessions are required by the Book of Order to develop and implement their own policy on Anti-Racism for their church.

5. **Resources:** A resource manual for training facilitators, along with study guides, is available through the Presbyterian Mission Agency website (pcusa.org/racial justice). Further resources are encouraged to be developed by the Peace and Justice Team of the Presbytery. The PC(USA) also coordinates with the ELCA, RCA, and UCC to develop joint resources and unified training, maximizing our collective impact against systemic

racism. There is also potential funding through the Hawkins Buchanan Fund for Racial Justice from the PC(USA)

V. PROCEDURE IN RESPONSE TO COMPLAINTS

1. **Prohibition:** Racial discrimination by any Presbytery employee, minister, educator, inquirer, candidate, or leader is strictly prohibited and subject to disciplinary action, up to dismissal, per the *Rules of Discipline*.

2. **Filing:** Victims or witnesses should and are encouraged to notify the Stated Clerk in writing. If the complaint involves the Stated Clerk, the General Presbyter must be notified.

3. **Corrective Action:** Initial assessments will evaluate the perpetrator's understanding of the church's faith position. If lacking, immediate antiracism training is required. The goal is behavioral correction and restoration, not expulsion.

4. **Retaliation:** Retaliation against anyone filing or assisting with a complaint is strictly prohibited.

VI. THEREFORE

- **We reject racism** in our church, community, and nation, whether hidden or overt.
- **We ask God's forgiveness** for past shortcomings and seek wisdom to love one another equally.
- **We commit to studying** our history, critically evaluating our relationships, and implementing activities that strengthen inclusion.
- **We reject despair.** As people of hope, we trust God to change hearts and pledge to follow Christ toward liberty and justice for all.

Building H.O.P.E. Vital Churches Fund

Grant Program — Planning Framework

This framework outlines a proposed plan to revitalize the Building H.O.P.E. Vital Churches Fund with a clear, transparent, and grant-making process. The goal is to honor the spirit of the donors' original intent — strengthening congregations and supporting pastors in the Presbytery of Western North Carolina — while modernizing its structure for long-term impact.

1. Current Financial Position and Proposed

As of March 31, 2026:

Metric	Amount
Total Capital Collected through Building H.O.P.E.	$384,986
Total Grants Awarded to Date	$82,971 (approx. 22% of collected)
Current Available Balance (with investment gains)	$536,655
Annual Grant Budget	$50,000/year

Note: The funds have been significantly under-deployed. Formalizing the structure and grant process will help ensure these resources are put to meaningful use each year.

2. Proposed Structure

- The Vital Churches Team will have $50,000 available to award each year. The Coordinating Ministry may revisit the spend rate in light of the investment experience with the Building Hope Vital Churches Fund..
- Unspent grant funds in a given cycle are available for the next cycle. They do not lapse.

3. Grant Priorities and Categories

Rather than hard budget buckets by category, grants will be awarded on the merit of the application regardless of category. The following four areas represent the fund's historic intent and serve as priority guidance for the review team. No fixed percentage is allocated to any category — the strongest applications are awarded.

Priority Area	Description	Examples
Congregational Vitality	Outreach initiatives, new worshiping communities, worship or education innovations, small grants for local ministry	Seasonal outreach programming such as VBS, community ministry pilots such as after-school care or a food pantry, new worship services, etc.
Pastoral & Leadership Development	Retreats, cohort groups, continuing education, conferences, training	Pastor cohorts, spirituality retreats, leadership seminars, continuing education conferences
Ministry Capacity & Staffing	Supplemental staffing support for growing or transitioning congregations	Musicians, ministry interns, program support staff
Technology & Communications	Equipment, software, digital ministry tools — with demonstrated ministry impact	Basic A/V for worship, media ministry tools (see guardrails below)

3a. Technology Grants — Special Guardrails

Given the ambiguity of the original technology restriction and the pattern of large infrastructure requests, technology grants will carry additional requirements:

- Cap: Technology grants will be capped at a lower maximum than other categories (see Section 5).
- Impact requirement: Applications must articulate a clear and specific ministry impact — not just an equipment upgrade. The question the team will ask: "How will this change what your congregation can do for people?"
- Basic need exception: Congregations with no functional sound or presentation capability will be given preference over those seeking system upgrades or premium features.

4. Eligibility

- Congregations in the Presbytery that have actively supported the mission and ministry of the Presbytery including financial support as permitted by the congregation’s resources.
- Individual members of presbytery serving in installed, stated, or validated ministry positions.
- All applicants must be current on any required presbytery reporting and training certification.
- Congregations must have session endorsement for all applications.
- No repeat grants to the same recipient within a 2-year window. (Possible Exception: a recipient may apply in a new category after one cycle, at committee team discretion)

5. Grant Tiers and Award Sizes

The team will use the following tiers as a framework. Final award amounts are at the team's discretion based on application quality, scope, and available funds.

Tier	Max Award	Best For	Notes
Small	Up to $3,000	Individual pastors, pilot programs	Light application.
Mid-Size	Up to $7,500	Congregational programs, multi-session retreats, staffing support	Longer application required.
Large	Up to $20,000	Multi-congregation initiatives, significant staffing or capacity grants	Strongest case for impact required; may involve conversation with the team before application.
Technology (all sizes)	Up to $4,000	A/V, media, digital tools with clear ministry impact	Impact statement required; basic need prioritized

A church may combine a vital churches grant with other grants from the presbytery (such as Hunger Grants or Disaster Recovery Grants) or from other sources to strengthen the long-term impact of the proposal.

In unusual cases where a grant has the potential to transform the ministry of a congregation, the Vital Churches Team may recommend grants that exceed these dollar limits. Also, the Building HOPE Vital Churches Team may recommend grants that fund a Presbytery level initiative and/or staff support related to the goal of the Building HOPE Vital Churches Fund. These recommendations require the approval of the Coordinating Ministry before they are finalized.

6. Grant Cycle and Process

Grants will be awarded in two cycles per year:

Cycle	Application Deadline	Awards Announced
Spring	April 30	Reported to May/June Coordinating Ministry meeting
Fall	October 31	Reported to November/December Coordinating Ministry meeting

6a. Process Steps

1. Applicant submits application by cycle deadline
2. Vital Churches team reviews applications and scores against stated criteria
3. Vital Churches team votes to approve, modify, or decline recommendations
4. Awards communicated to recipients within 2 weeks of vote
5. Funds disbursed by presbytery staff

7. Vital Churches Team

- A standing Vital Churches team of the Presbytery will serve as the grant review body
- Recommended composition: 5 members including clergy and lay leaders, with representation from small and large churches. The General Presbyter and Finance staff representative serve *ex officio* without vote.
- Members should recuse themselves from any application in which they have a conflict of interest.
- The team will develop and maintain a simple rubric aligned to grant priorities.

8. Post-Award Requirements

All grant recipients must submit a completion report within 12 months of receiving funds. The report must include:

- Narrative: A brief description of how the grant was used and what was accomplished.
- Financial accounting: A simple accounting of how funds were spent, with receipts or invoices on request.
- Completion of reporting is required for eligibility in future grant cycles.

9. Transparency and Reporting

- The review team will present an annual grant report to the Presbytery.
- The report will include: total funds awarded, recipients, grant amounts, and brief project descriptions.
- The Building H.O.P.E. page of the website will be kept current with fund information and application materials.

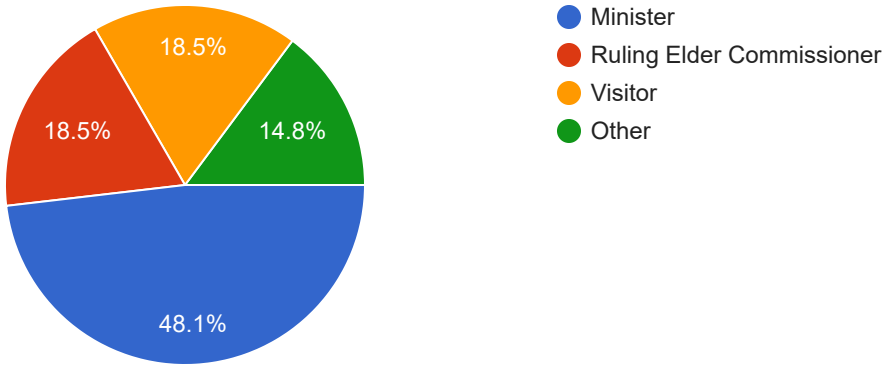
Summer 2026 Neighborhood Presbytery Meeting Feedback

27 responses
Publish analytics

In what capacity did you attend this meeting?

Copy chart

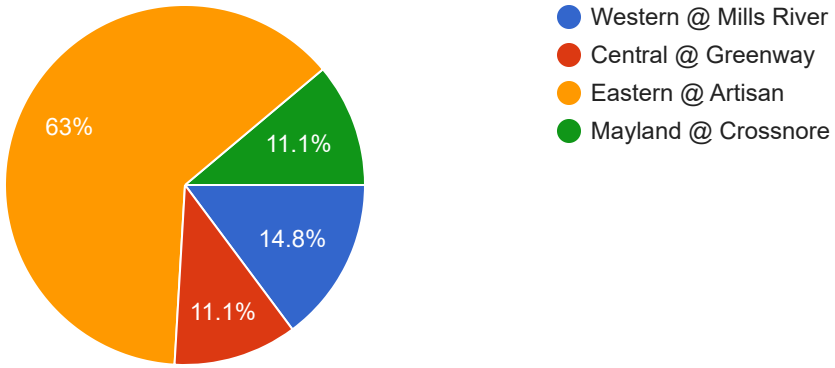
27 responses



Which Neighbohood Presbytery meeting did you attend?

Copy chart

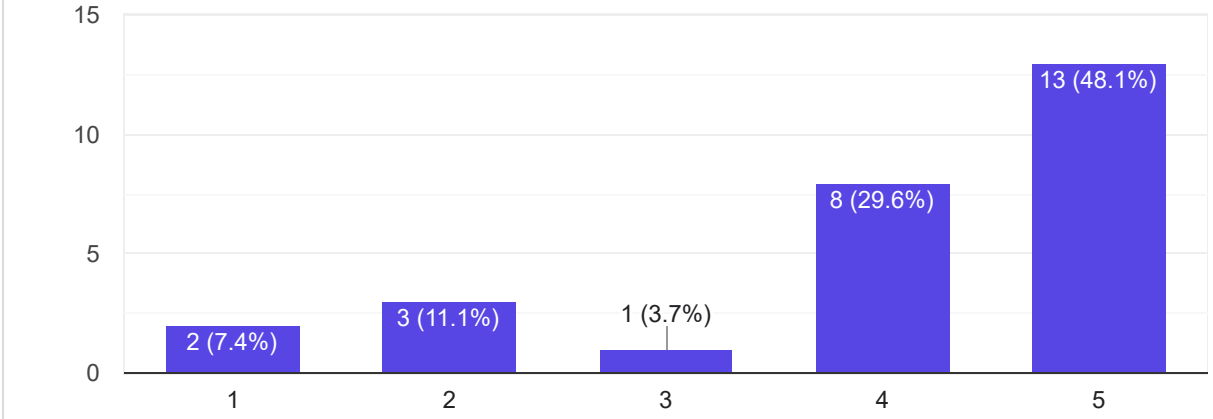
27 responses



Copy chart

How prepared did you feel for the work of this meeting?

27 responses



Any comments on preparation?

17 responses

It was wonderful!

very welcoming and comforting

Focus on establishing or re-establishing our partnership with gautemala

Good information

Our "programs" did not have page but it was easy to follow the "program"

lack of preparation was my personal fault

New format- not totally clear on what to expect

I read the packet and talked with our chair of mission and ministry committee to prepare to share.

The hosts made us feel welcome. The presenters were engaging.

I was part of the committee for the meeting

My comments take into consideration this was the first time. The short videos on the weekly newsletter were good and helpful. However, I did not really know what to expect and there were timing issues at our meeting.

wonderful opportunity to experience Artisan and hear how God is at work in other churches

It has been helpful to download the packet so it can be read ahead of time.

Food, Service, and meeting excellent

Kudos to Ann and Katie

was a visitor today, but have attended other Presbytery meetings as a ruling elder

Well done- from greeters through out the morning

What (if anything) would have made you feel more prepared for this meeting?

6 responses

Meeting others and learning about activities in other churches and getting ideas

information format

Clearer indication on what was unique to neighborhood- us all

A specific agenda would have been helpful., with who was to report when. It was not made very clear what decision-making authority we had

not sure that there is anything I would add

It was very similar to a regular meeting of all of us. But having fewer people allowed us to visit with those who were there.

What part of today's meeting was meaningful to you?

25 responses

The worship at Artisan was spectacular.

I think the smaller number of attendees led to more personal interaction

Worship, Reports, conversation around lunch

the fellowship time with other churches

Reaching other members and encouraging participation. Hearing updates on disaster recovery.

Worship - the Mills River choir participated and added so much! The preaching was so rich and engaging. Sharing our mission work with each other was wonderful.

Meal time, sermon, and praying together

fellowship

the initmacy of being together in a smaller space, no microphones, seeing elders in the neighborhood

The meeting of the people from the different churches

Worship; meeting folks who are close by geographically but would never meet

Service on unity- one body

Dwight's message

It was meaningful to hear the reports from the various committees.

Worship, Guatemala report, Malawi Report

Table talk, worship and music

1) Each of the churches represented giving reports on their activities. 2) good food. 3) It did result in building relationships - so congrats!. 4) Each clerk seemed to have a script, was helpful.

worship, learning about Artisan/ Guatemala

The worship and the sharing of each church about its mission. It took a while to do that, but we discovered all the congregations are very active in their communities and beyond.

getting to know others from other churches

Fellowship

worship

Enjoyed the neighborhood meeting very much. Enjoyed visiting and learning about the artisan church. Enjoyed connecting in meaningful ways with other churches in our neighborhood. There was mor opertunity yfor conversation an interation than our usual Presbytery meetings.

Seeing our neighbors in leading worship and discussion

The worship- Malawi Report

Can't think of anything

Breakfast food was taken away and providing church left. So on break there was no food- food brought to share should be left until lunch.

directions

I would have loved a chance to have a time to share with one another - small groups of 3-4 then all together - with questions such as, "What is going well in your church?" "Where are some of thr struggles?" "Where have you seen God at work?" etc. Too often we get into the "Here's the report, its in your packet, got any questions?" mode - need to be more interactive. Smaller neighborhood gatherings is perfect opportunity for this.

Let the sharing time be separated from lunch- lunch discussion mostly involved getting acquainted

Put #s on name tags and have people sit at lunch according to the #. So we get to know each other.

Stay on schedule. We ran late from the start, and lunch was an hour+ late, which was significant and probably too long. Also, we had some very informed and expert reporting at our meeting. But how do we know the same info was communicated at each neighborhood?

Better planning on how long things take to accomplish. While the sharing of mission stories was important it delayed lunch. So the ladies who were preparing the food, had a hard time keeping it warm and probably stayed longer than they had anticipated.

handouts about missions

love the neighborhood concept

sound

Well Prepared

How can Presbytery help your congregation (Please include your name and church in your response)?

6 responses

You are already doing it--through the process of finding a new pastor

Michael Poulos, FPC-SP.
- Offer elder training for multiple churches in the neighborhood;
- Continue to support the Presbytery Associate for Youth as this ministry is an invaluable way our youth can participate in things that build their faith and connect them to the larger church (Montreat, Triennium, Guatemala, etc).

Visit us at First Church Cherryville

Continue to keep us posted with opportunities

From COM- cards, emails, calls and visits. Any Communication to churches looking for a new pastor. They can be overwhelmed/ disappointed at the length of time of the search, especially when it starts to affect talents, time, and monetary giving. Any word of encouragement is good PCUSA promotion and spirit care for our members and PNC Team.

?

Is there any additional feedback you would like to add? Include your name and contact information here if you would like personal follow-up on any of your responses.

9 responses

No

I think continuing with neighborhood meetings/ gatherings. I feel this will be of great help to all churches involved.

I really enjoyed this option. It was nice to meet in a more intimate group. It felt less business-y and more like a collective opportunity to share.

Beautiful morning. Encouragement and joy felt by all.

Glad we are willing to try something new!

Perhaps needs to be a little longer

All in all, I thought it was a good meeting for a first time trying it out.

Enjoyed this format/ good for once a year

Add a time for "speak-out" (Thanks to Tom P. for doing that)

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THE PRESBYTERY OF WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA
COMMISSION ON MINISTRY
KEITH GROGG, CHAIR
October 27, 2026

FIRST SECTION

1. RECOMMEND to Presbytery a first reading of a new Presbytery Policy on Harassment.
(See COM Attachment 1)

2. RECOMMEND TO PRESBYTERY FOR COMMISSIONING BY THE PRESBYTERY AS COMMISSIONED PASTOR:

A. Don W. Humphrey

From: Elder, Sweetwater Presbyterian Church, Hickory
As: Commissioned Pastor, Brittain Presbyterian Church, Rutherfordton.
(The Commissioning is to include permission to celebrate the Sacraments, moderate the Session, and officiate at weddings.)
Effective: October 27, 2026
(See COM Attachment 2 for Biography and Statement of Faith)

3. RECOMMEND TO PRESBYTERY MINIMUM TERMS OF CALL FOR 2027: The Committee on Ministry recommends to Presbytery that:

1. In 2027, the PWNC minimum effective salary be increased by 4.6 percent to $42,176, representing 56.7 percent of the 2027 median.

2. In 2027, Presbytery recommends that its congregations consider at least a 4.6 percent increase in effective salary for all ministers.
(See COM Attachment 3)

SECOND SECTION

The Book of Order provides (G-3.0307) that the Commission on Ministry may be given authority by the Presbytery to find in order calls issued by churches, to approve and present calls for service of ministers, to approve the examination of ministers transferring from other Presbyteries, required by G-3.0306, to dissolve the pastoral relationship in cases where the Congregation and pastor concur, to dismiss ministers to other Presbyteries, and to approve administrative commissions to ordain/install with the provision that such actions be reported at the next stated meeting of the Presbytery. This permission was granted to our Commission on Ministry; therefore, the following actions are hereby reported and are to be admitted to the record.

1. APPROVED FOR TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP:

A. Jill Isola

To: Presbytery of Northern New England
Effective: Sept. 12, 2026

B. Deneise Deter Liss

To: Presbytery of Charlotte
Effective: Oct. 6, 2026

C. Joe Welker

From: Presbytery of Northern New England

As: Active
Effective: 11/8/26
(See COM Attachment 4 for Bio and Statement of Faith)

D. Paul Sink
From: Presbytery of Salem
As: Active
Effective: 9/15/26
(See COM Attachment 5 for Bio and Statement of Faith)

2. APPROVED COMMISSIONED PASTOR AGREEMENTS:

A. Don W. Humphrey and Brittain Presbyterian Church, Rutherfordton.
From: Date of Commissioning to Dec. 31, 2026, and Jan. 1, 2027 to Dec. 31, 2027.

3. APPROVED AS MODERATOR:

A. Rev. John Gerstenmier (Charlotte Presbytery) and Arbor Dale PC, Banner Elk
Effective: During October 2026

B. Bill Lowe and New Hope PC Gastonia
Effective: Sept. 21, 2026

4. APPROVED CHANGE OF MEMBERSHIP STATUS

A. Leah Epps from Active to At Large
Effective: Aug. 31, 2026

B. Field Russell from Active to Retired
Effective: Aug. 4, 2026

C. Tamara Puffer from At Large to Retired
Effective: Oct. 5, 2026

D. Edyth Pruitt from At Large to Retired
Effective:

E. Bill Buchanan from Active to At Large
Effective Sept. 1, 2026

5. APPROVED PASTORAL RELATIONSHIP AND TERMS OF CALL

A. Paul Sink and Marshall Presbyterian Church

Effective	$58,500
Base	$45,000
Manse equivalent	$13,500
Social Security equivalent	$4,475.25
Professional expenses	$3,625
Professional development	$1,275
Total	$67,875.25

B. Joe Welker and Sylva First Presbyterian Church, Sylva

Effective salary	$74,200
Base	$54,200
Manse equivalent	$20,000
Social Security equivalent	$5,676.30
Professional development	$3,000
Total	$82,876.30

6. APPROVED CHANGE IN TERMS OF CALL:

A. Chad Smith and House of Mercy, Asheville (Salary reduction of $21,000.)

7. APPROVE TEMPORARY PASTORAL RELATIONSHIP – STATED PASTOR

A. William Robinson and Dorland Memorial Presbyterian Church, Hot Springs.
Effective: July 1, 2026, to Dec. 31, 2026.
Salary: $300/week (part-time)
Vacation: Two weeks

8. APPROVED TO LABOR OUTSIDE THE BOUNDS OF PWNC:

A. Whit Malone as Parish Pastor, St. Simons PC, Savannah Presbytery.
Effective: July 13, 2026

9. APPROVED TO LABOR WITHIN THE BOUNDS OF PWNC:

A. Rev. John Gerstenmier (Charlotte Presbytery) as moderator of Session, Arbor Dale PC, Banner Elk
Effective: During October 2026

10. APPROVED INSTALLATION COMMISSION FOR:

A. Rev. Jessica Rigel at Warren Wilson Presbyterian Church, Swannanoa Sept. 23, 2026:

Rev. Dr. Byron Wade, MWS and General Presbyter PWNC
Rev. Dr. Wanda Neely, MWS and Moderator PWNC
Rev. Dr. Keith Grogg, MWS Montreat Presbyterian Church
Rev. Megan McMillan, MWS Mills River Presbyterian Church
Rev. Dr. Shannon Spencer, MWS (UCC), Chaplain at Warren Wilson College
Rev. Dr. George Thompson, MWS Presbytery Associate PWNC
Jill Meadows, Elder FPC Asheville
Rodney Lytle, Elder Warren Wilson Presbyterian Church
Rev. David Black, MWS FPC Chicago, Presbytery of Chicago

B. Rev. Joseph Welker at FPC Sylva, Nov. 8, 2026:

Rev. Dr. Bryon Wade, MWS and General Presbyter PWNC
Rev. Dr. Wanda Neely, MWS and Moderator PWNC
Rev. Dr. Joseph Welker Jr., MWS PWNC
James Hogan, Elder FPC Sylva
Rev. Kelley Connelly, MWS FPC Highlands
Tom Phillips, Presbytery Associate PWNC
Karen McDougal, Elder FPC Newton
Ron Tingle, Elder FPC Waynesville

11. APPROVED DISSOLUTION OF PASTORAL RELATIONSHIP:

A. Greenway Presbyterian Church, Lenoir, and Leah Epps.
Effective: August 31, 2026

12. AFFIRMED RECEIPT OF COVENANT OF CLOSURE:

A. Greenway Presbyterian Church, Lenoir, and Leah Epps.
Effective: Aug. 9, 2026

13. APPROVED TO TAKE ORDINATION EXAMS:

A. Rev. Daniel Dean Coffey, International Council of Community Churches.

14. APPROVED MISSION STUDY:

A. First Presbyterian Church, Morganton

15. APPROVED MDP FORM:

A. Arbor Dale Presbyterian Church, Banner Elk

16. APPROVED PROCEDURE:

A. For creating a new Associate Pastor position.
(See COM Attachment 6)

17. APPROVED MEMBERSHIP LIST:

A. Ministers of Word and Sacrament within PWNC
(See COM Attachment 7)

WESTERN NC PRESBYTERY POLICY ON HARASSMENT
Policy on Harassment Task Force of COM
Task Force: Laurey Harrell; Jody Welker: Emily Wilmarth
Staff: Ann Philbrick
Ready for Approval on September 1, 2026

I. OUR FAITH BACKGROUND

This policy is grounded in scripture and our theological heritage.

A. Biblical Foundation

Micah 6:8: Requires us to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God.

Matthew 22, Mark 12, Luke 10: The greatest commandments: love God and love your neighbor as yourself.

2 Corinthians 5:8: God reconciled us through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.

Galatians 3:26-28: We are all children of God through faith; all are one in Christ.

Ephesians 2:**14-16:** Christ is our peace, breaking down the dividing walls of hostility to create one new humanity.

B. Confessions of Faith

The Confession of 1967 affirms "God's reconciling love breaks down every form of discrimination based on racial or ethnic differences."

The Belhar Confession affirms that God's life-giving Word and Spirit conquer the powers of sin, irreconciliation, and hatred, enabling the church to live in new obedience.

II. OUR COMMITMENT TO ANTI-HARASSMENT IN THE CHURCH

The Presbytery of Western North Carolina is committed to maintaining an environment free from harassment or discrimination against any individual regardless of race, sex, age, mental or physical health status, national origin or ancestry, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or genetic information.

The Presbytery of Western North Carolina expects its employees, Ministers of Word and Sacrament, Certified Christian Educators, Commissioned Ruling Elders, Inquirers and Candidates under care of the presbytery to conduct themselves in a Christ-like manner that supports and maintains a workplace free

of harassment and discrimination for our employees, members, and those with whom we minister. -

III. DEFINITION AND EXAMPLES OF HARASSMENT

1. Harassment is unwelcome conduct that is based on race, ethnicity, religion, sex (including sexual orientation, gender identity, or pregnancy), national origin, age, disability, or genetic information (including family medical history). Harassment becomes unlawful where 1) enduring the offensive conduct becomes a condition of continued employment, or 2) the conduct is severe or pervasive enough to create an environment that would be considered intimidating, hostile, or abusive. Anti-discrimination laws also prohibit harassment against individuals in retaliation for filing a discrimination charge, testifying, or participating in any way in an investigation, proceeding, or lawsuit under these laws, or opposing employment practices that they reasonably believe discriminate against individuals.

2. Harassment may include, but is not limited to, offensive jokes, slurs, epithets or name-calling, physical assaults or threats, intimidation, ridicule or mockery, insults or put-downs, offensive objects or pictures, and interference with performance.

3. Harassment can occur in a variety of circumstances, including, but not limited to, the following:

*The harasser can be the victim's supervisor, a supervisor in another area, an agent of the employer, a co-worker, or a non-employee.

*The victim does not have to be the person harassed, but can be anyone affected by the offensive conduct.

*Harassment may occur with or without economic harm

4. Per the PWNC's current Sexual Misconduct Policy, sexual harassment is defined by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when submission to or rejection of this conduct explicitly or implicitly affects an individual's employment, unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

IV. PREVENTION

A. Required Training

Presbytery employees, Ministers of Word and Sacrament, Certified Christian Educators, Commissioned Ruling Elders, Inquirers, and Candidates under care of the presbytery are required by the Book of Order (G-2) to receive boundary training authorized by the presbytery once every 36 months. The boundary training shall include the topics of

sexual misconduct, child sexual abuse prevention, anti-harassment and anti-discrimination.

B. Required Reading, Acknowledgement and Adherence
Presbytery employees, Ministers of the Word and Sacrament, Certified Christian Educators, Commissioned Ruling Elders, Inquirers and Candidates under care of the presbytery will be required to sign an acknowledgement of having read, understood and will adhere to this Harassment Policy.

V. PROCEDURE AND COMPLAINT

A. **Subject to Disciplinary Action**
An employee may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. Similarly, a Minister of Word and Sacrament, inquirer, candidate, certified Christian Educator, Commissioned Ruling Elder or member of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) who engages in this type of behavior may be subject to disciplinary action as is detailed in the Rules of Discipline section of the Book of Order. The Presbytery of Western North Carolina also reserves the right to take other disciplinary or remedial actions as imposed by the Personnel Committee, Commission on Ministry (COM), the Commission on Preparation for Ministry, or the Presbytery itself. The harassment of an employee or other person participating in any ministry of the Presbytery of Western North Carolina based on race, color or national or other protected classes as named above is also prohibited.

B. **Complaint Procedure**: Any presbytery professional or presbytery volunteer who believes an incident of harassment has occurred shall make a complaint in writing to the Stated Clerk in a timely manner. If the complaint is in regards to the Stated Clerk, it should then be in writing to the General Presbyter.

C. **Retaliation:** Anyone filing a harassment complaint or assisting in the investigation of a complaint shall not be adversely affected in terms and conditions of employment nor discriminated against in any manner because of the complaint.

D. **False and malicious complaints** of harassment (as opposed to complaints that, even if erroneous, are made in good faith) may be subjected to appropriate disciplinary action.

VI. DISCIPLINARY ACTION

When the activities or conduct of any member, staff, or other church leader is considered to be contrary to the policies and expectations of the Presbytery of Western North Carolina or is considered to be disruptive to the operations of the Presbytery of

Western North Carolina, its programs, or ministries, the procedure for potential corrective action outlined above and/or in the Rules of Discipline shall be followed.

VII. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I acknowledge that I have read the above PWNC's Anti-Harassment Policy and will present any questions I have to the General Presbyter or Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Western North Carolina. I understand that I am responsible for adhering to the Policy on Harassment.

_____

Printed Name

_____

Signature and Date

To be submitted to the Stated Clerk of the Western North Carolina Presbytery

Journey of Faith by Don W. Humphrey 7/17/2026

I accepted Jesus Christ in 1974 at the age of 16 in our home church where many of my relatives attended at one time or another. I remember in about 1975 or so I felt something going on inside of me after a church service. I just had a knowing that God wanted me to work for him in some Ministry.

I went to Community college in 1977 for Automotive which helped me become more qualified for better paying jobs then and in the future. I have always been involved in some level of Mechanical repair all of my life.

There was always that reminder in 1975 about God wanting me to be in some ministry for Him. In 1981 went to Bible School in Oklahoma for 2 years. I received some great teaching with my second year focusing on being a Pastor. I was an assistant to a Pastor doing whatever needed to be done as well as Preaching.

I got married moved to North Carolina in 1986. After 12 years the marriage ended and I was on my own. I went from 1998 to 2022 just working my jobs. From 2006 to 2026 I have been at the same company. I always believed that some day I was going to fulfill the calling on my life. At one point I was wondering if I had blown my chance but the push down in my Spirit said “Just keep the faith it will happen!

I thought at one time that after 40 years too much time had passed but looking at it from another angle, it was not wasted time but maybe it was just God’s timing. It also gave me more time to gain more life experience and I see that it would help me be a better Pastor. I am just grateful for what God has done in my life. I have always loved to teach no matter what it was. I taught Automotive classes in a Drug Rehab center for period after college. I am a Technical Trainer/Teacher for the company I work for.

I remarried in 2022 to a Lady who has been a Presbyterian all her life. I wondered if this was going to work given my other denominational back ground but it has worked very well.

The Presbyterian church we attend mentioned a Church Leadership Class for 2 years something clicked in me. So I enrolled and graduated. During the course of the CLS I saw where many of my previous denominational Doctrines and beliefs seemed to align for the most part with the views of The Presbyterian church. The BOOK of CONFESSIONS helped me to see how much alike my former denomination and being Presbyterian was.

I was in a sense “born” into a Pentecostal denomination because it was our family church like other people are born into other denominations and like most young people we believe what are parents and others say our church believes. But as we get older and spend more time reading and studying, and in conversation with others in the Church, we begin to come to our own conclusions and form our belief system.

Statement of Faith by Don W. Humphrey

I trust in the triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. They are three distinct, co-equal persons eternally united in one holy essence. God the Creator entered human history in Jesus Christ, born of the Virgin Mary. Fully human and fully divine, Jesus lived a sinless life, died a sacrificial death on the cross to atone for our sins, and was raised from the dead. Through His resurrection, Christ fulfilled the Mosaic Law, bringing forth a New Covenant of grace. This shifts our focus from a burdensome legal code to a life of faith and personal relationship, which is truly in line with the loving nature of God. The Holy Spirit actively teaches us, binds us to Christ, and illumines the Word of God in our lives.

I believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the unique and authoritative witness to Jesus Christ. Referencing: ***Westminster Confession of Faith (6.001)*** Inspired by the Holy Spirit, the "Scripture is the inspired and authoritative Word of God, serving as the guide for Christian truth." I believe that through Scripture, God's grace is revealed to us. Salvation is entirely a free gift from God; we are justified by grace through faith alone, totally apart from our own works, church attendance, or merit.

I believe in the "Sovereignty of God" as mentioned in ***Heidelberg Catechism (4.026)*** God is the ultimate ruler having both authority and the ability to command the universe while still showcasing "Fatherly Goodness" Believers can trust that He will provide all things necessary for both body and soul also is there to lift us in times of adversity.

I understand "Polity" as outlined in PCUSA. Polity refers to the system of church governance and organization. It operates as a representative democracy. Authority is shared equally among elected leaders, both clergy and laypeople. The Book of Confessions contains the theological statements outlining the church's faith and beliefs. The Book of Order is the administrative guidelines that govern the church's daily life, ministries, worship, and discipline.

Sanctification is the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life. As Romans 12 commands, we are called to present our bodies as a living sacrifice, refusing to conform to the world, but being continuously transformed by the renewing of our minds. Because God has fully secured our salvation, we respond in gratitude by spending time in the Word of God, allowing the Holy Spirit to change the way we think and align our minds with God's way of doing things.

I believe God seals His grace in our lives through exactly two sacraments: Baptism and the Lord's Supper. I believe Baptism is the sign and seal of our incorporation into Christ's body. It is fundamentally an act of God's covenant fidelity, appropriately administered to infants as a sign of His prevenient grace, or to adults as a public profession of faith, using water via sprinkling, pouring, or immersion.

I believe the Lord's Supper is a holy meal, not a mere memorial of empty emblems. In Communion, Christ is truly and spiritually present by the power of the Holy Spirit. As we receive the bread and the cup, we are nourished by the body and blood of Jesus and renewed for service. Empowered by these sacraments, we are sent out into the world as the Church, united to proclaim the Gospel and advance God's mission of justice, love, and reconciliation.

COM ATTACHMENT 3

RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING TERMS OF CALL FOR 2027

The Commission on Ministry recommends to Presbytery that:

1. In 2027, the PWNC minimum effective salary be increased by 4.6% to 42,176.00, representing 56.7% of the 2027 median.

2. In 2027, Presbytery recommends that its congregations consider at least a 4.6% increase to effective salary for all ministers.

Rationale:

In 2021, COM adopted the following plan regarding annual recommendations to Presbytery about increases in effective salary for ministers.

(a) Beginning in July 2021 and continuing each following October thereafter, in order to provide adequate information for congregational budgeting for succeeding years, the COM will make recommendations to the Presbytery about minimum terms of call for the upcoming calendar year for decision and approval by the Presbytery. The recommendations will be based on a percentage of the church wide median effective salary, usually published in August (formerly May) of each year by the Board of Pensions.

(b) Beginning in July 2021 and continuing each following October, the COM will make recommendations to the Presbytery about increases in all other (non-minimum) terms of call for the upcoming calendar year for decision and approval by the Presbytery. The recommendations will be based on the percentage increase between the current year and the coming year of the church wide median effective salary, usually published in August by the Board of Pensions.

In August 2026, the BOP report of the changes for 2027 in the church wide median salary indicated the following.

	Median effective salaries		**% Change**
	for 2027	**for 2026**	**2027 vs. 2026**
Ministers	$74,400	$71,100	4.6%

The Commission on Ministry further recommends to Presbytery regarding health care coverage:

1. Regarding Health Care Coverage for Spouse/Dependents/ Family:
   - THAT for congregational pastoral leaders who were enrolled in Transitional Pastor's Participation in 2026, if family coverage is still needed, churches consider covering the entire cost of the **2027 Transitional Pastor's Participation** (pension/medical totals 52.25% of Effective Salary).

2. Regarding Alternative Health Care Coverage for Spouse/Dependents/Family:
   - THAT churches affirm that adequate medical coverage for pastors and their families should be considered a matter of justice, not optional, discretionary, or a negotiating point.

- THAT churches acknowledge that compensation packages must include necessary benefits for the family and sufficient cash compensation for a basic standard of living.
- THAT since pastoral family needs vary, flexibility in choosing health coverage is essential. These options could include
    - coverage through the Board of Pensions,
    - the health insurance marketplace,
    - or a spouse's employer.

  Pastors and congregations should collaboratively explore these options for cost effectiveness:
- THAT if dependent coverage is chosen through the Board of Pensions, in some cases, cost sharing could be appropriate.
- THAT if coverage is obtained outside the Board of Pensions, the congregation should consider adjusting effective salary in consideration of the pastor's additional costs so that the basic standard of living can be maintained.
- THAT if a congregation, in conversation with a pastor, cannot arrange for necessary family medical coverage, it must submit a statement to the Commission on Ministry (COM), including financial evidence demonstrating how providing coverage impairs the congregation's ministry and mission.

Information on Congregational Pastor's Package:

The BOP approved a 2027 medical dues increase to 19.75% for the Congregational Pastors Package, with minimum and maximum dues of $7,500 and $21,200, respectively. Dues for the package, including pension and death and disability benefits, will total 29.75% of effective salary. Medical dues for the Congregational Pastors Package are for member-only coverage. Coverage for family members, available in three tiers, is optional for members, and congregations may choose to pay all, some, or none of the cost.

In 2027, a new subsidy will help alleviate the cost of medical coverage for children, effective January 1, 2027. The subsidy will cover 50% of the national, community-rated medical coverage cost of children, and will reduce the flat rates for both the Child(ren) and Family coverage levels. This subsidy will automatically be applied within an Employer Agreement. There is no application or effective salary cap to receive this subsidy. The pricing will be $5,700 for Child(ren), $14,052 for Spouse, and $19,752 for Family.

For more information, visit the Board of Pensions website at www.pensions.org

My Christian faith is grounded in the triune God (11.1) who we know and love through God's son, Jesus Christ and who is continually revealed to us through the presence of the Holy Spirit.

I believe in God as Creator, Mother hen, gracious Father, and the loving One who desires a relationship with me. (11.3) God claims me and welcomes me just as I am, even while inspiring me to be more servant-like in my life. (9.17) I believe that God's radical hospitality makes room for all who trust in Jesus at the Table of grace.

I believe in the revelation of God in the person of Jesus Christ as the Word made flesh, God in our midst. God's love for me and all the world is witnessed in the saving death of Jesus on the cross and affirmed in the resurrection to new life that makes us an Easter people. In God's salvific action, I am reminded that good will always triumph over evil and that hope is never far from our grasp. (9.08-09) The life I live, in obedience to Christ, should be my gracious response to God's gift in Christ our Lord. (4.090)

God's Holy Spirit is the sustainer of my faith, waling alongside me when life and times are challenging or fulfilling. (4.053) Service and ministry tasks are accomplished with the help of the Holy Spirit giving me energy, intelligence, imagination and love for the labors therein. I know that we, as God's people, are bathed in the Spirit's comfort, peace, and care when we gather as the body of Christ for worship, fellowship, service, and sustenance. (10.3)

Holy Scripture is God's inspired and authoritative Word that guides and informs how I live my Christian life through stories of faith. (6.004) The Bible informs worship and study as people of faith seek to grow closer to God and each other. It is a living, breathing exploration of the woven, narrative fabric of our faith. All people are invited to explore the textures of the material in ways that are curious, studious, emotional, and even doubtful at times. (9.29) A faith that questions and prods is a faith that seeks depth. I believe that Scripture invites us to go deeper.

The universal Church family exists as an expression of the body and Spirit of Jesus Christ. (10.2) God is praised and petitioned through the worship and life of the local Church, where we live out or mutual faith. God meets us at the Table when we gather 'round so that we may remember the sacrifice of our Lord and be well nourished in that feast of simple fare. Likewise, God washes over us in the welcoming waters of Baptism as we witness the sign and seal of God's covenant on the lives of each other. (4.074) Within the family of faith, I believe in our collective ability, with Christ, to care for and deeply respect all of creation and all of God's children. (10.3)

Rev. Paul Sink ~ Faith Journey

COM ATTACHMENT 4

My faith was nurtured from a young age as I was raised in the church family of FPC Lexington, NC. I was active in and loved youth fellowship and mission trips, which became engrained in me during that period of my life. I know that the high values I still place on mission and fellowship within the life and ministry of the church come from these early years of faith development.

Scouting was the first time that I can remember God calling me into ministry, but I didn't fully realize it until just a few years ago while on sabbatical. It was then that I recalled serving as the chaplain for our scout troop as a teenager which found me leading devotions and worship on camping and backpacking trips regularly with a tiny red Gideons' Bible in my backpack.

My faith continued to grow during college through the active in campus ministry at St Andrews as well as being active in community service projects such as founding a new Habitat for Humanity chapter. Upon graduation and moving to Raleigh, I became active at White Memorial PC where I was a volunteer youth advisor. During that year and a half, the youth of WMPC could see something in me that I had not. They encouraged me to explore some sort of ministry calling, so I began to have discernment conversations with our pastor and other church leaders.

Attending a discernment weekend at Presbyterian School of Christian Education helped refine what I was sensing in God's nudging me toward ministry work. PSCE helped me learn and develop skills and a calling for Christian Education ministry which carried me to a summer internship at Camp Monroe. During that summer, I was asked to supply preach at Old Laurel Hill PC for a vacation Sunday of the pastor. I reluctantly agreed and he gave me a crash course on sermon preparation. I was scared to death that Sunday morning with my sermon written out on a legal pad, that is, until I stood up in the pulpit. All the anxiety went away and I knew God's spirit was with me. It was a powerful moment of discernment in my faith journey and further discovery of God's call on my life.

I attended Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary for my MDiv where I continued to grow in faith and continued to discern where God was calling me to serve. Upon graduation I was called back to NC to FPC Statesville as Associate Pastor for youth and missions. That was a very active ministry role that truly fit me well for just over 7 years.

God led me to Taylorsville PC next, where I have truly fallen in love with rural, small church ministry. The nature of smaller congregations is so special because they really function like family in many respects. Serving in a rural community also served to highlight for me certain segments of the population who were in need of particular love and support. Working with and actively serving our unhoused neighbors, domestic violence victims, and food insufficient families has been so fulfilling as I seek to live out the greatest commandments. This is also how I have grown to be a strong and visible ally for the LGBTQ+ community. That has been a central part of my community ministry for the last 19 years, so it very much informed my search when I discerned that my work was coming to a close in Taylorsville.

God is using that strong part of my ministry call to draw me to Marshall PC. God's continued movement in my life has prepared me well to serve the Marshall church and community. The nature of how the congregation exhibits God's radically welcoming love for the world is precisely where God has been calling me. Thanks be to God!

COM ATTACHMENT 5

Statement of Faith
Rev. Joe Welker

I am guided by the PC(USA)'s Book of Confessions in understanding the gospel of Jesus Christ, summarized most simply in the Apostles' Creed, which I affirm without reservation. (2.1–3)

My understanding of both the sovereignty of God and the Trinity is well-articulated by the Scots Confession opening: "We confess and acknowledge one God alone, to whom alone we must cleave, whom alone we must serve, whom only we must worship, and in whom alone we put our trust. Who is eternal, infinite, immeasurable, incomprehensible, omnipotent, invisible; one in substance and yet distinct in three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. By whom we confess and believe all things in heaven and earth, visible and invisible, to have been created, to be retained in their being, and to be ruled and guided by his inscrutable providence for such end as his eternal wisdom, goodness, and justice have appointed, and to the manifestation of his own glory." (3.01) Our knowledge of God's sovereignty helps us be patient in adversity, grateful in blessings, and confident in our future, knowing nothing can separate us from the love of God, "For all creatures are so completely in God's hand that without his will they can neither move nor be moved." (4.028)

Jesus Christ's ministry served as, among other things, the visible presence of our sovereign, Triune God, and his ministry is primarily God's reconciling to humanity as our savior. His actions in ministry set the pattern of our example as a priesthood of all believers, both in what he did and how he did it (9.31-33). Yet we are not the sower; only he is. In our mission fields, we are to prepare the soil for the Word. His ministry was perfected and completed in his sacrificial blood on the cross, demonstrating that his love is cruciform, self-giving, and so should ours. He teaches us how to let God reform us day by day more and more into obedient coherence to his will and love, while also gratefully rejoicing that we *aren't* Jesus; he has accomplished our salvation already. Our growth in holiness is simply the most joyful response to his work we can do.

The power of the Holy Spirit, whom the Nicene Creed calls the Lord and giver of life (1.3), is the power of the consistent, active, invisible presence demonstrating the ongoing action of God, indwelling in each believer's heart and animating our lives to be ordered toward God's goodness. The power of the Spirit sometimes compels us to do things that our flesh would rather not. The power of the Spirit is not reserved for loud, ecstatic worship, or experiential "holy highs," but is present in the small, hidden miracles in the humblest of settings. I believe we should regularly take inventory of where we saw the Holy Spirit at work, while also discerning the difference between the Spirit and potential idolatries of the mind.

We grow in our discernment through the Bible, the Holy Spirit-breathed Word of God. Among its many treasures, the Bible's role is to be our daily companion and light of our path. The Bible's authority is as a singularly reliable witness to the God who is beyond history but who acts in history (9.27). Through developing deeper curiosity in its contexts while holding onto faith in its ability to show us the way to salvation, discipleship, and all the things God has done, is doing, and will do, Christians can confidently dwell in the Word as our primary means of spiritual development, ultimately God's action that we receive.

I believe the Church universal is the collective visible body of Christ in the world, where all believers in every time and place bear witness to God, and we are all responsible for one another, marked wherever the Word is truly preached and the sacraments rightly administered (3.18). The particular church, whether it be a particular denomination or a particular congregation, is a group of members of the body that is equipped with special gifts for special callings which it may not even be fully aware of. Through communion with the whole body, we may, by grace, learn what God has uniquely called us to do. I am Presbyterian because I believe that this work is best done collectively, with input from all voices, that the councils of the Church represent the best check on our idolatries over the long course of time, and that we have a "middle way" and moderating impact that can serve as a connective tissue between many parts of Christ's universal body.

The Sacraments are the most visible and sure signs of God instituted by the most visible person of the Trinity, Jesus Christ, where the new covenant is represented, sealed, and applied to believers (7.092). In the waters of baptism, we are claimed by God in a mystical union with him and his body. The same is true of the table, where in the Lord's Supper we participate in his presence in a spiritual but real way, not as "naked and bare signs" (3.21). When we remember his words to "do this in remembrance of me," our "remembrance" is not simply memorialism, but to bring him back to the forefront of our hearts. Our Lord instituted these simple but sacred signs as assurances of his promise, and as a Minister of Word and Sacrament, it is a high responsibility and honor to steward these mysteries for others to participate in God's work in the world.

COM ATTACHMENT 5

Brief Biography
Rev. Joe Welker

I am grateful to have grown up in the Presbytery of Western North Carolina at FPC Newton as a preacher's kid. The memories of growing up in that environment were not only formative, but ultimately re-formative later in life. After moving to the Triangle and going to UNC Chapel Hill, I left Christianity. I moved to Los Angeles to pursue the entertainment industry, but moreover, to pursue myself.

While ultimately it is God who never let go of me, calling me back to Christ in my late twenties, one of the means of his grace was the church I grew up in, even long after I left it. During the decade that I had spent away from Christianity, one of the many nagging, annoying facts was that I had not grown up in an abusive church environment like so many I know who lost their faith. Instead, I had grown up in a wonderful church, where people of all political stripes could love God, love each other, and serve neighbors both near and far with joyful and grateful hearts. So as much as I didn't want to believe in God for a long time, I had to reconcile the cognitive dissonance that this "backward religion" had produced a more nurturing, realistic, and love-filled community life than the many others I had attempted to ingratiate myself into as a secular, self-styled spiritual seeker. This included comedian subcultures, my day jobs, and other spiritual communities. I started to slowly reconsider ways I could take from Christianity, at least metaphorical lessons. After all, my church and my parents had been such loving people, so maybe I could at least learn from them without joining a church.

I spent a year touring 52 different spiritual communities (one a week) in Los Angeles and picked and chose what worked for me, while also podcasting, storytelling, and doing comedy as I had been, trying to learn from a lot of different places to see what really resonated. Part of that seeking eventually led me to thinking that I could find God in psychedelic drug experiences that were so common for people in my age and demographic. Eventually, I found myself applying to Harvard Divinity School thinking I would be a Unitarian Universalist who could facilitate spiritual drug experiences. But another inconvenient thing happened after I was accepted but before I arrived: during one drug experience, I remembered the phrase "child of God," and I realized yet another inconvenience: God, whatever I thought of him, was calling me to be a Christian again.

This put a shelf life on my time as a Unitarian Universalist. I eventually found Fourth Presbyterian in South Boston, a joyful community that taught me how to worship and pray like a disciple again, and rediscovered that being Presbyterian was just in my DNA. And many of the Reformed theological threads that I had heard growing up—Calvin, Barth, Niebuhr—had gradually been making more and more sense, especially as I rediscovered them. I wasn't just being pushed away from yet-more-grass-that-wasn't-greener, but was feeling drawn back to the PC(USA), a place I know isn't perfect, nor even in its own self-estimation the only true Church, but the best expression of the visible Church that made sense for my personal discipleship and a place where I could earnestly lead.

The more seriously I took discipleship, and as I learned from more Christians beyond just our PC(USA) lineage, particularly from Thomas Merton, the more disenchanted and disturbed I came to be at the whole combination of psychedelics and Christianity. Combined with this theological discernment was my time as an intern for a non-profit where mainline pastors were evangelizing and practicing the use of these drugs. I saw disturbing behavior that led me to become a whistleblower on a research study at Johns Hopkins University, which found serious ethical violations, and on the non-profit; eventually, the Episcopal Church deposed the priest who was my internship supervisor.

As this was all unfolding, a time that had a lot of intense pressure and darkness, I found more and more light in the true, simple gospel of Jesus Christ. My faith increased not by my merit but by God continuing to reveal himself the more I kept trusting him in my walk. I met the woman who would be my wife and answered a call to a beautiful, peaceful country church in rural Vermont, East Craftsbury Presbyterian Church, where I have served for three years at 3/4 time but overpaid in graces.

During my first few years as a solo pastor, I've come to love congregational ministry, from the weekly engagement with the text for preaching to pastoral visits and everything in between. My wife and I got married in this church last June, and are expecting a little girl in the first week of January. Our shared discernment has led us to accept FPC Sylva's call to serve in Western North Carolina, where I am grateful to come back once again, while also humbled in knowing that times have changed, that Sylva isn't Newton, and I'm not who I was when I grew up. But I pray I can help foster the same kind of community through which God first nurtured me and never let me go, stewarding God's blessings as I continue to grow as a disciple in following Jesus Christ.

REPORT TO COM
MEMBERSHIP LIST
Ann M. Philbrick, Stated Clerk
October, 2026

1) Categories of Membership

A. G-2.0503. There are three categories:

i) Engaged in a Validated Ministry

This includes pastors serving in congregations and in ministries outside of congregations. Any position in a congregation (PCUSA or Formula of Agreement congregation) or PCUSA governing body is automatically considered validated. Anything outside of that must be validated. Reviewed annually.

ii) Member-at-Large

This is for ministers who once were in some kind of validated ministry, but for various reasons cannot do so. Reviewed annually.

iii) Retired

B. G-3.0306. Permission to labor within the bounds:

Granted to PCUSA minister members of another presbytery serving one of our congregations.

C. G-2.0506. Temporary Membership

Granted to non-PCUSA ministers working in one of our congregations.

2) Current Membership List of the Presbytery of Western North Carolina:

MOTION NEEDED: To approve the list of minister members (names and categories of membership) as presented.

Key to list:

Active – c = Serving in a congregation
Active – v = Serving a validated ministry
MaL = Member at Large
Retired
Temp = Temporary Member

COM ATTACHMENT 6

Abel, Robert M.	Retired
Achtemeier, Katherine	Retired
Achtemeier, Mark	MaL
Aiken, Jefferson K.	Retired
Akin, Karen	Retired
Alexander, Merri	Retired
Alexander, Terry	Retired
Amos, Kevyn	Temp
Apple, Ann	MaL
Aschmann, Stephen	Retired
Aydelotte, James	Retired
Bacon, Patricia	Active -c
Baker, Tony	Retired
Banes, Edna	Retired
Baroody, Alan	Retired
Beavers, Jerry	Retired
Bennett, Joseph D.	Active - c
Bledsoe, Clara Lynn	Retired
Boggs, Randall	Retired
Bonnema, David	Active - c
Bowman, Lee W.	Retired
Boyce, Richard N.	Retired
Boyer, Grace	MaL
Bradley, David	Active - v
Brakemeyer, Ryan	Active - c
Braswell, Troy	MaL
Brauer, Ronald O.	Retired
Brown, Sandra R.	Retired
Brown, Thomas A	Active - v
Buchanan, William	MaL
Burnham, Monty B.	Retired
Button, Connie	Retired
Byrd, Joey T.	Retired
Cameron, David	Retired
Cameron, Kathryn Johnson	Retired
Campbell, John T.	Retired
Campbell, Kathy D.	Active - c
Cantrell, Amy	Active - v
Carson, H. Pride	Retired
Christenbury, Dwight	Active - c
Christian, William	Retired
Cline, Terry	Temp
Coburn, Sarah	MaL
Cockerham, James M.	Retired
Coleman, Evelyn	Active
Coleman, Hunter	Retired
Commerford, Daniel	Active - c
Connelly, Kelley	Active - c
Cook, James C.	Retired
Cook, Thomas C.	Retired
Covin, Riley	Retired
Dale, James (Jamie)	Retired
Davis, Dent C.	Retired
Davis, Heather Wood	Active c
Davis, Holly K.	Retired
Denne, Susan	Retired
DeWater, Janet	Retired
Donnell, Edward W.	Retired
Dozier, Ellen	Retired
Eason, Stephen	Retired
Edmunds, Robert	Retired
Epps, Leah	MaL
Evans, Rob	Retired
Ewing, Jim	Active - c
Florence, David Carter	Active - c
Floyd, Richard	Active - c
Forsyth, Paul Edward	Retired
Fouse, Clay	Active - v
Frederick, Kevin E.	Retired
Freeman, Keith B.	Active - c
Freeman, Schaap	Active - c
Frye, John L.	Retired
Furr-Vancini, Laurie	MaL
Fussell, R. Curtis	Retired
Fussell, Tempe	Retired
Gaines, A Willis	Retired
Galbreath, Paul Harold	Retired
Galloway, Lewis	Retired
Gamble, Robert	Active - v
Garnett, David	Retired
Garrison, William	MaL
Garrity, Lisle Gwyn	Active - v
Germer, David	Active - c

COM ATTACHMENT 6

Gonzalez-Block, Samantha	Active - v
Grana, Gregory M.	Retired
Grogg, Keith H.	Active - c
Guess, Decherd	Retired
Gurney, Rebecca	Active - c
Hall, Michal H.	Retired
Hanna, Terry L.	Retired
Hardy, Patrick	Retired
Hardy, Randall	Retired
Harkey, M. Luther	Retired
Harrell, Laurey	Retired
Hazelrigg, Marti	Active - v
Hester, Julie	Active
Hobson, J. Samuel	Retired
Honeycutt, Garland	Temp
Horne, Matthew	Retired
Hornsby, James S.	Retired
Hosick, David	Retired
Hovis, Carol	Active
Hutchins, George B.	Retired
Hysom, Dennis	Active - v
Jacaruso, Lindsay	MaL
~~Jafvert, Donald~~	~~Retired~~
Jarrett, Esta M.	Active - c
Jividen, Cecil M.	Retired
Johnson, Caitlin	Active - c
Johnson, G. Wallace	Retired
Johnson, Katherine	Active - c
Johnson, Patrick	Active - c
Jones, Franklin S.	MaL
Jones, Lucas	MaL
Jones, Rebecca S.	MaL
Jones, Sarah Diane	Active - c
Jordan, Shannon	Active - c
Justice, Kimberly	MaL
Kang, Dong Uk	Retired
Keel, Lynn	Active - v
Kennedy, David	Retired
Kennerly, Ira K.	Retired
~~Kercher, R. Paul~~	~~Retired~~
Kirk, William L.	Retired
Krouskop, Janice	Retired

Kruse, Lee	MaL
Lamm, Michael	Retired
LaMotte, John	Retired
Laughlin, John C.	Retired
Lauterer, Margaret P.	Retired
Layman, James E	Retired
Lewis, Thomas G.	Retired
Lindeman, J. William	Retired
Lindsay, John	Retired
Linton, Eugene B.	Retired
~~Liss, Denelse Deter~~	~~MaL~~
Lloyd, Jamie	Retired
Lloyd, Neal	Retired
Long, Laura	Retired
Lowe, Billy T.	Retired
Lowrey, Bill	Retired
Lusak, Alexandra	Retired
Madigan, Kathleen	Retired
Malone, Whittington	Retired
Mangione, Drew	Active - c
Marsh, Marjorie	Retired
Martin, Joan C.	Retired
Martin, W. Tyler	Retired
Matthews, Matt	Active - c
Matthews, Rachel	Active - c
McCall, John S.	Retired
McClinton, Sandra	MaL
McCracken, Mike	Active - c
McCully, Robert A.	Retired
McKee, David	Retired
McKee, Michael T.	Active - c
McMillan, Megan	Active - c
McNeill, Alex	MaL
Meeks, Ken	Retired
Michie-McNair, C. Lynn	MaL
Miller, Beth Ann	Retired
Montgomery, Robert L.	Retired
Montgomery, Sarah Grace	Active - c
Morgan, Anne C.	Retired
Moseley, Jim	Retired
Morrison, Keith	Retired
Mulford, David E.	Retired

COM ATTACHMENT 6

Murchison, Cameron	Retired
Nash, David	Retired
Neely, Wanda	Retired
Neely, William "Bill"	Retired
Nelson, Thom	Retired
Newman, Elizabeth D.	Active - c
Nygren, Richard	Retired
Oedy, Daniel J.	Active - c
Park, O'Hyun	Retired
Parkey, Andy	labor w/in
Peery, Albert G.	Retired
Peery, Margaret B.	Retired
Peggs, Bonnie	Temp
Perry, Lance	Active - c
Petersen, Martha Jane	Retired
Philbrick, Ann	Retired
Phillips, J. Thomas	Retired
Poling, James N.	Retired
Poulos, Michael J.	Active - c
Price, Donald G.	Retired
Proctor, Caroline	MaL
Proctor, E. Allen	Retired
Pruitt, Edyth P.	Retired
Puffer, Tamara	Retired
Purtill, Allan	Active - c
Rabuck, Jay K.	Retired
Ragan, Daria L.	Active - c
Rash, Earl M.	Retired
Ray, Betsy	Active - c
Reid, Patricia	Retired
Ricks, G. Harriss	Retired
Rigel, Jess	Active - c
Robinson, Mary Katherine	Active - c
Robinson, William 'Billy"	Active - c
Roquemore, David	Retired
Runholt, Steven	Retired
Russell, T. Feild	Retired
Scofield, Donald G.	Active - c
Scoggins, Henry D.	Retired
Seiler, Dana Vaughn	Active - c
Sell, Caroline	MaL
Sell, Nate	Active - v
Shepard, Michael	Retired
Shepherd, Rachel	MaL
Shoop, Marcia Mount	Active - c
Sigmon, Mary Elizabeth	Active - c
Simpson, Brad	Retired
Sink, Paul	Active - c
Skinner, W. Wirt	Retired
Smith, Allen P.	Active - c
Smith, Chad	Active - c
Smith, David B.	Active - v
Smith, Lance	Temp
Smith, Paul S.	Active - c
Stanley, Becky B.	Retired
Stanley, J. Mark	Retired
Stansell, Margaret B.	Retired
Steele, Carol	Active - v
Stitt, Daniel G.	Retired
Stow, Betsy	Active - c
Strickler, Cynthia R. P.	Retired
Sumey, Craig	Active - v
Sutton, Dana	MaL
Sweetser, William B.	Retired
Taylor, Christopher V.	Retired
Thompson, Beverly	Retired
Thompson, George B.	Retired
Thompson, Keith J.	Active - c
Thorpe, Denise	MaL
Tippens, Ron	Retired
Tipton, Daniel	MaL
Tompkins, Kathleen V.	Retired
Torrence, Margaret L.	MaL
Turnage, Lynn	Retired
Tutterow, Christina	MaL
Tuttle, Robert	Retired
Upchurch, Melissa A	Retired
Upchurch, William	Active - c
Van Brocklin, Gary	Retired
Vanacore, Lauren S.	MaL
Verbrugge, Sussan	MaL
Wade, Byron	Active - c
Ward, Rockwell	Retired

Warner, Samuel P.	Active - c
Warren, Rob	Active - c
Webber, Lynn E.	Active - v
Weger, Judith H.	Retired
Wehrung, Allison	Active - v
Welker, Jody	Retired
Welker, Joe	Active - c
Wells, Kimberleigh	Active - c
White, Barbara	Retired
Whiteside, William	Temp
Williamson, Parker T.	Retired
Wilmarth, Emily L.	Active - c
Wilson, V. Otis	Retired
Wood, Graham	Retired
Young, Rebecca	Retired

NOMINATING/REPRESENTATION TEAM
Rev. Dwight Christenbury, Chair
October 27, 2026

The Nominating/Representation Team presents the following nominations to fill vacancies within the Class of 2029 and other open positions. The next team meeting will take place on November 21, 2026.

We offer our heartfelt gratitude and praise to God for your dedicated service.

CA **Permanent Judicial Commission**

Rev. Dr. Mark Achtemeier	Class of 2032	
Rev. James Aydelotte	Class of 2032	

CA **Finance Team**

Rev. Dr. Jefferson K. Aiken, Jr.	Class of 2028	
Mr. Tom Gibson	Class of 2029	
Mr. John Heilman	Class of 2029	

CA **Property Team**

Mr. Steve Brittain	Class of 2029	
Ms. Harriet Kirkland	Class of 2029	

CA **Coordinating Ministry Team**

Rev. Jim Ewing	Class of 2027	

CA **Commission on Ministry**

Dr. Gary Oakley	Class of 2029	
Rev. Jody Welker	Class of 2029	
Rev. Dr. Keith Grogg	Class of 2028	

CA **Examinations Sub-Team**

Rev. James Aydelotte	Class of 2028	
Rev. Sarah Dianne Jones	Class of 2028	Co-Chair for 2027
Rev. Kathleen Madigan	Class of 2029	
Rev. Dr. Margaret Torrence	Class of 2027	Co-Chair for 2027

CA **Preparation for Ministry Team**

Mrs. Vickie Burgess	Class of 2029	
Rev. Kelley Connelly	Class of 2029	Chair for 2027
Mr. Roger Wise	Class of 2028	
Rev. Jess Rigel	Class of 2029	

CA **Validated Ministry Sub-Team**
Rev. Clay Fouse — Class of 2029

CA **Commissioned Pastors Sub-Team**
Rev. Merriam Alexander — Class of 2029

CA **Strengthening Congregations Ministry**
Rev. Carol Steele — Class of 2027
Rev. Dr. Laurey Harrell — Class of 2028

CA **Engaging in Mission Ministry**
Ms. Sue Johnson — Class of 2029

(Additional nominations that have been accepted since the report deadline will be approved by the Coordinating Ministry Team and reported to Presbytery in January 2027.)

For Information

The Leadership Teams of Strengthening Congregations, Equipping Disciples, and Engaging in Mission report the following as information:

Hunger Team
Paulette Heck — Class of 2029

Malawi Leadership Team
Kevin Fredrick — Class of 2027 — Chair

Faith Formation
Ms. Barbara Arnold — Class of 2029
Mrs. Leslie Peterson — Class of 2027
Rev. Ed Forsyth — Chair

The Nominating/Representation Team is continuing to work to fill the following vacancies for the Class of 2029 and other open positions:

TEAM	VACANCY
Permanent Judicial Commission	Ruling Elder (1)
Personnel Team	Teaching Elder (1)
Finance Team	Teaching Elder (1)
Coordinating Ministry Team	Ruling Elders (3)
Commission on Ministry	Teaching Elder (2), Ruling Elders (2)
Commissioned Pastors Sub-Team	Teaching Elder (1), Ruling Elders (2)
Strengthening Congregations Ministry	Ruling Elder (1)

The Nominating/Representation Team is responsible for filling the slate for each team throughout the year and for creating the new Class of 2029, to begin serving a three-year term in January 2027. To this end, we ask you to discern your wishes regarding a Presbytery team on which you would like to serve, or suggest someone for a Presbytery team.

Please be mindful of the Presbytery by-laws, which state: “Team members shall serve a term of three (3) years, divided into equal classes. No team member shall serve more than two (2) consecutive terms. Ordinarily, an individual may serve on only one Presbytery team at a time.”

Malawi Mission Leadership Team Newsletter

October 2026

There are good things happening in Nkhoma, Malawi. Join us on the 2027 Mission Trip.



Two Ebenezer girls, determined to go to high school, will have that opportunity. In the July Newsletter you read about the two village girls at Ebenezer, who walked two hours every day barefooted to get to school and then two hours home. Dana Frady interviewed one of them during our mission trip this spring. The girl was emphatic and determined that she was going to pass the entrance test to go to high school and that she was going to high school. Both girls had been walking barefoot and were too poor to afford uniforms. When we learned about this, we were able to get them shoes and uniforms (see picture to the right). This school year, which began September 14th, the Principal will have a fund to help students with this kind of need. The girl determined to pass did pass and so did all the seven grade students at Ebenezer. God is at work for God's children.



The Nkhoma Synod 18 church vacancies have been filled. The Nkhoma Synod had approximately 42 vacant churches which have more than one or two thousand members with responsibly for a few up to a dozen prayer houses, each with several hundred members. This year the seminary graduated 18 pastor, about double the number in most classes. This will help to fill some of the vacant churches.

On August 30th the Nkhoma Synod held an induction ceremony for the graduates prior to the new pastors and their wives departing to their churches. PWNC helped the Synod get all those pastors to their new churches often in rural areas with poor roads on a large bus.

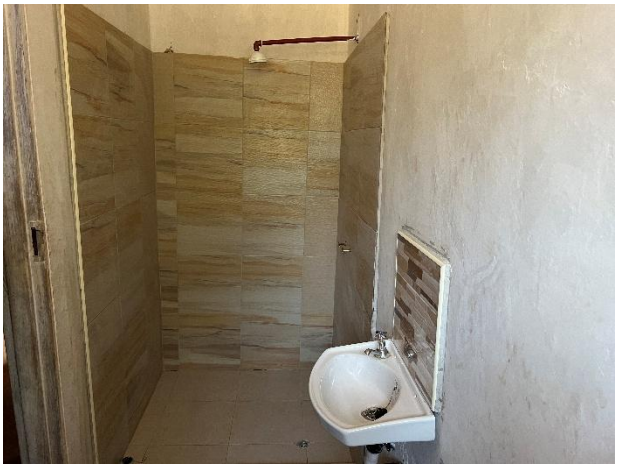




Several weeks ago, PWNC sent $20,000 from the Building Hope Funds for Malingunde Health Center's houses. Two Nurses' houses were falling in because of termites. These two houses are being repaired and rebuilt so that these key medical people and their families will have adequate houses. These are two critical medical staff, who along with the chief medical officer, serve an area of about 100,000 people. Termite protection work is also happening to protect Malingunde's health buildings and other houses.

(Picture to the left: The ceiling is falling in on this staff house because of the termites in the wooden rafters have eaten away at the wooden beams causing them to crumble and fall apart.)

PWNC with support from a donor helped the Synod finish a women's dorm this year. This will provide a safe place for women students, who will have electricity, bathroom facilities, and safe housing. When school is out, dorm/hostel can also serve a housing for continuing education for pastors and others and provide limited income for the Synod.





Two of the women who were interviewed during our spring trip were able to send several videos inside one of the ensuites and sent the message via WhatsApp "The was very good and beautiful as you can see it is very very beautiful. Thank you very much for your help. The good Lord bless you abundantly and I love the work."



Many good things are happening, more than included in this report. However, Malawi is having Tough Economic Times: Malawi and our partners in Synod, the Nkhoma Hospital, Ebenezer School, the Seminary, etc., are facing hard economic times.

- **Over the last several years the crops have not been good enough** – Families no longer have enough crops to last the year. Most poor families rely solely on maze, and this has proven to be less reliable over the years.
- **The Nkhoma Hospital has been receiving less money from their patients, some who have none to give** - This year they have requested additional money for medicine and to feed children on the pediatric ward.
- **Poor crops mean people do not have money to pay the hospital or their churches** - Then the churches do not have money for the Synod and they are supposed to give to the Synod to pay the pastors, pay for seminarians and their family, pay Pension funds, have programs for the roughly 500,000 youth, etc. The Synod's primary income is from the churches, who are getting less income, and donors and they do not have other significant support. So that is why, PWNC supported getting pastor to their churches. That is not a usual thing.
- **Some international donors have pulled out or are giving significantly less** - USAID pulled out or is giving significantly less. The Synod lost funding from one important international donor. Ebenezer has lost funding from some of their international donors that supported it previously and donors like this Presbytery are giving less in scholarships because of the loss of support during Covid. That significantly impacts the school's operating budget.
- **International events impact Malawi over which they have no control and do not have sufficient funds to protect themselves** - Several weeks ago gas was $12 a gallon and is probably more by now. Fertilizer is up and may be out of reach of most people and in a farming dependent country, fertilizer is critical. So international events drastically impact Malawi's people. Malawi additionally has a significant debt issue that impacts all Malawians.
- **This can sound all negative, but Malawians have also made significant progress** - In 2005, when we came to the hospital there was not consistent working oxygen. Now oxygen is pumped into the hospital wards. Electricity has improved. PWNC with the Hospital helped all the Health Centers get basic electricity and water. Life expectancy is much, much higher. Much has changed for the better and that is very important to remember. Malawians have worked hard.

The economic situation is bigger than this presbytery and the Nkhoma Synod. The Malawians are struggling with how to respond. So are we. Out of the box, creative ideas are needed. **Prayer is important and they and we as partners ask for your prayers.**

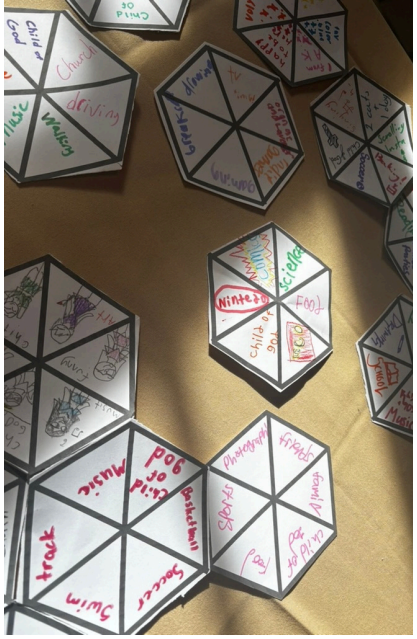
PRESBYTERY OF WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA

UPCOMING YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES

NOV. 14-15, 2026	FALL RETREAT @ CAMP GRIER MIDDLE SCHOOL AND HIGH SCHOOL SEE FLYER FOR DETAILS!
MARCH 5-6 OR 12-13, 2027	HIGH SCHOOL MISSION RETREAT HOSTED BY A LOCAL CHURCH WHERE WE WILL CONNECT & VOLUNTEER WITH MISSION PARTNERS
MAY 1, 2027	ADVENTURE DAY @ CAMP GRIER - RECREATION, WORSHIP & OUTDOOR ADVENTURES! FOR HS AND MS YOUTH
JUNE 2027	PRESBYTERY YOUTH MISSION TRIP WITH YOUTH MISSION CO. DESTINATION TO BE ANNOUNCED SOON!
JULY 25-31, 2027	MONTREAT YOUTH CONFERENCE FOR RISING 9TH - COMPLETED 12TH GRADE JOIN A GROUP OF YOUTH FROM ACROSS THE PRESBYTERY FOR A TRANSFORMATIVE WEEK AT MONTREAT!

QUESTIONS OR IDEAS? CONTACT SARAH GRACE MONTGOMERY

SARAHGMONTGO@GMAIL.COM OR 704-962-8975









PATHWAYS EVENT SEPTEMBER 26, 2026

The September Pathways event at Montreat was full of fellowship, laughter, worship and play!

Join us for the next event as we gather for a Fall Retreat at Camp Grier - November 14-15, 2026











FALL YOUTH Y-3 RETREAT

Founded in Faith, Living in Love

Psalm 8 — Luke 6:27-36

NOVEMBER 14-15, 2026

Join Middle AND High School Youth from across our Presbytery for an overnight retreat at Camp Grier with recreation, keynote, small groups, fellowship and fun!



COST: $50 PER PERSON (INCLUDES 3 MEALS, LODGING & PROGRAM)

REGISTRATION OPENS OCTOBER 1ST

DEADLINE: NOVEMBER 1

SCHEDULE:

Registration begins at 9:30 am on Saturday. The retreat concludes with Sunday morning worship.

No lunch will be served Sunday.

BRING:

Sleeping bag or bed linens, pillow, towel, toiletries, medications, comfy shoes and clothes, Bible, flashlight, water bottle, & rain gear.

RETREAT LEADER:

WILL BUSCH



WILL (KNOWN AS WILLY B TO HIS CAMPERS AND STUDENTS) CURRENTLY SERVES AS THE DIRECTOR OF STUDENT MINISTRIES AT MT. TABOR UMC IN WINSTON-SALEM, NC. WILL PREVIOUSLY SERVED AS PROGRAM DIRECTOR AT CAMP TEKOA IN HENDERSONVILE, NC AND ENJOYS VOLUNTEERING THERE EACH SUMMER WITH CAMP BARNABAS FOR SPECIAL NEEDS ADULTS. WILL GREW UP IN CHARLOTTE WHERE HIS FAITH WAS FORMED AT MALLARD CREEK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH. WILL IS PASSIONATE ABOUT SOCIAL JUSTICE, SHARING THE GOSPEL WITH YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE CLEVELAND BROWNS.

Register here!

Questions? Sarah Grace Montgomery

sarahgmontgo@gmail.com

Presbytery of Western NC — Strengthening, Equipping, Engaging

Camp Grier — Established 1952

BB-1

Finance Team
Don Scofield – Chair
October 27, 2026

For information only the Finance Team presents:

- The 'Operating Budget Summary' of the Presbytery of Western North Carolina as of September 30, 2026, BB-2.
- The 'Balance Sheet' of the Presbytery of Western North Carolina as of September 30, 2026 compared to December 31, 2025, BB-3.
- The 'Hurricane Helene Fund Financial Statement' of the Presbytery of Western North Carolina as of September 30, 2026, BB-4.

For the complete financial statements contact the Presbytery office at 828/438-4217 or lpressley@presbyterywnc.org

PRESBYTERY OF WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA
OPERATING BUDGET SUMMARY
AS OF SEPTEMBER 30, 2026

BB-2

ACCOUNT	2026 ANNUAL BUDGET	2026 YTD BUDGET	2026 YTD ACTUAL	**% OF ANNUAL BUDGET**	2025 YTD ACTUAL
INCOME:					
Unified Giving from Churches	$ 694,190	$ 520,642	$ 476,498	68.6%	$ 455,983
Other Income	23,500	$ 17,625	14,743	62.7%	12,846
Anticipated Grants/Income	6,000	$ 4,500	6,000	100.0%	6,500
Transfer From Existing Funds-NWC	30,000	$ 22,500	22,500	75.0%	17,500
Transfer From Existing Funds-Disaster Recovery	100,000	$ 75,000	47,970	48.0%	46,800
Transfer From Existing Funds-Legal Work	10,000	$ 7,500	17,911	179.1%	4,898
Income From Investment	257,854	$ -	-	0.0%	-
TOTAL INCOME	$ 1,121,544	$ 647,767	$ 585,622	52.2%	$ 544,527
EXPENSES:					
General Assembly Per Capita/Unified Giving	$ 165,000	$ 123,750	$ 113,257	68.6%	$ 111,596
Synod Per Capita	18,731	$ 14,048	12,857	68.6%	9,849
Institutions & Agencies	4,000	$ 3,000	2,746	68.6%	2,705
Strengthening Congregations Ministry					
Church Vibrancy Team	11,946	$ 8,960	8,959	75.0%	8,959
Youth Ministry Team / Council	20,450	$ 15,338	14,470	70.8%	14,980
Faith Formation Team	4,700	$ 3,525	101	2.1%	-
Campus Ministry Team	9,000	$ 6,750	6,750	75.0%	6,750
Equipping Disciples Ministry					
New Worship Community Team	30,000	$ 22,500	22,500	75.0%	26,250
Digital Church Team	-	$ -	-	0.0%	-
Community Outreach Team	-	$ -	-	0.0%	-
Peace and Justice Team	2,200	$ 1,650	1,500	68.2%	126
Disability Inclusion Team	200	$ 150	-	0.0%	-
Engaging in Mission Ministry					
Hunger Programs Team	-	$ -	-	0.0%	-
Self-Development of People Team	-	$ -	-	0.0%	-
Disaster Assistance Team	103,000	$ 77,250	48,915	47.5%	47,440
Housing Team	3,000	$ 2,250	2,000	66.7%	1,000
Guatemala Leadership Team	27,000	$ 20,250	12,705	47.1%	3,338
Malawi Leadership Team	4,000	$ 3,000	-	0.0%	4,036
Supporting Leadership Ministry					
Commission on Ministry	2,925	$ 2,194	2,000	68.4%	666
Examinations Team	-	$ -	-	0.0%	-
Validated Ministry Team	-	$ -	-	0.0%	-
Preparation for Ministry Team	5,400	$ 4,050	1,296	24.0%	124
Commissioned Pastors Team	-	$ -	-	0.0%	-
Church Leadership School Team	1,000	$ 750	4	0.4%	52
Coordinating Ministry					
Coordinating Ministry	20,434	$ 15,326	15,250	74.6%	3,250
Permanent Judicial Commission	500	$ 375	-	0.0%	-
Nominating / Representation Team	500	$ 375	-	0.0%	-
Personnel Team	579,818	$ 434,864	401,690	69.3%	370,440
Finance Team	82,040	$ 61,530	55,544	67.7%	49,193
Stated Clerk Expenses					
Stated Clerk	25,700	$ 19,275	22,862	89.0%	13,061
TOTAL EXPENSES	$ 1,121,544	$ 841,158	$ 745,406	66.5%	$ 673,815
NET INCOME/(LOSS)		(193,391)	(159,783)		(129,288)

Presbytery of Western North Carolina
Balance Sheet
As of September 30, 2026

BB-3

		Sept-26		Dec-25
ASSETS				
Cash (checking and on hand)		$ 243,642	$	950,719
Money Market		$ 257,313	$	257,217
Certificates of Deposit		$ 216,293	$	216,293
Investments (Presbyterian Foundation)[1]				
Presbytery of WNC		$ 6,138,286	$	5,615,999
Building HOPE[3]		$ 1,641,003	$	1,731,822
Malawi-GAP Ebenezer School Scholarships[3]		$ 211,229	$	199,514
Treasury Fund		$ 595,783	$	100,218
Receivables (Sales tax refunds due)		$ 231	$	443
Notes Receivables - Property[2]		$ 1,383,801	$	1,439,714
TOTAL FINANCIAL ASSETS		**$ 10,687,581**	**$**	**10,511,939**
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS				
LIABILITIES				
Payables (within the next twelve months)(FICA/State W/H)		$ -	$	1,505
Payables (beyond next twelve months)		$ -	$	-
TOTAL LIABILITIES		**$ -**	**$**	**1,505**
NET ASSETS (Defined as assets less liabilities)				
Undesignated Funds				
Funds available for general purposes		$ 3,312,985	$	3,140,481
Sale of Church Property		$ 2,262,493	$	2,243,884
	Subtotal	**$ 5,575,478**	**$**	**5,384,366**
Designated by Coordinating Ministry				
Sale of Church Property (Notes Receivable)[2]		$ 1,383,801	$	1,439,714
New Church Development		$ 174,013	$	198,013
Physical Plant Needs		$ 54,684	$	53,652
Community Outreach Grant Fund		$ -	$	8,670
Hospitality Grant Fund		$ 50,000	$	-
Korean Church Mission Gift		$ 50,834	$	100,000
	Subtotal	$ 1,713,332	$	1,800,049
Donor Restricted				
General Assembly/Synod/ Mission Co-Workers/Crisis Relief/Special Offerings		$ 85,636	$	58,698
Building HOPE[3]		$ 1,598,539	$	1,621,652
Hurricane Helene Relief Fund		$ 305,025	$	280,558
Daily Change		$ 94,904	$	55,707
Men in the Mirror		$ 24,545	$	28,453
Malawi-Nkhoma Hospital		$ 126,408	$	115,357
Malawi-Ebenezer School		$ 54,815	$	100,486
Malawi-GAP Ebenezer School Scholarships[3]		$ 207,729	$	199,514
Malawi-Mission Trips		$ 23,440	$	30,019
Guatemala Scholarship/Partnership Needs/Projects/Jubilee Fund		$ 170,022	$	166,727
Guatemala Health/Nutrition		$ 41,934	$	32,317
Guatemala Microloans		$ 22,355	$	8,954
Guatemala Mission Trips		$ 15,549	$	17,194
Taiwan Mission Support		$ 87,251	$	43,924
Disaster Relief Coordinator Fund		$ 76,180	$	124,150
Passthru Funds and Other Activities		$ 464,438	$	442,310
	Subtotal	$ 3,398,772	$	3,326,019
TOTAL NET ASSETS		**$ 10,687,581**	**$**	**10,510,434**
TOTAL LIABILITES AND NET ASSETS		**$ 10,687,581**	**$**	**10,511,939**

Notes:
1: Invested 60% Stocks 40% Bonds through the Presbyterian Foundation
2: Mortgages held by the Presbytery on Swannanoa/Westminster/W Avenue/John Knox properties
3: Any difference is due to some of the asset residing in Cash, Checking or Money Market accounts

Hurricane Helene Fund Financial Statement
As of 9/30/26

BB-4

Donations

2024		478,994.43
2025		170,539.14
2026		30,905.38
Total Donations	$	680,438.95

Passthru Funds (not included in Donations)

PC(USA)PDA Host Site Grant
New Hope Presbyterian Church, Asheville
$5,000 received by PWNC Apr 2025/remitted May 2025

PC(USA)PDA Host Site Grant
Spruce Pine Presbyterian Church

Designated Funds
$1,460 designated to purchase Tools for Tool Trailer

$2,000 designated to be used for needs in the Asheville area

Expensed

Nov-24	(1,500.00)	$500 Pmts to Micaville PC, Marshall PC & Green Mtn PC (FPC Napa gift)
Dec-24	(2,500.00)	Grant to Dorland Memorial PC (GC approved for damages)
Dec-24	(2,500.00)	Grant to Green Mtn PC (GC approved for damages)
Dec-24	(2,500.00)	Grant to Green Street PC (GC approved for damages)
Dec-24	(2,500.00)	Grant to Jack's Creek PC (GC approved for damages)
Dec-24	(2,500.00)	Grant to Marshall PC (GC approved for damages)
Dec-24	(2,500.00)	Grant to Micaville PC (GC approved for damages)
Dec-24	(2,500.00)	Grant to New Hope PC (Asheville) (GC approved for damages)
Dec-24	(2,500.00)	Grant to Black Mtn PC (GC approved for direct assistance)
Dec-24	(2,500.00)	Grant to Grace Covenant PC (GC approved for direct assistance)
Dec-24	(2,500.00)	Grant to FPC Marion (GC approved for direct assistance)
Mar-25	(1,000.00)	Grant to Green Mtn PC - Community Healing (Lenten video Project)
Mar-25	(25,000.00)	Grant to Marshall PC - Church Repair
Mar-25	(10,000.00)	Grant to Marshall PC - Direct Relief to Community
Mar-25	(10,000.00)	Grant to Tryon PC - Direct Relief to Community
Mar-25	(10,000.00)	Grant to Grace Covenant PC - Direct Relief to Community
Mar-25	(10,000.00)	Grant to FPC, Marion - Direct Relief to Community
Mar-25	(10,000.00)	Grant to Warren-Wilson PC - Direct Relief to Community
Jun-25	(125.30)	Reimbursment for supplies-PWNC PDA Team - 25 trip-Canton, NC
Jun-25	(10,000.00)	Host Site Expense Fund - New Hope Presbyterian Church
Jun-25	(10,000.00)	Host Site Expense Fund - FPC Spruce Pine
Jun-25	(1,050.00)	Funds to Cover Per Diem Shortfall from 2 Volunteer Groups-FPC Spruce Pine
Aug-25	(3,999.00)	Gilreath Auto Sales LLC (Purchase of Tool Trailer)
Oct-25	(200.28)	Brotherhood Mutual (Insurance Policy for Tool Trailer)
Nov-25	(25,000.00)	Grant to Camp Grier (grant for damages)
Nov-25	(25,000.00)	Grant to Green Mountain PC (grant for damages)
Nov-25	(25,000.00)	Grant to Marshall PC (grant for damages)
Nov-25	(10,000.00)	Grant to Marshall PC (grant for direct relief to neighbors)
Nov-25	(10,000.00)	Grant to Camp Grier (Old Fort Strong_Edwards House) (direct relief to neighbors)
Nov-25	(10,000.00)	Grant to Reems Creek-Beech PC (grant for direct relief to neighbors)
Nov-25	(10,000.00)	Grant to Waldensian PC (grant for direct relief to neighbors)
Nov-25	(2,500.00)	Grant to Warren Wilson PC (grant for damages)
Dec-25	(30,000.00)	Grant to WNC Conf of United Methodist Church (Direct Relief to Neighbors)
Dec-25	(6,000.00)	Grant to Camp Grier (Old Fort Strong_Edwards House) (direct relief to neighbors)
Dec-25	(25,000.00)	Grant to Camp Grier (grant for damages)
Dec-25	(2,000.00)	Grant to Green Street PC (grant for damages)
Dec-25	(13,459.00)	Grant to Jack's Creek PC (grant for damages)
Dec-25	(22,141.84)	Grant to Newdale PC (grant for damages)
Dec-25	(25,000.00)	Grant to Marshall PC (grant for damages)***
	25,000.00	Grant to Marshall PC-returned by church (Sept 2026) funds provided by FEMA
Mar-26	(2,203.20)	Payment to Divine Disaster Relief for month's hotel costs for displaced homeowner
Jun-26	(7,144.00)	Grant to Arbor Dale PC (grant for damages)
Jun-26	(1,000.00)	Grant to Canton PC (grant for hosting PDA teams)
Jun-26	(10,000.00)	Grant to Dulatown PC (grant for damages)
Jun-26	(10,000.00)	Grant to Marshall PC (grant for direct relief to neighbors)
Jun-26	(840.00)	Grant to FPC Spruce Pine (grant for hosting PDA teams)
Sep-26	(251.51)	Brotherhood Mutual (Insurance Policy for Tool Trailer)
Total Expensed	$ (375,414.13)	

Current Balance **$ 305,024.82**

2026 Donations include Union Community Church 2025 & 2026 payments to PWNC as part of their property settlement agreement ($6,000)

Hurricane Helene Relief Grants Application Deadline Dates

October 31, 2026

Building H.O.P.E. Financial Statement

Health Care (Malawi) - **O**utdoor Adventures (Camp Grier) - **P**artnered Growth (Vital Churches) - **E**ducation (Guatemala)

As of 9/30/26

Campaign Totals		Ministry details			
		Malawi	Camp Grier	Vital Churches	Guatemala
Collected	**$1,992,516.65**	**$911,437.70**	**$374,161.21**	**$385,647.44**	**$321,270.30**
Gain/Loss (subject to market fluctuations)	$790,947.78	$382,435.39	$77.47	$194,425.05	$214,009.87
Campaign Expenses	$107,347.10	$49,073.14	$20,216.13	$20,760.17	$17,297.66
Utilized	$1,207,645.68	$572,809.32	$354,022.55	$95,970.81	$184,843.00
Available for Requests	**$1,468,471.65**	**$671,990.63**	**$0.00**	**$463,341.51**	**$333,139.51**

Malawi (Health Care & Education)

Projects	Utilized
Rural Health Clinics*	$64,587.54
Rural Health Clinic Housing*	$169,019.78
Research Accountability	$6,600.00
Mobile Health Unit	$91,786.00
Medicines Fund	$189,200.00
Ebenezer Institute Endowment Fund	$51,616.00

* Per General Council approval, Aug 2024, requests for Rural Health Clinics and or Clinic Housing can come from either line item

Camp Grier (Outdoor Adventures)

Projects	Utilized
Adventure Program Equipment *	$93,500.00
Lake Front Upgrades *	$0.00
Trail Development	$70,000.00
Lodge Renovations	$190,522.55

* The camp received funds from other sources to help with these projects, Building HOPE funds reallocated to the other project needs

Vital Churches (Partnered Growth)

Projects	Utilized
Worship Initiatives & Congregational Development	
Assessment tools	$16,699.75
Water to Wine	$9,200.00
New Worshipping Communities	$0.00
Leadership Development & Pastoral Revitalization	
Church Leadership Workshops	$8,636.25
Pastoral Initatives	$10,999.81
Supplement Leadership Support	$12,000.00
Supplement Pastoral Support	$10,000.00
Pastoral Education	$2,535.00
Consultants, Seminars & Upgrades in Technology	
Hardware & Software	$17,500.00
Websites	$0.00
Consultants & Seminars	$8,400.00

Guatemala (Education)

Projects	Utilized
Higher Education Endowment	$77,200.00
Fund for Theological Education of Pastors	$75,500.00
Libraries/Teacher/Parent Formation Programs	$27,193.00
Dream Goals	$4,950.00

Building HOPE Campaign website: http://buildinghope.wncpresby.org/

227th General Assembly Commissioners Report

Barbara Nagy, Ruling Elder, Waldensian

The 227th meeting of the General Assembly of the PCUSA met June 19-25 (virtual committee meetings) and June 27-July 2 on site in Milwaukee, WI. The theme of the assembly was 'Be the Leaves' of the tree for the healing of the nations, from Rev. 22:2. I want to sincerely thank all who helped me to serve as a commissioner. I learned a tremendous amount about our church governance, was able to bring my international missions experience to numerous interfaces, and took great joy in meeting my fellow Presbyterians throughout the world. YAAD contributions were especially informative and inspiring (I didn't know there was a 20-year-old alive that had actually READ the Book of Order!) and they received much positive feedback. I particularly want to thank Byron Wade and Ann Philbrick, who prepared us well and took such good care of us during our work and travels. That said, being a commissioner is not for the faint of heart; days started at 8:30 and sometimes ended after 10 pm. Technological glitches troubled and at times limited commissioners' work, but margins of voting were not close. It is clearly quite challenging to find a meeting site that will satisfy our needs. I felt the split virtual/on-site meeting format worked fairly well and was more economical, but voting was in favor of an entirely on-site meeting in two years in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Diversity was a strong emphasis in overtures and worship, and it was a delight to hear from many of our international partners.

At the conclusion of our assembly we elected Rev. Marta Pumroy-Cordero and Rev. Dr. Kristopher D. Schondelmeyer as new co-moderators. This was particularly apropos as Rev. Pumroy-Cordero is Puerto Rican and a native Spanish speaker. She is a border ministry coordinator with Tres Rios Border Foundation. Rev. Dr. Schondelmeyer is the senior pastor at First Presbyterian Church in Davenport, Iowa. He holds a doctorate in Contextual Leadership with studies in Executive Leadership, Engaged Compassion and Public Management.

Significant overtures considered by the 227th General Assembly include:

Missions overtures RIW-01, RIW-02 were passed by large margins, the text of RIW-01 incorporating two previous overtures with concurrence by our Presbytery, so all of our concurrences passed by large margins. A task force will be created to study the future of Presbyterian mission efforts now that World Missions has been dissolved at the denominational level. The overture banning non-disclosure agreements also passed by a large margin, CON-02. Greg Allen-Pickett, previous COO of World Missions, highlighted that there remain millions of dollars of designated missions funding at PCUSA nationally, invested in the Presbyterian Foundation, that are presently unspendable since the dissolution of PCUSA World Missions.

Language was included in these resolutions establishing a task force for determining the future of these funds.

A resolution was passed condemning genocide in Gaza and was supported by prior GA Moderator Rev. Fahed Abu-Akel, a Palestinian Christian who traveled to the Assembly to support it. I have known Fahed for decades and hope that he will come to our Presbytery to share his vision as the head of the Palestinian Christian Alliance for Peace.

The Report of the Ordination Task Force (ORD-07) was debated and passed with referral to further study for creation of an Ordination Portfolio, an accessory pathway to ordination for those presbyteries and candidates wanting an alternative to the Standard Ordination Exams. Language was also added to make evaluation of undergraduate and theological transcripts more flexible, responding to a more diverse pool of inquirers and also to international candidates. These determinations will remain subject to the discernment of individual presbyteries. Discussions were prolonged about the naming and privileges of what in our presbytery are Commissioned Lay Pastors, whether they are registered at the presbytery level and have voice and vote at presbytery meetings. Privileges to perform weddings in commissioned congregations was approved, but apparently there is no premarital counseling training in their course of study.

Climate impact studies and advocacy from prior GA task forces resulted in passing two climate advocacy overtures, CLJ-02 which recommends continued divestiture from entities promoting fossil fuels, and CLJ-03 establishing a permanently endowed fund to support Green Future goals, with grants available and establishing a Green Future Fund Design Team. It is unclear to me how this fund would actually be funded but financial impact on per capita would be negligible.

PCUSA's understanding of HIV/AIDS engagement and Human Sexuality was affirmed with passage of GEN-01. Language proposed to the Ministry Discernment Profile that would allow congregations to indicate their openness to call an LGBTQIA+ candidate was referred for further study, as was an overture condemning polyamory, which was felt to need more theological support.

Numerous overtures from the Racial Justice Committee were overwhelmingly passed including RAC-01 Formation of a Special Committee on African American Ecclesial Repair and RAC-05 Restoring and Strengthening Racial Equity and Intercultural Congregational Support Ministries.

The Reformed Witness in the US Committee recommended RUS-01 repudiating Christian Nationalism, which was also overwhelmingly passed. Numerous recent actions by US Immigration were condemned and Congress is asked to check Executive Power.

A few negatives from GA from my perspective:

It was difficult to ascertain the financial impacts of our votes in real time. We collectively referred numerous issues to new task forces, which are costly, in spite of viable alternatives. One speaker highlighted that GA 226 directed the formation of the Interim Unified Agency with much disruption of our national/international ministries for the purpose of reducing costs, but that actually costs are higher than before the reorganization took place. Every overture was accompanied by a cost analysis, but there was no aggregate cost analysis enabling us to know what the cumulative effects of our successive votes would be. There was significant displeasure amongst the commissioners that Per Capita costs will rise by between 1-2 dollars for each of the next two years.

I feel there is a disconnect between our national leadership and the local congregations I have known. I would hope this is not true of our new co-moderators, who seem to be feet on the ground type people, but the Moderators are not part of the permanent national staff. With all of the shifting national structures, I think we need a new organogram to indicate who is actually responsible for what functions and structures.

This is an important time in our denomination as we look to understand God's vision, strengthening communications between local churches and the national office, and trying to use the unique gifts of the Presbyterian Church to have a positive impact on our nation and world. I encourage everyone to keep their local church, the presbytery, and our national offices in their prayers.

With thanks again for this opportunity to serve and grow,

Barbara Nagy

227th General Assembly, Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Leah E. Epps, Teaching Elder -Greenway

I am deeply grateful that I had the opportunity to participate in the General Assembly this year. First were 3 intensive days online in committee; the committee I was a part of was Reformed Identity in the United States. Yes, when I first heard that title, I had no idea what it would entail. We had several topics to consider including Christian Nationalism, a possible new confession, human trafficking, reinstating the office of theology and worship, and navigating artificial intelligence, just to name a few.

Before even arriving at GA, many connections had been made through committee work, seeing familiar faces on the plane, and meeting new folks on the ride from the airport to the hotels. There were many volunteers from the Presbytery of Milwaukee who met us at the airport, guided us through registration, answered questions, and overall were amazing in all they did. Community and fellowship were a blessing through the long days of plenary work.

In plenary, we sat by presbyteries, again among friendly faces and colleagues. Plenary days were long but wonderful. Being able to hear differing voices on issues and find out the work done by other committees was instructive; a time of listening and learning. Most lunches and dinners were planned by the GA, or one was given choices to attend. There was a committee meal, a seminary lunch, a dinner hosted by the Mid-Atlantic Synod, and a Western North Carolina Presbytery dinner.

Something done differently this year was waiting to the end to elect new moderators. Cece Armstrong and Tony Larson continued as Moderators through the assembly. Thursday, new moderators were elected; they are Kristopher Schondelmeyer and Maria Purmroy-Cordero. The 228th General Assembly will meet in 2028 in Puerto Rico.

My first General Assembly experience was overwhelming and wonderful and hopefully will not be my last time to attend GA. Blessings and thanks to the Presbytery of Western North Carolina.

227th General Assembly - Commissioner's Report

Bob Forsythe

I am honored to have served as Commissioner from Western North Carolina Presbytery to the 227th General Assembly of the PC(USA). For me, the Assembly provided a time of learning, discernment, sharing, re-connection with friends, and renewal.

I was privileged to be assigned to the Racial Justice Committee.

The committee work provided me an opportunity to learn about the extensive involvement of Presbyterians in the colonization of Liberia, which was, in part, designed to prolong the practice of enslavement in the United States. The excellent presentation by REAC (Racial Ethnic Advisory Committee) informed the committee about the harm that colonization caused and the resulting pain that continues. The committee recommendation, and subsequent action by the assembly establishes a Special Committee on African Americal Ecclesial Repair to, in part, recommend methods for repairing historical harms.

An action by the committee and General Assembly which, if affirmed by the presbyteries, will directly impact members of Presbytery is the amendment to the Book of Order, which adds a requirement for anti-racism training for teaching elders, commissioned ruling elders and others called to service. Training resources will be provided by Presbyterian Life & Witness (PW&L).

That overture, approved by 95% of the commissioners, also directed PW&L to create a tracking system that displays the progress/completion of all General Assembly (GA) business, beginning with the business related to race, racism, and White supremacy submitted at the 227th GA, and working back until all business of the GA, at least from the year of reunion in 1983 is captured.

There were many other committees, and thoughtful, prayerful discerning work was accomplished. Two items that were of interest to many commissioners were the overtures on a new confession, and the review of the restructuring of the PCUSA World Missions.

The Reformed Identity in the United States Committee recommended continuing the process to include the new confession in the Book of Confessions, by appointing a committee of at least 15 to consider the proposed confession. Inclusion would not occur until 2030 at the earliest. A substitute motion, to authorize a Special Committee to study and consider the confession, revising and rewriting [it] if deemed wise was adopted. The substitute motion included inviting the whole church – every congregation, presbytery, everyone - to study and consider the confession, and report its consideration to the new Special Committee. This would delay inclusion until 2032 at the earliest.

The hurt felt by many mission co-workers, partners and churches as the world mission efforts were restructured was expressed by many at General Assembly. The Reformed Identity Around the World recommended a study, which was later strengthened to review decision making and implementation surrounding this issue during the last 30 years.

Serving with so many committed Presbyterians, working on the future of the PCUSA, and together persevering toward wholeness was inspiring and motivating to me.

Report and Reflections from the 227th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church C(USA)
"Persevering Toward Wholeness"
June 22 - July 2, 2026 | Milwaukee, Wisconsin

I am deeply grateful to the Presbytery of Western North Carolina for the opportunity to serve as a Teaching Elder Commissioner to the 227th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Commissioners met virtually during the first three days of the Assembly before gathering in Milwaukee for Plenary Sessions. I was assigned to the General Assembly Operations (GAO) Committee, where I had the privilege of participating in recommendations related to the business and operations of the Assembly.

One of our committee's most widely discussed recommendations concerned the location of the 228th General Assembly in 2028. Dancing, applause, and enthusiastic cheers filled the plenary hall after the Assembly overwhelmingly approved GAO-01, recommending that the 228th General Assembly be held in San Juan, Puerto Rico. It was a joyful and memorable moment that reflected the spirit of the GA.

The Presbytery of Milwaukee's Committee on Local Arrangements (COLA) was gracious and welcoming hosts throughout the week. Although the weather quickly turned hot, with humidity reaching nearly 75 percent, they worked hard to keep everyone comfortable. Our PWNC staff also made sure we were well cared for with encouragement and, without question, the best snacks any commissioner could ask for!

Despite the many motions, amendments, and procedural votes, I truly enjoyed serving in this important role within our denomination. I heard several people describe it as "holy work," and I could not agree more. Whether meeting virtually or in person, we were able to conduct business in real time, ask thoughtful questions, engage in respectful debate, make motions, and vote together as the Body of Christ.

The Moderators led with faithfulness, professionalism, and grace through both routine business and challenging moments. Their gentle reminders to pause, breathe, pray, and reflect on Scripture kept us centered in Christ and affirmed that God was present with us throughout our work. They reminded us that God had neither left us nor forsaken us.

GA began with three days of virtual committee meetings. Our committee of more than 60 members met from our homes and offices to consider approximately 30 items of business, with many recommendations eventually moving to the consent agenda.

Worship and prayer were central throughout the General Assembly, guiding both Zoom committee meetings and plenary sessions. We paused for prayer before significant votes and in times of special concern, including prayers for the Rev. Berla Andrade, Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Venezuela, who was unable to attend due to U.S. visa denial, and for the family of Mr. Dusty Ray Spencer following his execution in Florida.

On Sunday, local Presbyterian churches welcomed commissioners to worship. I was blessed to attend Heritage Presbyterian Church in Muskego, Wisconsin. This congregation has mission at the heart of its ministry. After selling its church building ten years ago, the congregation chose to invest those resources directly into ministry and mission rather than maintaining a physical

facility. They now worship at Tudor Oaks Senior Living Community, demonstrating that the church is truly the people, not the building.

The opening plenary worship service was led by the Co-Moderators, the Rev. CeCe Armstrong of St. James Presbyterian Church, and the Rev. Tony Larson of Trinity Presbyterian Church. Their sermon was inspiring, heartfelt, and deeply moving.

Throughout the GA, we also received financial updates at the beginning and end of each plenary session, allowing commissioners to understand the financial impact of actions we took.

Committees considered numerous overtures, many of which came before the full Assembly for thoughtful discussion, prayerful discernment, and final action.

The Assembly elected and installed the Rev. Marta Pumroy-Cordero and the Rev. Dr. Kristopher Schondelmeyer as Moderators of the 227th General Assembly. They will serve as ambassadors for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) until the conclusion of the 228th General Assembly.

Serving as a Teaching Elder Commissioner was truly a blessing and an honor. The experience humbled me, strengthened my faith, and gave me the opportunity to worship, discern, and serve alongside Presbyterians from across the United States and around the world. Together, we sought God's guidance as we made decisions that will help shape the future of our denomination.

Now comes the next stage of the General Assembly experience. Commissioners, advisory delegates, and corresponding members return home to share what we experienced with the rest of the Church. Those who observed from afar saw only part of the story. It is now our privilege to tell how we encountered Christ throughout the Assembly and witnessed the Holy Spirit at work in our discernment.

As the Assembly concluded, commissioners, Young Adult Advisory Delegates (YAADs), and Presbyterian Youth Advisory Delegates (PYADs) received a heartfelt message of appreciation from the GA Team:*"Thank you, Commissioners and Advisory Delegates. Well done, everyone! You all are rock stars. See you in Puerto Rico!"*

Thank you again for the privilege of representing the Presbytery of Western North Carolina at the 227th General Assembly. It was an experience I will always treasure, and I look forward to sharing more of what God accomplished through this gathering of the Church.

Pat Reid
Teaching Elder Commissioner
Presbytery of Western North Carolina

Report from the 227th General Assembly Commissioner's Report
Barbara Massey Arnold- Ruling Elder Commissioner
Presbyterian of Western North Carolina
2026

I was truly honored and grateful to The Presbytery of Western North Carolina for giving me the opportunity to represent them during the 227th Presbyterian General Assembly. This year's Assembly was held from June 23 thru July 2, 2026. The first 3 days consisted of online Committee Zoom Meetings, and the remainder days were in person Plenary Meetings. Both consisted of long hours, discussions (sometimes hard) and decision-making. As a Commissioner for this General Assembly, I gained some additional knowledge regarding The Presbyterian Church (USA) beliefs, structure and core values.

My committee assignment was Constitutional Interpretation where some of the overtures we discussed were:

Prohibiting Non-Disclosure Covenants in Employee Relations

Restoration to Ordered Ministry after Sexual Misconduct

Expanding Healthcare Option for Ministers

Requiring Ministers of Word and Sacrament to be Monogamous

I was also a participant in my Committee's daily Worship Service.

Additional overtures addressed during The Plenary Sessions from other committees were:

Standing against White Christian Nationalism Recommendation and Relations

On Preparation and Ordination

Recommendation for New Introduction to the Manual of the General Assembly from the Unification Committee

Addition of Question to Ministry Discernment Profile from the Advocacy Committee for LBGTQIA Equity

Agency Pay Equity Recommendations and Rationale

Recognizing that Israel has violated the International Law Prohibiting Genocide-- for me this was a very emotional moment as I sat and listed to Fahad Abu-Akel, a Teaching Elder from The Presbytery of

Greater Atlanta and a former GA Moderator (GA214), talk about having to flee his home as a young child and watching his mother from the rooftop as the family left without her.

The Assembly also voted to begin having "Fully in-person" assemblies beginning in 2030.

Also, during the GA, I witnessed 2 Historical Events:
1. The election of the First African American Woman (Krysten Carter Holloway) of The Board Of Pensions.
2. The General Assembly approving to hold its first ever assembly outside the United States. The 228th Assembly will be held in Puerto Rico.

Our Co- Moderators, The Revs. CeCe Armstrong and Tony Larson were the best! During our worship time on Monday, June 29th, they spoke to us from the scripture Luke 24:13-25, using the title "Walk with Us". They also told us to " Slow down long enough for Christ to speak to us". Speaking of Worship Service, all attendees were provided the opportunity to attend a local Presbyterian Church on Sunday, June 28th. I choose to worship at Forest Park Presbyterian Church where the Rev. Kimberly Trimboli is the pastor.

The volunteers from The Presbytery of Milwaukee were outstanding hosts. They were onsite at The Milwaukee Airport to meet and greet us upon our arrival and directed us to the ground transportation. At the hotels they were extremely helpful in directing us to the Convention Center; they providing information and made suggestions about " things to do and see" in and around the city as well as how to get to these places - most were within walking distance.

Lastly, I have to give a huge Thank-you to Rev Byron Wade and Rev Ann Philbrick for making sure all the Commissioners from PWNC were well accommodated with plenty of coffee and snacks while we were in the Plenary Sessions, and I am looking forward to attending The 228th Assembly in Puerto Rico!

Barbara Massey Arnold
Third Street Presbyterian Church

Report on the 227th General Assembly
Rev. Daniel J. Commerford

This summer, I served as a commissioner to the 227th General Assembly that met in Milwaukee, WI. I spent two weeks away from my family, congregation, and rhythm of life and ministry that normally occupies my time to discern how God is moving in the wider church. It was an honor to serve alongside several other fantastic commissioners from our Presbytery. Specifically, I served on the Climate and Environmental Justice Committee that considered five overtures that were presented to the Assembly. In those two weeks, we worshiped together, deliberated overtures of serious weight, proposed and debated amendments (and amendments to amendments), agreed, disagreed, and made votes while discerning what God is saying to us through it all. Beyond the actual votes that were cast, proposals to our constitution that will be considered by our presbyteries, and statements on what God's Spirit is saying to our nation and world, I offer the following brief reflections on my time at General Assembly:

The Spirit is active in Christ's Church
Most of my call is focused on discerning how the Spirit is calling the congregation of First Presbyterian Church Gastonia to be a faithful witness to one another and the community as it embraces and shares the Good News of Jesus Christ. While that continues to be a passion of mine, it was a blessing to see how God's Spirit is moving in every congregation in our denomination across the world. Hearing stories of different churches meeting and overcoming challenges, finding new and innovative ways to serve their respective communities, and continue to be Christ's hands and feet in our world inspired me and left me feeling grateful to be a part of God's story with our tradition.

Christ's Church is both connectional and hyper contextual
On the one hand, we are a connectional tradition that proclaims a sense of unity in God's Spirit that spreads across every congregation of our denomination. On the other, every congregation has its unique challenges and opportunities when responding faithfully to God's call. This tension often creates challenges when making decisions or statements that impact an entire denomination. I reported to my congregation that many votes passed by roughly an 80% to 20% margin, and I found myself in both the majority and minority of those votes. I struggled at times to understand how some votes would impact my congregation or community. I've also walked with members of my congregation who struggle to discern what it means when their denomination makes a statement with which they disagree. In a world where we often feel more connected than ever, I still find that each congregation's sense of call is often hyper contextual to its community setting. How we remain connected while faithfully pursuing our individual and congregational sense of call remains a challenge for the Presbyterian Church (USA).

Our hope is ultimately built on Christ, not our accomplishments
We gathered, worshiped, prayed, discerned and debated, voted, and now seek to abide by what was decided. Much of our discernment will yield fruit. Some of it will not succeed and need to be reconsidered. Through it all, Christ continues to walk with us and speak to us, guiding us to his way, truth, and life. More than anything our General Assembly accomplishes, my hope remains in Jesus.

Synod of the Mid-Atlantic

Assembly Highlights

THE 258TH SYNOD ASSEMBLY IN REVIEW

SEPTEMBER 14–15, 2026 BARTIZAN EVENTS VENUE • GLEN ALLEN, VIRGINIA



258TH ASSEMBLY • SYNOD OF THE MID-ATLANTIC

THIS YEAR'S THEME

Dismantling Barriers, Cultivating Opportunities

What does it look like for the church to make room for everyone—and to turn that welcome into action? That question ran through the 258th Assembly of the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic. Across two days of worship, learning, presbytery sharing, and business, participants explored how our shared ministry can remove barriers and open new possibilities for service.

The Assembly paired those conversations with concrete commitments: support for local ministries, continued investment in the Next Generation Initiative, and the election and installation of new Synod leadership for 2027.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

02 **Worship, Welcome & Listening**
Opening worship and presbytery updates

03 **Making Room for Change**
Bible study on Acts 6 and a call to Jubilee

04 **Connecting with the Wider Church**
General Assembly reflections and follow-up from Melvin Bray

05 **Putting Resources Behind Ministry**
Grants approved by the Assembly

06 **Investing in the Next Generation**
Jubilee Fund, NGI, and the 2027 budget

07 **Thanks & New Leadership**
Honoring service; welcoming 2027 officers

OPENING WORSHIP

Beginning with worship and welcome

MODERATOR LEAH EPPS welcomed the gathering, and Deacon Terrence Benn offered an opening sermon on inclusion and equity. The celebration of the Lord's Supper, administered by Epps, and a land acknowledgment shared as a prayer of confession helped ground the Assembly's work in faith.

Epps also encouraged participants to care for themselves during difficult conversations, taking time to pause and re-center when needed. It was a thoughtful invitation as the Assembly prepared to consider questions of belonging, power, and change.

"Pause and re-center when needed."

AN INVITATION FROM MODERATOR LEAH EPPS



The communion table set for the Lord's Supper, administered by Moderator Leah Epps.



OPENING SERMON

Deacon Terrence Benn

pictured at left, offered the opening sermon on inclusion and equity.

PRESBYTERY SHARING

Listening across the Synod

Presbytery presentations gave participants a chance to hear what is happening across our region—and where support is needed. Baltimore and Coastal Carolina shared recorded messages, while ten other presbyteries presented in person. These brief updates brought local ministry and challenges into the wider Synod conversation.

Erin Skinner shared updates from the Presbyterian Foundation.

Clayton Rasco, Executive Director of Massanetta Springs, reported that its new bridge is complete and construction of a new lodging facility is underway, with completion anticipated in time for the September 2027 Assembly.



Clayton Rasco, Executive Director of Massanetta Springs

12

Presbyteries shared updates — 10 in person, 2 by recorded message

2027

New Massanetta lodging expected in time for the September Assembly

OR YOUTH

Keep Awake

A weekend of worship and workshops for senior high students, focused on Matthew 25.

BIBLE STUDY

Making room for change



Rev. Dr. Frances Taylor Gench led the Assembly's Bible study.

REV. DR. FRANCES TAYLOR GENCH led a Bible study on Acts 6:1–7, where the early church faced a painful inequity: Hellenist widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution. The passage invited participants to consider what happens when familiar practices no longer meet the needs of the whole community.

Her study connected the care of human needs with the proclamation of the Word, affirming both as ministry. Conflict and changing circumstances, she explained, can become opportunities to listen, discern, and adapt. The question for today's church is where our own structures may limit participation—and how we can make room for the gifts and voices of the broader community.

> "Where may our own structures limit participation—and how can we make room for the gifts and voices of the broader community?

KEYNOTE PRESENTATION

Practicing equity together

In a presentation on *The Acceptable Year of the Lord*, Melvin Bray explored Luke 4:16–30 and Matthew 25 through the lens of Jubilee. Jesus' proclamation of good news, healing, and freedom became a starting point for conversation about economic hardship, healthcare, incarceration, debt, immigration, and other systemic concerns.

Bray invited participants to move from "power over" toward "power with"—sharing agency and resources to address inequity. Table conversations applied that invitation to situations within the Presbyterian Church, using the framework of reorder, repair, and reimagine. Equity was presented as an ongoing practice that calls for changes in relationships as well as structures.

THE TABLE-CONVERSATION FRAMEWORK

REORDER | REPAIR | REIMAGINE



Melvin Bray led a presentation on Jubilee, shared power, and equity.

Power over → **Power with**

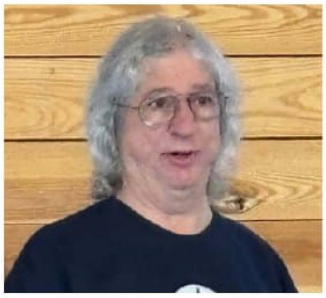
REPORTS & TRAINING

Connecting with the wider church

BARRY PARKS AND LEAH EPPS shared reflections on the recent General Assembly, including committee work on international concerns, Christian nationalism, immigration detention, human trafficking, theology and worship, and artificial intelligence. Their reports highlighted the need for accurate information, further education, and attention to the systems behind difficult decisions.



VALERIE IZUMI, pictured, provided training for the Synod Committees on Nominations and Representation, with follow-up training planned later in the year. Together, these reports and learning opportunities supported the Assembly's work of informed, thoughtful leadership.





Barry Parks, left, and Leah Epps, right, shared General Assembly reflections.

GA COMMITTEE TOPICS

International concerns • Christian nationalism • Immigration detention • Human trafficking • Theology & worship • Artificial intelligence

AFTER THE ASSEMBLY

Continuing the conversation with Melvin Bray

After the Assembly, Melvin Bray sent a warm note of thanks for the welcome he received and shared resources to help participants carry the work forward. His follow-up offered two reflections on the table conversations, inviting congregations and presbyteries to deepen their Matthew 25 commitments.

01 Start with the people most affected

Bray noted that no table explicitly named the need for ongoing conversation with—and the continuing consent of—the community experiencing the inequity being addressed. Some groups spoke of asking the community what it wanted, building relationships, or forming coalitions.

He encouraged participants to make that commitment explicit: seeking the insight and consent of those most affected is the first step in correcting power imbalances.

02 Look beyond individual acts of service

His second reflection recognized the church's experience with hands-on care, including meals, clothing drives, and volunteering. He invited participants to consider structural change as well: how the mechanisms that channel, amplify, or limit people's power shape outcomes.

Systems thinking takes the conversation further, asking how personal actions, structures, and culture interact to produce recurring results.

MELVIN BRAY • CONTINUED

An adapted collaboration model

To support that shift, Bray shared an adapted collaboration model designed to help groups recognize the different kinds of impact possible at varying levels of collaboration—and the changes in thinking each level requires.

He welcomed its use with attribution and invited readers to share observations as comments in the linked document.

Reflections and resources shared by Melvin Bray in his follow-up email. Please credit Melvin Bray when using his collaboration model.

RESOURCES TO EXPLORE

- → Adapted collaboration model
  Google Sheets • shared by Melvin Bray
- → Collaborative design forum & facilitation
  collabyrinthconsulting.com
- → Collabyrinth Consulting
  collabyrinthconsulting.com
- → UnLearn InEquity series
  unlearninequity.melvinbray.com

GRANTS APPROVED

Putting resources behind ministry

The Assembly approved grants that support ministry in very practical ways—from meals and early childhood education to youth formation and access to books.

$10,000 **Massanetta Springs Camp & Conference Center**
For Keep Awake. *Program evaluation required.*

$5,000 **Amherst Presbyterian Church**
Tuition assistance for preschool and daycare students.

$5,000 **Oxford Presbyterian Church**
Sunday breakfast meals.

$5,000 **Central Presbyterian Church**
An HVAC system. *Pending receipt of matching funds.*

$3,000 **Ben Salem Presbyterian Church**
A mobile banned-books project. *The request for staffing funds was not approved.*

$28,000 IN GRANTS TO FIVE LOCAL MINISTRIES

19
Young people covered by a Visionary Fund grant for next summer's Camp Monroe Confirmation Class

6%
One-year Small Church Grants distribution rate, based on a 20-quarter rolling average

Commissioners also called for broader promotion of Synod grant opportunities to presbyteries, colleges, and high schools.

JUBILEE FUND

Investing in the next generation

THE JUBILEE FUND will provide $5,000 to Carver Memorial Presbyterian Church in Newport News, Virginia, for *Building Hope Through Faith, Music, Arts, and Community*. The initiative serves African American youth and young adults through faith formation, the arts, mentoring, leadership development, technology, service learning, and intergenerational engagement.

The Assembly also approved Jubilee funding for the Next Generation Initiative at $45,000 per year for the next three years. NGI reported responses from 35 African American congregations across six presbyteries to its Church Snapshot survey, along with listening sessions with African American young adults ages 18–39 about the future of the Black Church within the Synod.

$45,000
Per year for three years to the Next Generation Initiative

35
Congregations responded to the Church Snapshot survey

6
Presbyteries represented

BUDGET & FINANCE

Supporting the work ahead

Commissioners approved the 2027 Synod budget and a one-time $25,000 stipend to Atlantic Korean American Presbytery. The Finance Committee reported that investments exceeded expectations and that investment interest is expected to cover the 2026 budget deficit.

The Emerging Ideas Committee reported two approved $2,500 grants for Synod church leaders to participate in Deeper Journey Ministries' *The Sacred Invitation* hybrid cohort, scheduled for October 2027 through October 2028. The opportunity will be publicized during the coming year.

$25K One-time stipend approved for Atlantic Korean American Presbytery



Addie Peterson, Jubilee Fund, left; Cassandra Thomas, Emerging Ideas, right.

WITH GRATITUDE

Giving thanks for faithful service



Rev. Dr. Floretta Barbee-Watkins and Bronwen Boswell receive a floral presentation from Joselyn Shipman.

The Assembly recognized **Bronwen Boswell** and **Tamara Williams** for years of ministry that have supported and connected the church.

Nearly 39 years

Of ordained ministry for Boswell — including service as the first woman Stated Clerk of the PC(U.S.A.).

Boswell's nearly 39 years of ordained ministry include nine years of service in Shenandoah Presbytery and service as the first woman to serve as Stated Clerk of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Participants celebrated her leadership, knowledge, and mentorship. As she enters retirement and looks forward to returning to Buffalo, she expressed gratitude for the colleagues and friends who have shared the journey.

Williams was honored for her service as Stated Clerk of Charlotte Presbytery and for her contributions to the wider church, including serving as Platform Manager at General Assembly. Her work has helped congregations, leaders, and church processes stay connected. Preparing to retire in December, she thanked the Synod and her colleagues and shared her intention to remain engaged in Presbyterian ministry and community.

ELECTIONS & INSTALLATION

Welcoming new leadership



From left: Debbie Reese, new Moderator, Baltimore Presbytery; Rev. Dr. Floretta Barbee-Watkins, welcoming the new officers; and Rev. Dr. Ron A. Hankins, new Vice Moderator.

The Assembly elected Ruling Elder Debbie Reese of Baltimore Presbytery as Moderator for 2027 and Rev. Dr. Ron A. Hankins, also of Baltimore Presbytery, as Vice Moderator. Commissioners also approved the recommended slate for permanent committees and the commission, continued the current designated committee chairs, and elected John Barker as chair of the Synod Committee on Nominations.

Reese and Hankins were installed during closing worship. They affirmed their commitment to Christ and their call to serve with "energy, intelligence, imagination, and love." The Synod, in turn, promised to support and encourage them in their ministry.

2027 MODERATOR	2027 VICE MODERATOR	NOMINATIONS CHAIR
Ruling Elder Debbie Reese	Rev. Dr. Ron A. Hankins	John Barker

CLOSING WORSHIP

Carrying the conversation home



Rev. gretchen sausville led closing worship.

Rev. gretchen sausville led closing worship, reflecting on the Jerusalem council in Acts and the church's need to remain open to the Holy Spirit. She described the Synod as living "between the rooms and the roads": gathering for discernment, then returning to congregations, presbyteries, and communities with new relationships and a wider vision.

Her invitation was to stay present through disagreement and uncertainty, recognize where God is already at work beyond familiar boundaries, and keep journeying together.



A QUESTION TO CARRY HOME

What barriers can we help dismantle, and what opportunities can we cultivate together?

As participants returned home, the Assembly's theme offered a continuing question for our shared ministry.

Synod of the Mid-Atlantic

258TH SYNOD ASSEMBLY HIGHLIGHTS
SEPTEMBER 14–15, 2026 • GLEN ALLEN, VIRGINIA
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

Presbytery of Western North Carolina
Report of the General Presbyter
October 1, 2026

"If you are not moving forward, you are falling back."

Dear PWNC,

I hope you are doing well and enjoying the fall season, especially the cooler weather!

If you have noticed one thing about life, there is always a tension between moving forward and falling backward. Everybody wants to move forward to the possibilities and hopes the future will bring. At the same time, moving backward is seen as a negative. People don't want to look back at the past for a variety of reasons – avoiding pain and hurt as well as the need to move forward and forget what has happened. However, I believe going backward can help you focus on what needs to happen in the future.

Looking back at what has happened since our July Neighborhood Presbytery meetings, life has been full! I continue to enjoy visiting our congregations. I worshipped with First Church, Asheville at the end of August. The church is currently undergoing some sanctuary renovations and they recently purchased an adjacent lot from the City of Asheville, which they will use for additional parking and future ministry; I also preached at First Presbyterian in Lenoir; attended worship at Greenway Presbyterian in Lenoir to recognize Pastor Leah Epps' last service; and attended First Presbyterian of Gastonia, where I gave a "minute for mission" at both services. They have just unveiled their strategic plan to the congregation, and there is much excitement for the future. I was also at Trinity Presbyterian in Hendersonville, where I gave a "minute for mission." They are looking forward to calling a new minister soon. At Marshall Presbyterian Church, I preached their Sunday rededication service to celebrate the renovations to the building and sanctuary after the effects of Hurricane Helene. It was a packed house and also a time for celebrating their new minister, Paul Sink. It was a wonderful Sunday!



I also have been blessed to be a member of the Presbytery's Commission to ordain and/or install two of our new ministers. Rev. Sarah Dianne Jones was ordained and installed at First Presbyterian, Hendersonville in a wonderful service in August. Rev. Jessica (Jess) Rigel was installed as pastor of Warren Wilson Presbyterian in September. Both services were very joyous and meaningful. Please keep Sarah Dianne, Jessica, and both congregations in your prayers for a faithful and fruitful ministry.





In relation to our theme “Building and Sustaining Relationships”, I have accomplished two of the three goals I set for myself: 1) formation of a Welcome Team to welcome new ministers into the Presbytery, and 2) creation of a presentation entitled “What is a Presbytery and Why Does It Matter?” I presented this at the Presbyterian Women’s Fall Gathering at Tryon Presbyterian Church September 26th. I am working on the third goal of forming a Stewardship Team. More information will be provided soon on this endeavor!

Looking back on all that has happened in the past, I believe God is preparing us to move forward for the future. I am discerning a new theme for 2027 entitled “Get Involved!” (or something like that!). The focus will be on highlighting our ministries and teams with the intended effect of having more people participate in the life and ministry of the Presbytery. I also have some other thoughts rolling around in my head and will share those with you in due time.

We are doing great things here in the Presbytery of Western North Carolina! Looking back has helped us in moving forward by God’s Holy Spirit to do greater things. I hope you will not be afraid of falling back for it is only in this that we will be ready for the future God has for us.

Peace,



Byron

HELPING CHURCHES CULTIVATE GENEROSITY AND ACHIEVE THEIR VISION

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

Partnering with churches to fund bold initiatives, tackle deferred maintenance, eliminate debt, and pursue transformative goals that leave a lasting impact on both the congregation and the community.

ANNUAL STEWARDSHIP

Empowering congregations to nurture a year-round culture of generosity, emphasizing the spiritual joy of giving while ensuring sustainable support for ministry beyond just meeting a budget.

ASSET STEWARDSHIP

Helping churches reimagine the use of underutilized buildings and campuses to enhance ministry impact while generating new revenue streams to sustain and expand their mission.

GENEROSITY COHORT

Equipping presbyteries and other judicatory bodies to guide smaller churches in adopting best practices that foster generosity and boost giving across their congregations.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Guiding congregations through a process that evaluates five key areas of overall church health to develop clear, actionable steps for growth and long-term success in each.



STEVE LINDSLEY, D. Min

Senior Ministry Strategist

https://www.horizons.net/stevelindsley

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horizons STEWARDSHIP

Happy Retirement



The Thompson's

May this next chapter be filled with great joy,
endless relaxation, and brand-new adventures!

Please stop by the reception table in Memorial Gallery to share your well wishes with George and Beverly. They will complete their service with PWNC effective October 31, 2026. Light refreshments will be available.

January Deadline

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

JANUARY PRESBYTERY PACKET DEADLINE

JANUARY 7TH

Reports not submitted by the team or ministry chair/moderator by the stated deadline will not be included in the Presbytery meetng packet. All reports must be written and submitted to Katie Quinn, kquinn@presbyterywnc.org by 1/7/27