

**ONE HUNDRED THIRTY-EIGHTH STATED MEETING  
MINUTES OF SALEM PRESBYTERY  
MAY 16, 2023**

The One Hundred Thirty-Eighth Stated Meeting of Salem Presbytery, held on Tuesday, May 16, 2023 at North Wilkesboro Presbyterian Church, North Wilkesboro, North Carolina and by Zoom was called to order by the Presbytery Moderator, Elder Catreliia S. Hunter at 9:00 a.m.

**ENROLLMENT:**

Commissioners		Commissioned Ruling Elders	7
Elders	69	Lay Pastors	3
Ministers	102	Presbytery Staff	2
		Corresponding Members	2
		Stated Clerk	1
		TOTAL:	186
		(+Visitors - 32)	218

The following were present for this meeting of Presbytery:

**Ministers (102):**

Almeida, Margaret	Harris, Randy	Perkins, Sam
Anderson, Amanda	Harrison, Evan	Pharr, Steve
Asher-Lawson, Marybeth	Hazelrigg, Marti	Phillips, Caroline
Barner, Taylor	Henry, David	Phillips, Jon
Barrett Todd, Katie	Heyward, Will	Pitts, Wes
Barrow-Ziglar, Kaye	Horan, Amanda	Priddy, Kim
Bates, Timothy	Howell, Charles	Pruitt, John
Beach, Kathy	Johnson, John	Quandt, Boni
Berry, Kent	Jones-Johnson, Vicki	Reynolds, Jeff
Bowers, Erin	Jordan, Steve	Rhodes, Paul
Braswell, Steve	Kim, Peter	Richardson, Nicole
Browne, Kellie	Kim, Seulki (John)	Rigel, Jessica
Bussell, Matt	Kirby, Barrie	Ritsch, Fritz
Campbell, Kathryn	Kirby, Randal	Rummage, Brian
Conley, Kevin	Lambeth, Jay	Schlaman Larsen, Emily
Cowan, Newton	Lansden, Phanta	Senior, John
Curl-Dove, Keith	Lawson, Scott	Simmons, Allison
Duffield, Jill	Lee, Charlie	Sink, Paul
Eads, Will	Lenger, Ruth	Smith, Barbara
Ealy, David	Levens, Kristen	Smith, David
Elam, John	Lingan, Jodi	Smith, Jeff
Engle, Terri	Martin, Jon	Snipes, Steve
Fearing, Stephen	Martin, Susanne	Sockwell, Jeff
Fitch, Rachel	McCain, Vicki	Stevens, Courtney
Fruits, Dana	McCutchen, Joseph	Taylor-Troutman, Andrew
Gaska, Jonathan	McFarland, Bryan	Thompson, Ernie
Glaser, Joanne	Milam, Judson	Troyer, Liz
Goodman, Kyle	Milam, Travis	Tysinger, Arlo
Greene, Sandra	Miranda, Alfredo	Vazquez, Jorge
Griffin, R. C.	Miranda, Rosa	Williams Berry, Nancy
Hall, Randy	Moss, Stephen	Wilson, Alicia
Hankins, Stephanie	Mullen, Lisa Florence	Wisner, Leigh
Harley, James	Musser-Gritter, Joshua	Wyche, Frank
Harper-Spellings, Kate	Musser-Gritter, Lara	Zehmer, Lee

**Ruling Elder Commissioners (69):**

Alamance	Dail, Graham	Immanuel	Brown, John
Alamance	Uniatowski, Judy	Jamestown	Robinson, Clayton
Asheboro 1st	Pugh, Ruth	John Calvin	Hinshaw, Sammie
Baird's Creek	Miller, Jinx	Lexington 1st	Stalvey, Celia
Bethany Statesville	Land, Barbara	Lloyd	Ruchigo, Purity
Bethel McLeansville	Allen, Eva	Love Valley	Burr, Gay
Boone 1st	Merschatt, Carrie	Mount Vernon	Sharpe, Sarah
Burlington 1st	Hill, Ami	New Creation	Alexander, Loretta
Burlington 1st	Hill, Bob	New Hope	Clark, Kathy
Burlington 1st	Matthews, Steve	North Wilkesboro	Worley, Karen
Calvary	Minkins, Sara	Oak Ridge	Gunter, Diana
Chapel in the Pines	Bolig, Paul	Old Providence	Pence, Carla
Church of the Cross	Peeples, Kaylene	Parkway	Gellatly, David
Clemmons	Cunningham, Syd	Pine Ridge	Gordon, Nancy
Clemmons	Preston, Susan	Pleasant Grove	Jordan, Annette
Concord	Ervin, John	Reidsville 1st	Coleman, William
Dellabrook	Curry, Luellen	Rumple Memorial	Lilly, Judy
Elkin	Hon, Ken	Rumple Memorial	Stewart, Jeff
Faith	Rissmiller, Betty	Saint Andrews	Lambert, Bonnie
Fellowship	Wordsworth, Adlai	Saint Paul High Point	Davis, Doris
Francisco	Collins, Greg	Salisbury 1st	Drinkard, Mike
Freedom	Campbell, Valeria	Shady Side	Gilchrist, Robert
Graham	Crabtree, Ben	Shallowford	Hartle, Jack
Grace	Wilson, Carol	Springwood	Bleiler, Jim
Greensboro 1st	Hurd, Anne	Starmount	Dixon, Stan
Greensboro 1st	Johnston, Carrie	Taylorsville	Mitchell, Dwight
Greensboro 1st	Turner, Sam	Third Creek	Hutchison, Chris
Greensboro 1st	Veraar, John	Thomasville 1st	Griffin, Anice
Greensboro 1st	Wakefield, Rhonda	Thyatira	Hall, Edward
Griers	Morris, Bill	Trinity Salisbury	Green, Monica
Guilford Park	Hickling, William	Trinity WS	Gregory, Megan
Guilford Park	Peck, Tim	Unity	Fleming, Karen
High Point 1st	Clinard, Aaron	Westminster	Hooker, Larry
Highland	Jones, Betty	Westminster	Siler, Craig
Highland	Milam, Alice		

**Commissioned Ruling Elders (7):**

Blankenship, Jerry  
 Braxton, Steve  
 Brooks, Rachael  
 Browder, Bill  
 Crunk, Sidney  
 Glaser, Tim  
 Moore, Sue

**Lay Pastors (CREs without current commission) (3):**

Bates-Harley, LaQreshia A.  
 Collier, Richard  
 Ratchford, Rainey

**Corresponding Members (2):**

Lesane, Warren (Synod of Mid Atlantic)  
 Rawson, Stewart (Trinity Presbytery)

**Stated Clerk, Salem Presbytery (1):**

Vaughan, David

**Presbytery Staff (2):**

Carter, Renee  
 Ratledge, Christine

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### CALL TO ORDER AND OPENING PRAYER

The Moderator, Elder Catreliia S. Hunter, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and constituted the meeting with prayer.

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### MORNING WORSHIP AND CELEBRATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

Salem Presbytery was led in worship by the Rev. Amanda Horan, associate pastor of North Wilkesboro Presbyterian. The Rev. Amanda Horan preached the sermon written by Rev. RC Griffin (who was ill), "A Wild Gathering" using scripture readings from Mark 4:30-32. The Lord's Supper was celebrated following the sermon.

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### WELCOME FROM HOST CHURCH

The governing body was welcomed by Rev. Amanda Horan, North Wilkesboro Presbyterian Church, North Wilkesboro, North Carolina. Information regarding the arrangements for this meeting was presented.

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### QUORUM

The Stated Clerk, Elder David Vaughan, advised the Moderator that a quorum was present for conducting the business of Presbytery, and the Moderator declared a quorum present.

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### APPROVAL OF DOCKET

The docket was presented by the Moderator of Salem Presbytery, Elder Catreliia S. Hunter.

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### **ACTION:**

1. Presbytery approved the docket.
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### WELCOME AND REPORT FROM THE MODERATOR AND INTRODUCTIONS

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

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### GREETINGS FROM ECUMENICAL GUEST

Salem Presbytery welcomed Rev. John Triplett, Pastor and Executive Director of Wilkes Ministry of Hope. He brought greetings and thanks for the ties between Wilkes Ministry of Hope and the North Wilkesboro congregation.

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## LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

A Land Acknowledgement statement was offered by Rev. Keith Curl-Dove, to recognize Indigenous Peoples who are the original stewards of the lands on which we now live.

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## PRESBYTERIAN ORGANIZATIONS

Elder Olanda Carr brought greetings from the Presbyterian Foundation and described the services available to Presbyterian Churches. Elder Lee Woods (Logan, and elder commissioner to Synod of the Mid-Atlantic) shared links to presentations made addressing Matthew 25 and Poverty during the 251<sup>st</sup> Assembly.

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## REPORT FROM TRANSITIONAL GENERAL PRESBYTER Rev. Barbara Smith

926 – That’s how many days I’ve served among you as your Transitional General Presbyter, and not only is this your first in person meeting since February of 2020, but it is my first in person meeting with you – ever! This is indeed an exciting day in the life of Salem Presbytery and I am thrilled to be here together with all 5 of my amazing colleagues on the presbytery staff and our 5 engagement pastors.

85 – Because I’m here in person, you are not seeing me in front of my now infamous china cabinet. And – finally – since a number of you have asked - I remembered to count the glasses!

7 – The number of teaching elders and ruling elders on the Search Team who have begun the important work that will lead to your election of a new General Presbyter. Allow me the privilege of introducing them to you – Paul Sink and Donna Hines, co-moderators, Stephen Fearing, secretary, Catreliia Hunter, Charlie Lee, Rosa Miranda, and Jae Hoon Lee. Watch for updates from them in upcoming issues of Salem Matters.

168 – The number of days we still have together! Now is not the time to sit back and “wait to see who the new person is”. It is the time to continue to do the amazing work you’ve been doing! If the Committee on Representation asks you to fill a seat on a committee, say “yes”! If Jodi or someone from the COM Task Force on Ministry for the Changing Church asks you to serve on a shepherding team to work with a small church, say “yes”! I have every reason to let potential General Presbyter candidates know how far Salem has come and the bright future that lies ahead.

116 – The number of days until our next Presbytery meeting – IN PERSON!

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## REPORT FROM DESIGNATED PRESBYTER Rev. Jodi Ligan

Eastertide Greetings Salem Presbytery! Our vision states that this presbytery serves as “a catalyst for transformational ministry.” It has now been a year since the position of Designated Presbyter for Transformational Ministry commenced service, with a focus on churches without installed ministries.

I have worshipped and/or met with 33 of our churches without installed ministries. We learned these churches comprise the majority of our Presbytery (54%) and that our African American churches are disproportionately impacted (79%)<sup>1</sup>. We developed the Church Empowerment Assessment (CEA), now completed by 9 churches, and initiated 3 Shepherding Teams to walk alongside churches working through difficult decisions.

Two churches requested dissolution (Covenant and Stoneville). The voice of the Black Caucus has been regenerated after COVID. A Call to Conversation was hosted for Installed Ministries in February 2023, another will be hosted for Uninstalled Ministries May 6th, and one is planned for Hispanic Ministries in October (2023). Our work together continues as we seek to strengthen our faith family as we renew our understanding of core PCUSA beliefs.

Many of you have extended great grace to me in sharing your thoughts or pointing me to others who have shared their thoughts. This is what we in the PCUSA hold as our (human) energy source: being relational and connectational. We are chasing huge windmills of theological wholeness these days. Transformation is not the work of one person, one committee, or even the churches struggling the most. In honoring our beliefs, we understand that transformation must be embraced by all of us, together. We are the priesthood of all believers: "Everyone is just as spiritual, just as capable of speaking to God, and just as called to deliver God's message to the world. Everyone is equally called to do God's work and to minister to God's people."<sup>2</sup>

We are Easter People, believing the impossible is possible: that life springs from death, that light overcomes darkness. It means we must let old things die. If we don't, we are just practicing resuscitation, not resurrection. Right now, every church has the call to examine what old, exhausting, pre-pandemic ministries must be let go so that God might bring new life into being, to witness to the resurrection, to leave the tomb in the garden and practice resurrection. May it be so!

With a grateful heart to be serving with you, jodi

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<sup>1</sup> 72 of 134 churches; 15 of 19 African American churches - as of April 2022

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/what-we-believe/priesthood-of-all-believers/>

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STATED CLERK REPORT  
David Vaughan

**FOR INFORMATION:**

Upcoming Meetings of Presbytery - 2023

Saturday, September 9, 2023 – First Presbyterian Church Burlington, Burlington, North Carolina

Tuesday, November 14, 2023 - on the ZOOM platforms

**Annual Directory**

The packet for this meeting contains the annual Presbytery directory, which I am required to publish. Please note that this roster includes Presbyterians only; we are grateful for those of other denominations who are faithfully serving our churches. CREs are listed only if they are serving under a current commission.

**Minutes of Administrative Commissions to Ordain/Install**

This packet contains the minutes, since May 2022, from Administrative Commissions to ordain/install a minister off Word and Sacrament within our bounds.

**Tragedy in Nashville, Tennessee**

On March 27, 2023, a shooting in Nashville killed six people at a church school affiliated with the Presbyterian Church in America. I wrote the Stated Clerks of both the PCA Nashville Presbytery and the PCUSA Presbytery of Middle Tennessee on your behalf, to share our inexpressible sadness and our prayers for all affected by this horror. I received wonderful notes of thanks from both.

**Renunciation of Jurisdiction**

Under the terms of D-3.0106: I am required by the Book of Order to notify the Presbytery that the Rev. Dr. L. Adlai Boyd (HR) renounced the jurisdiction of the church on April 27, 2023, in the midst of a disciplinary investigation.

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PEACE AND JUSTICE TASK FORCE

Rev. Wes Pitts and Rev. Jessica Rigel, Co-Moderators

Rev. Jess Rigel announced that the next racial equity equipping event is to take place May 25, 2023, at North Wilkesboro Presbyterian, North Wilkesboro, North Carolina. This training is required to be done every three years. Rev. Wes Pitts distributed two Peace and Justice grants during the meeting. The first grant in the amount of \$1000 was awarded to First Presbyterian Church Greensboro to aid in the creation of a documentary exploring their congregation's "discovery" of a history of racism and its efforts to reconcile. The second grant in the amount of \$2000 went to New Creation Community Church to aid in its effort to host two events, a Safe Surrender Event for gun owners and an event in which pieces of cut guns will be turned into art.

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EL BUEN PASTOR NEW CHURCH DEVELOPMENT  
Rev. Jorge Vasquez and Elder Megan Gregory

Rev. Jorge Vasquez with the assistance of Elder Megan Gregory shared the work of the ministry of El Buen Pastor. Rev. Jorge Vasquez invited Salem Presbytery congregations to partner with them to minister to the Latino community. Their goal is to dramatically increase the number of churches in the Presbytery that actively support El Buen Pastor with annual gifts to sustain this vital ministry.

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HUNGER TASK FORCE  
Rev. Leigh Wisner, Committee Chair

Rev. Leigh Wisner gave an update on the international hunger accounts (Sister2Sister and Congo Helping Hands). Operations have been expanded and consideration is being given to a possible third partner internationally because of the increase in donations.

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COMMITTEE ON PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY  
Rev. John Senior and Rev. Courtney Stevens, Co-Moderators

The CPM moves the following motion:

1. That candidate Taylor Austin be considered to have completed his Candidacy as of May 16, 2023, subject to the provisions of Book of Order G -2.0610, "Accommodations to Particular Circumstances."

Background and rationale:

Taylor Austin entered the ordination process in October 2020 and advanced to the candidacy stage in the November 2022 meeting of the Salem Presbytery. He graduated from Princeton Theological Seminary in May 2019, having already completed ordination courses with the foresight that he would pursue ordination after seminary. In 2021, Taylor's ordination timeline was delayed as he changed congregations and came under the care of Westminster Presbyterian Church's (WPC) Session. CPM requested that he participate in a follow-up psychological assessment, continue in his work with his therapist, and become more connected to WPC before being moved to Candidacy. Taylor willingly obliged each of CPM's requests and fulfilled each item with a spirit of openness. In January 2023, Taylor completed his final ordination exam (Biblical Exegesis). The CPM is now satisfied that Taylor has completed all requirements related to the ordination process and is ready for his final assessment.

Ministry Development Service experienced a backlog of work owing largely to the pandemic. For that reason, Taylor was unable to schedule the follow-up psychological assessment, which the CPM requested, for more than six months after the CPM made the request. Taylor completed this task last fall.

The Book of Order requires that the total duration of the ordination process be at least two years and that the duration of the Candidacy phase be at least one year (G-2.0602). Rather than penalize Taylor for timing issues outside of his control, and thus delay his movement to the Certified Ready to Receive a Call (CRRC) stage, the CPM is requesting that the Salem Presbytery vote to truncate the Candidacy phase in Taylor's case such that it concludes at the date of the May 2023 presbytery meeting (i.e., May 16, 2023). Should the presbytery vote to sustain this motion, the total duration of the ordination process in Taylor's case will still be more than two years.

Additional Report:

Finally, the CPM reports the following item:

In its March 2023 meeting, the CPM voted to enroll Nolan Chilton, member of First Presbyterian Burlington and student at Duke Divinity School, in the inquiry phase of the ordination process.

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## **ACTION:**

2. Salem Presbytery voted candidate Taylor Austin had completed his Candidacy as of May 16, 2023, subject to the provisions of Book of Order G -2.0610, "Accommodations to Particular Circumstances."

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### COM TASK FORCE ON EXAMINATIONS Rev. Debbie Layman and Rev. Travis Milam, Co-Moderators

The Examinations Committee has successfully examined the following for service in Salem Presbytery. The COM has received all of these to membership in Salem Presbytery.

#### **Faith Journey**

**Rev. Bonita Clark Quandt**

First, I gave as I received. God birthed me into a family of believers in Jesus Christ. My parents received faithful training through Methodism, but I came when they were not yet established into faithful personal practice. So, my grandparents arranged in my toddler years to instill a regular pattern of corporate worship while my mother taught me Scriptures and my father exemplified a Christian worldview. Through them, the seeds they planted were grown by God to form within me a trust that I am God's and beloved.

The community church nurtured me and taught me to live strong for Jesus. In my anxious teen years, when I could not find validation in school, I found it in my church family. I launched from high school into college with a solid faith and a prayer for a Christian friend. God answered with favor. Although disconnected from home, I found connection through new acquaintances and exposure to new ways.

By graduation, I was married, found a career, birthed a child, and desired to raise him in the faith. God drew me to a specific church that opened my heart to Jesus' call and nurtured my son and I through a divorce and remarriage. This church was PCUSA, and I was invited to use my talents abundantly. Here, I became an Elder, learned my deep need to partner with Jesus in matters of social justice, and shaped a new life in trust that God indeed is the only resource for what I have in life. I attended presbytery, volunteered in interfaith programs, and served the homeless. God created within me a passion for helping others.

A call story formed in the aftermath of my husband's firefighter duty injury, a lynchpin of change. He was disabled with permanent compensation for life. We chose to move away, taking me from my career. Our relocation gave us blessing of reuniting with my family, and a similar career position that was not as enjoyable. A new PCUSA church community received us and nurtured us. As an Elder, I preached and a member asked why I was not in seminary. God used those words to ignite a call to ministry for me. I pursued the call, and I graduated from seminary as my son graduated from college, and my husband provided all support possible to do so.

My first call to ordination was to serve a church known to be difficult. It was. Yet, God used me to touch so many lives. Some came to deeper faith, some adults came to faith to be baptized. Many children were baptized. The community included a state women's prison, where I preached monthly. I participated in Kairos prison ministry. A beautiful group of peers from Presbytery gathered monthly with me to breakfast, pray and share. Although this church also rejected me, the outcome was that Presbytery intervened and the cycle of clergy abuse subsided.

God led me to other churches, each for a fruitful season. I found gifts of giving and mercy within me. My ability to write provided a season of creating Christian education materials. My ability to create produced new audio/visual ways to present the Gospel.

I retired, but God continues to use me to minister to others. I insert myself into churches and continue to use these talents for Christ to spread the good news. Praise be to God.

#### **Statement of Faith**

**Rev. Bonita Clark Quandt**

I believe. God is Almighty, Eternal Love, and Creator of everything, including us. As Author of life and Authority over all, God possesses all, including us. God desires us to be close, proven in past covenants. First with Noah, God promises to never again wipe out creation to end wickedness. Then with old Abram and Sarai, God promises a child and makes from that offspring a nation known as God's people. And with Moses, God renews the Abrahamic covenant with new commandments for living according to God's ways.

Holy Spirit is Sustainer of humanity and the Breath of God. Regenerator of humanity, Holy Spirit is eternally available to initiate faith and transform us into new beings. Moses cried out to God for help, and God sent a portion of Spirit to

anoint 70 elders to help. Ever present is the power of Holy Spirit to draw us close to God as teacher and sustainer of faith.

Jesus Christ is the son of God and Mary. Jesus is Prophet, Priest, and King to us. Jesus mediates between God and us. Being fully God, Jesus taught us with authority how to love God and be love to everyone else. Jesus' fully human life exemplified true obedience to God and complete love for us. He poured out his life on a cursed torture instrument, as a sacramental act of a new covenant sealed by His blood for us. He justified us fully with God. In Jesus, we are sealed. Boldly, we live within a sinful and broken world as people set apart by God through sanctification. Connected to God by the power of the Holy Spirit, we are better able to refrain from sinful behavior. But when we miss the mark, we may confess our sin to God and gratefully receive forgiveness.

Sacraments are significant, particular times marked by God as a visible sign of covenantal connection to the Triune God. Participation in sacraments marks a sacred moment deeply connecting us to the Holy Trinity. The Sacrament of Baptism formally marks the occasion of one's public renunciation of sin, one's promise to live in God's realm, and being God's own. Common water is the sign of washing away sin's stain. A Trinitarian formula is pronounced as water is applied. This is a visible seal of an eternal new covenant of life in Christ Jesus, only done once.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is the mark of remembering Jesus who lived, died and resurrected for us. With the sign of bread broken and eaten, we remember Jesus' saving death. Likewise the cup which we drink is sign of Jesus' new covenant with all. As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, Jesus seals us unto himself and with all saints for which we worship and praise Him.

Where two or more are gathered in Jesus' name, there is the church. The church is a community that is not immune to the state of sin in the world, yet serves as a conduit of faith-building and sanctification. When purposeful gathering of believers includes worship, scripture and the sacraments, we thrive and grow in God's grace and love.

## **Faith Journey**

**Evelyn R. Crews**

As a child of a busy, single mother, I did not grow up in the church. My mother was a young divorcee in the early 60's and felt ostracized from communities of faith, yet my own experience with God began early in life. Due to certain circumstances, I experienced God as a presence and a still small voice, though I did not know what to call these experiences at the time. I knew the presence and voice were "other," and was a source of comfort for a child in need of comfort and love. These memories have never faded and offer me the complete conviction that God is a real, active, life-changing presence in our lives and we are to be that love and presence for others, especially those in greatest need.

When I began to be more aware of church through occasional visits with friends as a child, I found that I loved the story-telling and how the words and stories of scripture made me feel. Eventually, my older brother and I attended a nearby church together and I was baptized there at the age of 16. My community of faith offered much of what was lacking elsewhere, though I still had questions and concerns. Having been raised by a strong mother who served the community through social work, I questioned what seemed to be a secondary role of women in church and community. Following my mother's example, I grew to work in the world of nonprofits, particularly those in service to the homeless population. It was through my work as the director of an organization that served homeless families that I received my call to ministry and applied to divinity school at Wake Forest University. At the same time, I served as an Outreach Minister at a Baptist church and was eventually ordained there. I initially desired to return to the nonprofit world after graduation, better equipped to meet the many needs of community, but fell in love with the difficult but intimate work of chaplaincy through CPE.

CPE took me to work in a large urban hospital, and a smaller community hospital where I came to offer Spirituality and Art classes in the hospital cancer center as a path toward healing and wholeness. It was while I was serving in this ministry, that I answered an ad for a position at Springwood Presbyterian Church, which was the beginning of an unexpected call. At Springwood, I began in administrative work but was quickly given the grace and freedom to grow into pastoral care, delve into placemaking and program development, Vision 2020 implementation, and was coached and encouraged to preach, something I never thought I would do.

In another surprising call from God, I was invited to be the lead minister of a rural Baptist Church and have learned so much in my year here. I have gained confidence in preaching and program development and my desire to proclaim God's call to inclusivity, hospitality, social justice, and interfaith dialogue. God continues to provide opportunities for spiritual growth through creativity and self-expression, and I continue to hold onto that still small voice saying all of God's creation are deeply loved and valued. Springwood Presbyterian Church is once again central in my ministry journey as the proposed Vision Implementation Pastor. My true love in ministry is found in the sacred moments spent with others during pastoral care, the moments of our greatest need. Second to pastoral care, I greatly enjoy creating, implementing and teaching community classes that invite others into the presence of a knowable God of love, compassion, and forgiveness. My own journey has brought me to this place.



I believe in the Triune God, one in three - God the Creator, Jesus, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

God created the universe and all within it as an act of love, filled with goodness, beauty, diversity, and wonder. It is a creation that continues to awe and inspire us, and help us visualize the true nature of God. I believe in God as love - giving, nurturing, merciful, offering God's creation a vision of kindness, caring, forgiveness, justice, peace, and presence. God gives us free will, and walks with us through events in human life that occur both in accordance with nature, and as a result of free will - through times of great joy and celebration, as well as loss and heartbreak. I believe that through sin we are separated from God. God sent God's only Son as a living sacrifice for our salvation through the atonement of our sins, and through whom we see God and God's desire for our lives.

In Jesus, God gives us Emmanuel, God with us, both fully human and divine. Through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, our sins are forgiven and we are invited into life everlasting in the presence of God. As God incarnate, Jesus lived a life of service to others, and turned the world's status quo upside down. He taught that we are to free the oppressed, give voice to the voiceless, love God above all else, love ourselves and our neighbors as God's creation, and live toward equality, justice, and goodness. Through Jesus' death and resurrection, we too are offered new life and hope through the Easter promise. Jesus invites us, as one who reveals God, to follow him and live by his teachings and example to help usher in the Kingdom of God on earth, here and now.

Through the Trinity, we are gifted with the guidance and presence of the Holy Spirit with us always in an ongoing, co-creative relationship with God. The Holy Spirit is God's "most intimate, powerful and mysterious presence with and in us," (PCUSA Mission Agency). Present in the sacraments, the Spirit renews us in body, mind and relationship with Christ, and through God's grace, sustains our faith and empowers us that we might then help transform the world. The Spirit is present with us in Word, through the teachings and continued revelation of scripture in the Old and New Testaments of the Christian Bible, the word of the Lord. The Holy Spirit is continually active in the life of believers, as a live-giving, sustaining, and mysterious relationship with God and God's redeeming love. Together we are called to be the Body of Christ.

**Faith Journey****Rev. Dr. Matt Bussell**

My family joined First Presbyterian Church of Grand Haven, MI when I was three years old, and I have been Presbyterian ever since. I grew up attending church every week, learning the stories of Scripture in Sunday

School and by staring at the stained-glass windows throughout worship. As a youth I enjoyed not only the weekly youth group meetings, but the lock-ins, mission trips, and summer conferences. The church was a second family for me which taught me the Christian faith.

When looking at college, I decided early that I was interested in a Christian liberal arts education and attended Calvin College. At Calvin, it took me some time to figure out the direction of my studies, going from engineering to education to religion to finally settling in with a history degree. While I worked out my focus in the classroom, outside I found myself heavily involved in the campus ministry programs. Toward the end of my time in college, I was discerning between graduate school for history and seminary, and ultimately felt called to attend seminary. Having spent my entire life in West Michigan, I decided to move to a new area to attend Columbia Theological Seminary in Atlanta.

I entered the ordination process with a lot of questions. I fell in love with theology at Columbia but was not sure that congregational ministry was the best fit for me. This apprehension was reinforced during my supervised ministry in a dysfunction congregation with a manipulative supervisor. I decided to pursue doctoral studies in service to the church rather than congregational ministry. Following a year doing a Th.M. at Duke, my wife and I moved to southern California for me to enter the Ph.D. program at Claremont Graduate University. As I was deepening my understanding of theology in my Ph.D. coursework, I also found myself drifting away from the life of the church. The PC(USA) had moved to become more inclusive of the LGBTQIA+ community and the congregations in our area were fighting about who to exclude and considering leaving the denomination. For the first time in my life, I was without a church home. I still had faith, yet I did not have a faith community.

Following the completion of my coursework and qualifying exams, my wife and I moved back to North Carolina to live with her parents in Tarboro. My father-in-law was serving as the interim minister at Howard Memorial Presbyterian Church at the time. This church welcomed us with open arms and provided the connection to a local congregation I had been missing in California. They supported us as we welcomed our daughter and encouraged me to participate in the life of the church. This church helped me see that all my theological studies could be used in the church, something that I had forgotten in my time away. They helped me hear again the call of God to congregational ministry.

I was ordained as a minister of Word and Sacrament by Pittsburgh Presbytery in March of 2016 to serve Covenant-Community Presbyterian Church. CCPC was a small congregation struggling to survive yet full of loving and kind people. At CCPC I learned to enjoy preaching, the holiness of funerals, and the delight of teaching. I also learned the importance of community with other church leaders as I navigated the joys and struggles of serving that congregation. In September of 2018 I started a new call at First Presbyterian Church in Jonesboro, AR. FPC Jonesboro is a healthier congregation set in a difficult ministry context. Jonesboro is town of fundamentalists with the Presbyterian and Episcopal churches being excluded from community church events. Yet the people in the church are loving and compassionate, seeking to care for the poor and marginalized in a community where they blamed and derided. FPC Jonesboro has supported me in completing my Ph.D. and involvement in the wider church with the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

In the seven years that I have served in congregational ministry, God has slowly transformed my faith. I entered ministry as a doctoral candidate in theology with a love of abstract theology. While I still love theology, my focus has changed to how it is lived out in the community of faith. I see abstract theological notion of love lived out in the concrete encounters with my neighbors and joining the work for justice and equity. Where my faith used to focus on what I believed, it is now focused on what I and the church do to join the mission of God in the world.

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## **Statement of Faith**

**Rev. Dr. Matt Bussell**

I believe that the Triune God created the world out of nothing. The Father is primarily responsible for the act of creation but the Son and the Holy Spirit also participate. God did not create out of primordial matter or with another being but rather out of nothing. God has the ultimate authority and is the source and sustainer of all things.

Humanity is created in the image of God. We are created good and with freedom. God created us to be in relationship with others and God as a community of mutual love, justice, and peace. Sin tarnishes our ability to live as God created us. When we, individually and as a community, destroy relationships through behaviors such as greed, selfishness, oppression, prejudice, and self-devaluation, we alienate ourselves from each other and God.

In Jesus Christ the Eternal Word of God was incarnate, becoming human as the ultimate expression of divine love. Throughout his life and ministry, Jesus shared the vision of God's Kingdom for the world based on community and love. His teachings angered the religious and political elites who viewed him as a threat. They conspired to execute him on the cross. Three days later he rose from the dead and later ascended to reign beside God the Father. Through his life, ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension, Christ reconciles humanity with God and one another. The ultimate experience of alienation in death is overcome in Christ as he paid the penalty for our alienation from God and foreshadows our resurrection to new life. We have hope for the future because of the resurrection of Christ. After death we will be united with God. This resurrection we anticipate is not the rising of our souls to heaven but a bodily resurrection.

It is through the Holy Spirit that we come to know Christ. The Spirit unites us to Christ, enabling us to receive Christ's benefits. Through the Spirit we are justified by grace, through faith. The Spirit works in us through grace in our sanctification.

The source of our knowledge of God and God's work of redemption in history is Scripture. Scripture is the Word of God, inspired by God but written by people. Scripture has been written, edited, translated, and interpreted by people who are prone to error. It is therefore the Word of God insofar as it points to Christ. In Scripture we learn of God's character and actions; it is in Scripture that we know God's grace.

The church is the body of Christ on earth. Though there are many denominations, together they constitute the body of Christ. It is through the church that we participate in the community of believers and receive the sacraments. The sacraments are signs that point to God. Baptism is a sign of God's covenant with us while Communion is a sign of Christ's incarnation, death, and resurrection which unites us with God. Christians are not called to be solitary but in community, building each other up in love. We are called to be agents of God's reconciliation, justice, peace, and love in the world.

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## **Faith Journey**

**Michael Sarvis**

My Faith Journey began in the city of Atlanta when I was in 4th grade, attending "The Billy Graham Crusade" with my brother, parents, and our neighbor who invited us. My parents grew up in the Christian Faith but had fallen out of it during their early adult lives. I remember nothing about attending this event. I only remember it as the catalyst for both of my parents rededicating their lives to Christ and ended my streak of Sunday morning cartoons. From this point forward we were at church every chance our family got. We began attending a small Southern Baptist church within a few months both me and my brother were baptized. Looking back at my baptism I don't remember much outside of choking on the water as the pastor dunked me. I think it is possible I just did this because it was expected

of children this age in the church, I can't say one way or another. Shortly after that we started attending a Presbyterian church in town and this is where my faith really came to life. I met a boy who embraced me like no other person my age had before. He was kind, funny, and celebrated me for who I was. He was the first person outside of my family to truly treat me like Christ would have. I have always been partial to the story of Jesus and the blind man in John 9. As a young person I felt like the blind man – misunderstood and gossiped about. I feel strongly that Jesus getting level with the man and touching his face is a very important part about the Christian faith. We are called to love and serve one another, and it is not possible to do that if we are stuck behind barriers. This was the first time in my life I didn't feel any barriers between myself and a peer.

My friendships that grew from this boy empowered and grew my faith. I learned what true friends were through my experiences at church. My parents and brother loved me but knowing people who weren't my family also loved is what grew the curiosity in exploring my faith. I became interested in service and helping others and wanted to extend to others what had been extended to me through my friends at church. This is ultimately what made me want to pursue a career in the church, and how I became exposed to and fell in love with the reformed tradition. Time went by, I graduated and went to college and while in college took an intern position, a youth director position at a small church, and then an interim youth director position that ended up being a position that lasted 8 years. I then took the job where I currently work and went to seminary. I graduated seminary in 2018 and have been affirmed by my current congregation into my call for preaching and teaching.

I think my faith journey is a bit unique as I began working and serving in a ministry context at a young age. Being a 20-year-old "youth pastor" was a recipe for disaster but these experiences and the people I met along the way really brought the gospel to life for me. It was through my own missteps and interacting with people who didn't like or value me I was able to better understand the person of Christ.

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## **Statement of Faith**

**Michael Sarvis**

I believe in a Triune God that is God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit. I believe God the Son is the incarnation of the Triune God as the person of Jesus Christ. I believe I am a sinner in need of saving. I believe God does not share the human prejudice and division humanity struggles with. Christ's birth, ministry, death, and resurrection are acts of God showing God's love for creation and humanity. Jesus Christ is the vessel God has used to reveal to us God's power, spirit, and love – these things are the culmination of God's grace and what have saved me from my sinful nature. This encourages me to abandon human prejudice and division. I believe Jesus Christ's life and ministry represent grace, compassion, and liberation and we have been commanded to carry this message to the end of our lives, and follow Jesus as the ultimate example of how one is to live their life. I believe God loves every human being and that love is magnified through Jesus Christ. I believe life is a gift from God and we truly experience kingdom living when we chose grace, compassion, and love in our social interactions.

I believe the church is the gathering of people worshipping a Triune God, basking in the liberating, transforming power of faith in the Triune God revealed to us through Jesus Christ. I believe the church is the body of Christ. I believe the church is to model its community through study of canonical scriptures, acts of grace, love, and compassion. I believe these actions embody the Spirit of God. I believe every follower of Christ is an integral part of the body of Christ – called into some form of action or work that shows the world we are disciples of Jesus Christ. I believe the church is to try and always care for the poor, downtrodden, outcasts, and sick – regardless of what has brought them into these circumstances. The church's action of service stands to serve as a tool that deepens our understanding of God's love for us. In addition to various acts of service, I believe the church is to also proclaim God's love for us in the form of The Lord's Supper. I believe this meal welcomes and waits on us despite our sinful nature.

I believe baptism is the sign and seal of our faith, this symbolic action follows the model of Christ's death and resurrection. Taking time to remember our baptism serves as a constant and growing hope that grants us endurance to live a life like Christ with grace and compassion for our world as we hope for God's kingdom.

All of these truths of my faith are built on the foundational value of whatever we think of God, God is greater. It is because of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit I am able to be renewed every day, being flexible and open to new and wonderful things regarding my faith.

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## **Faith Journey**

**Rev. Peter Kim**

### **My Journey**

Two truths have been central to my life and have more meaning to me today than when I started my ministry 25 years ago: (1) God is sovereign and (2) I am loved by God, the Father.

With age and maturity, I am learning that life is unpredictable. Rather than an upward and straight trajectory, life is a winding, ascending, and descending journey. Yet through it all, God is sovereign. God is in control. I know that in all

things God works for the good of those who love God, who have been called according to his purpose (Romans 8:28).

God is sovereign in my trials and God is sovereign in my joys. God is sovereign in my mountain-top experiences and God is sovereign in my darkest hours.

God works to benefit me and not to harm me (Isaiah 29:11). This truth leaves little room for regrets. God's goodness and mercy enables me to be at peace about my past, present, and future. I know I am fully loved by a sovereign God who has wonderful plans for me to discover.

#### My Multiculturalism

At the beginning of my pastoral career, as a Korean-American, I followed the tradition and served in immigrant Korean churches. However, by doing so, I was not able to engage in other aspects of who I was and had passion for, especially my heart for every people, nation, and tribe.

As I grew as a minister, I was able to expand my wings. Not only have I served in ethnic immigrant congregations, but I have also been at white congregations, African American congregations, small in number to a several thousand-member churches. I've preached to elementary aged children, youth, college, and to those in their 90s. Moreover, I was a director at a seminary and other non-profit organizations, which gave me a perspective outside the church.

My multiethnic and multicultural background, unique experiences, and ability to connect with people from different races, ages, and vocations allow for flexibility, openness, and creativity in the way that I serve.

#### My Service

My passion, enthusiasm, and genuine love for Jesus, His Church, and His people are paramount to who I am. My mantra in my life has always been to be FAT: faithful, available, and teachable. I will bring this attitude of humility, availability, and teachability to the church that I am called to serve now.

### **Statement of Faith**

**Rev. Peter Kim**

#### God, the Father

I believe in the first person of the Godhead: God the Father, who is the Almighty Creator of all things. God desired to have fellowship with humanity; hence, God created man and woman in God's image (Imago Dei) to have eternal fellowship with the Creator.

But the man and woman sinned in disobedience. Consequently, they were alienated from their Creator, broken of their fellowship, and eternally separated and condemned.

In mercy, God sent messengers, prophets, priests, judges, kings, and other servant-leaders to woo people back, but to no avail. Something had to be done to reverse God's judgment and condemnation.

#### God, the Son (Jesus Christ)

Hence, I believe in the second person of the Godhead: God the Son, who is the living Word that came into this world in the form of a human being. I believe in the miraculous conception by the Holy Spirit and the virgin birth. I believe Jesus is fully God and fully human united in one person.

Jesus lived a sinless life among sinners in order to identify with them.

Jesus' purpose/mission was to forgive our sins by dying on the cross as our substitute in order to satisfy God's divine justice and accomplish salvation for all who trust in Jesus. Thus, Jesus restored our broken fellowship/relationship and reconciled us to God.

I believe salvation is received by having faith in Jesus, as well, Jesus' faithfulness to us- and not by our works. We are saved, justified, and made righteous through God's grace.

I believe that Jesus died and rose again from the dead on the third day, ascended into heaven, and now sits on the right hand of God the Father.

Jesus promised that he would send the Helper (Paraclete), who will guide, direct, and convict people of their sins.

#### God, the Holy Spirit

Therefore, I believe in the third person of the Godhead: God the Holy Spirit, who continually convicts us of our sins. I believe we are all in need of renewal and rebirth by from the Holy Spirit.

I believe in the indwelling presence and transforming power of the Holy Spirit, who gives to all believers a new life and a new calling to obedient service.

#### Holy Scriptures

I believe in the Holy Scriptures- the Word of God written and fully inspired by the Holy Spirit for God's people. It is God's revelation for our salvation and our divine guidance for life and faith.

#### Holy Communion

I believe as followers of Jesus Christ, we are called to remember what Jesus did on the cross as we take bread and the cup and celebrate God's grace to us.

#### Baptism

In baptism we are united with Jesus Christ and the Church. It is an outward sign/testimony of God's grace and faithfulness for God's people. In baptism we testify that we have been crucified with Christ and we are resurrected with Christ to new life.

#### The Church

I believe the Church is the espoused Bride of Christ, the living Body of Christ on earth; where Christ is the head and source of life. The Church exists to celebrate the living God, cultivate personal growth in Christ, love one another in Christ, and communicate Christ to the world through words and deeds, and making disciples of all nations.

#### The Second Coming

I believe in the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. I believe Jesus will come and reward the faithful ones, and say, "Well done my good and faithful servant. Come into your rest." Thus, we cry out with the cloud of witnesses: "Come, Lord Jesus."

### **Faith Journey**

**Rev. Suzanne Schafer-Coates**

My earliest memories are of church. Mom was the organist of our small country Presbyterian church in Sykesville, Maryland, and Dad was a Deacon (in the days when Deacons were the equivalent of Trustees). (Later Dad was an Elder/Chair of Worship/Clerk of Session. Later still, Mom was ordained an Elder.) I learned my faith, and it was nurtured by worship (hymns and the Apostles' Creed which I could recite by age three), my family, kind pastors, and the people of the church; I was probably about six years old before I realized that they weren't all related to me.

My journey of faith has been a constant journey throughout my life. It has taken me on many highways and byways, including high peaks and "sloughs of despond." It has taken me to an Episcopal boarding school (7-12 grades), Presbyterian Church camp, Presbyterian college (Florida Presbyterian/Eckerd), six years as a chorister in several Anglican churches, a conservative bible college (in London), Princeton Theological Seminary, and finally brought me into the UPCUSA (later PCUSA) as a newly minted M.Div.

I went to Seminary searching; I felt a Call during my Field Ed (Seminary Intern) experiences. My faith grew as I learned and experienced more about the love of the Triune God through my Seminary studies, daily chapel services, interaction with colleagues/peers, and the mentoring of my Field Ed supervisors.

Thirty-eight years as an active Pastor in the same Presbytery (Monmouth, NJ) showed me many sides of the Church, and sometimes my faith was severely tested. My Call and my faith stayed strong and I grew in trust that God was always with me...except for one time, when I was so wounded by the church that I felt empty, and for that period of time, my faith was carried for me by my colleagues and my loving congregation, until I emerged stronger; looking back, I know that God was with me in that wilderness.

Now, in retirement, God is, as God always is, as close to me as breathing. My journey in faith will continue beyond the bounds of this life. "Were the whole realm of nature mine, that were a present far too small; Love so amazing, so divine, Demands my soul, my life, my all." Issac Watts, 1707

### **Statement of Faith**

**Rev. Suzanne Schafer-Coates**

Before the dawn of time, the Lord God began to create. How God formed every thing that exists, earth, sky, moon, stars, the Milky Way and all that is beyond, no one knows. "My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts," says the LORD. "And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine." (Isaiah 55.8) After God created every thing there is, God created human beings, "in God's likeness" and forged with them a covenant of love. In God's likeness we might be, but God gave us the freedom to be fallible, sinful, and over and over again from time immemorial we broke the covenant of love with God, and wandered away, got lost. Over and over again God forgave us and brought us back, to the point where God came to live on earth with us in the human body of Jesus Christ. In Jesus we saw and felt God's love, mercy, and justice and we couldn't stand it, so in sin we killed him. We deserved to be abandoned by

God, but God in Jesus promised never to leave us or forsake us, not even in death, so God raised Jesus from death, thus assuring us that our sins will never separate us from God's covenant of love, even in our own death. And if we wander far away from God's love, God's Holy Spirit, a gift to us, will lead us back, and we'll find that we were never lost at all. The Scriptures of the Old and New Testament witness to me of this love, and I have come to believe in Jesus, the Word of God, through the words of the many writers who testify to him. The body of Believers who form the Church of Jesus Christ carry this witness into the present time, through the power of the Holy Spirit. In the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, we proclaim that the living Christ is with us and enfolds us in his love. My call as a servant and minister of the risen Christ is to proclaim and embody his love to those he calls to be his own, that is everyone. "Here might I stay and sing, no story so divine; Never was love, dear King! Never was grief like Thine. This is my Friend, in whose sweet praise I all my days could gladly spend." (Samuel Crossman, 1664)

## **Faith Journey**

**Rev. Jeffry Reynolds**

The character development of my faith has been dominantly influenced by geographic movements. These movements have introduced me to cultures, and fascinatingly diverse human beings, who have provided me with treasures that constantly stimulate and challenge my faith and spirit within.

I was born in the Finger Lakes region of Upstate New York on a small flower farm in Cortland. I had been baptized as a child in a small Protestant congregation, but when I was seven, my mother decided to move us into the local Roman Catholic Church. From that time until I left Upstate New York I was attending Mass, and the transformation of the Mass, created by Vatican II. Despite the move from Latin liturgies to the local tongue, the chanting, the incense, the light, and the darkness, all invited me to embrace the wonder of God's mysterious presence.

In 1980, after finishing four years of college without a degree, I decided to depart from Upstate New York by following a young Upstate woman heading to Florida. That relationship didn't last very long, but I remained in this new and different geographic location. In 1982, I met Jeanne, a native of Central Florida, who was working at the same place I was working, Walt Disney World. Our relationship grew, and in time she invited this Catholic boy to an evangelical Protestant para-church ministry called Young Life. She had been born into the Protestant world through the Presbyterian Church (USA), and in doing so she introduced me to an academic approach of understanding the Bible. The more quality you gave to biblical study, the more quality in your relationship with God. I missed an absence of God's mystery, but I also valued the sincere effort of studying the biblical text.

In time, Jeanne and I married, we left Disney for Young Life, she gave birth to our first child Casey (son), and we adopted a ten-year-old Haitian son, Berto (a faith journey story of its own, but if curious, feel free to ask when we meet). Columbia Seminary was ahead of us, but Admissions reminded me that Jeanne had received her undergrad degree, but I needed to finish my mine! The fastest way was to pack the family and go back to Ithaca College and take a full year of Religious Studies courses. These courses introduced me to world religions and the mystics of many major religions. This ten-month move back home challenged me and excited my faith significantly.

I returned South with my undergraduate degree that filled me with endless questions, but my seminary professors only cared to challenge this Catholic boy to wrestle with biblical understanding and Reformed Theology. I soon realized that this focus was critical for me if I was to engage, to care for, and to help lead Presbyterians in their faith journeys. In the end, I was grateful for the patience and the quality education I received from each seminary professor and the birth of our seminary daughter, Carlye (car-lee)!

In the years since seminary my faith has continued to be influenced by geographical movements that have challenged and expanded my faith. Living in the Appalachian culture for 28 years, travels with expatriate families throughout Saudi Arabia, visits to see students and their families in China, Taiwan, South Korea, and Japan, continued mission work in Mexico and within the Middle East in Jordan and Israel. In all these places sincere faith conversations took place. When curious I would share what this Jesus meant to me, and I was always eager to learn about the faith journey of others. Wherever I was in the world, I always found myself in a faith-filled conversation and in a position to discover new faith treasure for me to consider. I was always aware of God's mysterious presence, and God's Spirit urging me to love all neighbors anywhere from my home centered in Jesus.

## **Statement of Faith**

**Rev. Jeffry Reynolds**

As a Reformed Christian, I believe in the Holy Trinity - one God in three distinct persons: God the Creator, Jesus Christ the Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit the Comforter and Guide for believers.

I believe that in the beginning God's creation was declared by God as good, but God's uniquely free-willed human creation chose sin which rapidly distorted creation's original goodness. In time God's steadfast love chose to humbly enter God's creation as Jesus, the incarnation of God with us.

My faith in Jesus Christ, leads me to believe that Jesus is fully human and fully divine. Jesus lived a free-willed human life without sin, died on the cross for our sins, and resurrected on the third day. Through the death and resurrection of Jesus, we free-willed humans can now choose to be atoned from our sin and receive forgiveness and life beyond life.

The Holy Spirit guides and helps us in our daily lives. The Spirit convicts me to face my sin, comforts me in times of weakness, empowers me to grow and live out my faith internally and within a community of faith in Jesus.

Scripture is the authoritative and unique word of God and essential to our faith. It contains everything we need to know about God and God's plan for our lives. We must embrace the Old and New Testaments to deepen our understanding and relationship with God.

Being part of the church means being part of one body in Christ. Baptized in the Holy Spirit we are called to live in the humble ways that Jesus lived and taught us to live; to love God, to love others, and to love even those we reject with our first often cruel earthly impressions. To grow in God's definition of love is to honor God, to recognize sin and lay it aside, and awaken many a prodigal child to return home to a celebration.

Jesus calls us to participate in the sacraments of baptism and communion. In communion, we believe in the real presence of Christ with us, as we are nourished by bread and wine that represent his body broken and blood spilled for us. In baptism we are sealed and claimed by God in our lives. The sacraments are not just symbolic, they are also tangible ways in which we the Church experience God's bountiful grace and love.\_

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## **ACTION:**

3. Salem Presbytery approved the ordination of Michael Sarvis following his preaching and examination.
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### **COMMISSION ON MINISTRY**

Rev. Amanda Anderson and Rev. John Johnson, Co-Moderators

Rev. Amanda Anderson presented the following report on the work of the Commission on Ministry.

## **I. COMMISSION ACTION REPORTED FOR THE INFORMATION OF PRESBYTERY**

### **A. SECURING A PARISH ASSOCIATE AGREEMENT**

Concurred with the Session of **Rumple Memorial Presbyterian Church, Blowing Rock**, North Carolina, in securing a Parish Associate Agreement with the **Reverend Stephanie Hankins** for a period of one year beginning December 19, 2022.

Concurred with the Session of **Rumple Memorial Presbyterian Church, Blowing Rock**, North Carolina, in securing a Parish Associate Agreement with the **Reverend Ken Broman-Fulks** for a period of one year beginning December 19, 2022.

### **B. SABBATICAL PLAN APPROVAL**

That the sabbatical plan for **Reverend Kim Priddy** was approved for August through October 2023.

### **C. SECURING A STATED SUPPLY**

Concurred with the Session of **First Presbyterian Church, Thomasville**, North Carolina, in securing a Stated Supply contract with the **Reverend Susanne Martin** for a period of twelve months beginning April 9, 2023.

Concurred with the Session of **Dellabrook Presbyterian Church, Winston-Salem**, North Carolina, in securing a Stated Supply contract with the **Reverend Alberta McLaughlin** for a period of twelve months beginning April 1, 2023.

Concurred with the Session of **Springwood Presbyterian Church, Whitsett**, North Carolina, in securing a Stated Supply contract with the **Reverend Evelyn Crews** for a period of twelve months beginning April 1, 2023

for pastoral assistant work focused on the church's Vision 2020 & Beyond Initiative.

#### **D. LABORING OUTSIDE THE BOUNDS OF SALEM PRESBYTERY**

Approved the **Reverend Chris East's** work outside the bounds of Salem Presbytery in the Episcopal Diocese of Western NC, pending approval of the Episcopal authority there.

#### **E. RENEWING A CONTRACT WITH AN INTERIM PASTOR/TRANSITIONAL MINISTER**

Concurred with the Session of **First Presbyterian Church, Greensboro**, North Carolina, in renewing the Interim/Transitional contract with the **Reverend Deborah Conner** for a period of three months beginning March 28, 2023.

### **II. COMMISSION ACTIONS TAKEN ON BEHALF OF PRESBYTERY**

#### **A. COMMISSIONED RULING ELDERS/LAY PASTORS (RENEWAL)**

1. Concurred with the Session of **Trinity Presbyterian Church, Elon**, North Carolina, in renewing the contract of **Steve Braxton** to serve as their Commissioned Ruling Elder-Lay Pastor for a period of one year beginning March 16, 2023.
2. Concurred with the Session of **Bethany Presbyterian Church, Statesville**, North Carolina, in renewing the contract of **Tim Glaser** to serve as their Commissioned Ruling Elder– Lay Pastor for a period of one year beginning January 1, 2023.
3. Concurred with the Session of **Greenwood Presbyterian Church, Reidsville**, North Carolina, in renewing the contract of **Wayne Robertson** to serve as their Commissioned Ruling Elder– Lay Pastor for a period of one year beginning March 1, 2023.
4. Concurred with the Session of **Mount Vernon Springs Presbyterian Church, Siler City**, North Carolina, in renewing the contract of **Bill Browder** to serve as their Commissioned Ruling Elder– Lay Pastor for a period of one year beginning February 1, 2023.
5. Concurred with the Session of **Lansing Presbyterian Church, Lansing**, North Carolina, in renewing the contract of **Mae Weed** to serve as their Commissioned Ruling Elder– Lay Pastor for a period of one year beginning January 1, 2023.

#### **B. TRANSFER MINISTER INTO SALEM PRESBYTERY**

1. That the **Reverend Jeffry Reynolds**, a member of Northeast Georgia Presbytery, was received by Salem Presbytery on February 23, 2023.
2. That the **Reverend Peter Kim**, a member of Charlotte Presbytery, was received by Salem Presbytery on February 23, 2023.
3. That the **Reverend Matthew Bussell**, a member of Arkansas Presbytery, was received by Salem Presbytery on March 20, 2023.
4. That the **Reverend Bonita (Boni) Quandt**, a member of Grand Canyon Presbytery, was received by Salem Presbytery on April 26, 2023.

#### **C. MODERATOR OF SESSION**

1. That the **Reverend Olen Bruner** was appointed Moderator of Session for **Dellabrook Presbyterian Church, Winston-Salem**, North Carolina.
2. That the **Reverend Felicia Stewart Hoyle** was appointed Moderator of Session for **Second Presbyterian Church, Salisbury**, North Carolina.
3. That the **Reverend Brian Rummage** was appointed Moderator of Session for **Dogwood Acres Presbyterian Church, Asheboro**, North Carolina.
4. That the **Reverend R.C. Griffin** was appointed Moderator of Session for **Taylorsville Presbyterian Church, Taylorsville**, North Carolina, during Reverend Paul Sink's sabbatical.

#### **D. DISSOLUTION OF PASTORAL RELATIONSHIPS WHERE BOTH PARTIES AGREE**

Dissolved the Pastoral relationship between the **Reverend Cassandra (Casey) Riker** and **Jamestown Presbyterian Church, Jamestown**, North Carolina, effective April 9, 2023.

#### **E. PULPIT SUPPLY LIST**

Added the following individuals to the pulpit supply list:



Rev. Paul Ridolfi  
Rev. Steve Snipes  
Rev. Joanne Glaser  
Rev. Kevin Conley

#### F. TRANSFER MINISTER OUT OF SALEM PRESBYTERY

1. That the **Reverend Cassandra (Casey) Riker** was transferred to Central Florida Presbytery April 9, 2023.
2. That the **Reverend Steve Scott** was transferred to Charlotte Presbytery February 23, 2023.
3. That the **Reverend David Cagle** was transferred to Philadelphia Presbytery November 1, 2022.

#### G. SECURING A COMMISSIONED RULING ELDER-LAY PASTOR

Concurred with the Session of **First Presbyterian Church, Boone**, North Carolina in securing the contract of **Steve Marks** to serve as their Commissioned Ruling Elder-Lay Pastor from May 29, 2023 through September 4, 2023.

#### H. VALIDATED MINISTRY APPROVED (or REVALIDATED)

That the validation/revalidation of the ministry of the following individuals was approved for 2023:

##### *COUNSELING*

**Reverend Kent Berry**

##### *ACADEMIC*

**Reverend Jill Crainshaw** - Wake Forest Divinity

**Reverend Rebecca Todd Peters** - Elon

**Reverend John Senior** - Wake Forest Divinity

##### *CAMPUS MINISTRY*

**Reverend Glenn Otterbacher** - WFU

**Reverend Stephanie Hankins** - ASU

##### *CHAPLAINCY*

**Reverend Lynn Kunkle** - Hospice Iredell

**Reverend Alicia Wilson** - VA Salisbury

**Reverend Allison Simmons** - Iredell Memorial

**Reverend Blake Tickle** - organ donor program

**Reverend Francis Rivers Meza** - Atrium

**Reverend Tom Nesbit** - Hospice - Medi Home

**Reverend Amanda Lomax Davee** - Cone

**Reverend Virginia Wood** - Cone

##### *CONGREGATIONAL*

**Reverend Rachel Fitch** - 1st Greensboro

### III. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE ACTION OF PRESBYTERY

#### A. COMMISSIONING A RULING ELDER (LAY PASTOR)

That **Steve Marks** be commissioned as the Commissioned Ruling Elder-Lay Pastor of **First Presbyterian Church, Boone**, North Carolina, from **May 29, 2023 through September 4, 2023** and that he be granted permission to celebrate the Sacraments and Moderate the Session.

#### B. CALL EXTENDED TO CANDIDATE ACCEPTING A CALL IN SALEM PRESBYTERY

That following his successful examination, the call of **Graham Presbyterian Church, Graham**, North Carolina, to **Michael Sarvis**, a candidate under the care of Greater Atlanta Presbytery, to serve as Associate Pastor be found in order; and the terms of the call (printed below) be approved; and that the call be placed in his hands. The Commission on Ministry is satisfied that this congregation has complied with the EEO provisions of the Book of Order (G-3.0307) and the AAEEO Policy adopted by Salem Presbytery (July 1993) in offering this call, pending his successful examination and ordination. The effective date is June 1, 2023.

Effective salary  
Cash Salary: \$36,000  
Housing Allowance: \$15,000  
TOTAL \$51,000

Reimbursable expenses (by voucher)  
Automobile expense (at IRS rate per mile) \$1,500  
SECA Supplement: \$3,901.50  
Continuing Education \$1,500  
Moving Costs- provided

Full medical, pension, disability, and death benefit coverage under the Board of Pensions. Dental and vision coverage also provided.

Two months maternity leave at full pay or one month paternity leave at full pay.

2 Days off per week  
4 Weeks Paid Vacation  
2 Weeks Paid Continuing Education

In the seventh year of service, the congregation will provide for a three-month Clergy Renewal Leave (Sabbatical), continuing the salary and benefits for that period, and providing for pulpit supply in the pastor's absence.

#### **A. CALL EXTENDED TO MINISTER MEMBER OF SALEM PRESBYTERY**

1. That the call of **First Presbyterian Church, Greensboro**, North Carolina, to the **Reverend Matthew Bussell** to serve as Associate Pastor be found in order; and the terms of the call (printed below) be approved; and that the call be placed in his hands. The Commission on Ministry is satisfied that this congregation has complied with the EEO provisions of the Book of Order (G-3.0307) and the AAEEO Policy adopted by Salem Presbytery (July 1993) in offering this call. The effective date is June 11, 2023.

Effective salary  
Cash Salary: \$38,000  
Housing Allowance: \$35,000  
Deferred Compensation \$5,000  
TOTAL \$78,000

Reimbursable expenses (by voucher)  
Professional expense/Continuing Education/Mileage \$2,500 Moving costs- to be determined

Full medical, pension, disability, and death benefit coverage under the Board of Pensions.

Two months maternity leave at full pay or one month paternity leave at full pay.

2 Days off per week  
4 Weeks Paid Vacation  
2 Weeks Paid Continuing Education

In the seventh year of service, the congregation will provide for a three-month Clergy Renewal Leave (Sabbatical), continuing the salary and benefits for that period, and providing for pulpit supply in the pastor's absence.

2. That the call of **First Presbyterian Church, High Point**, North Carolina, to the **Reverend Peter Kim** to serve as Pastor be found in order; and the terms of the call (printed below) be approved; and that the call be placed in his hands. The Commission on Ministry is satisfied that this congregation has complied with the EEO provisions of the Book of Order (G-3.0307) and the AAEEO Policy adopted by Salem Presbytery (July 1993) in offering this call. The effective date is April 3, 2023.

Effective salary  
Cash Salary: \$46,855  
Housing Allowance: \$40,000  
TOTAL \$86,855

Reimbursable expenses (by voucher)  
Automobile expense (at IRS rate per mile) provided  
SECA Supplement: \$6,645  
Professional Expenses \$2,500 Continuing

Education \$4,500 Moving Costs up to \$5,000

Full medical, pension, disability, and death benefit coverage under the Board of Pensions. Family dental coverage also provided.

Two months maternity leave at full pay or one month paternity leave at full pay.

2 Days off per week

4 Weeks Paid Vacation

2 Weeks Paid Continuing Education

In the seventh year of service, the congregation will provide for a three-month Clergy Renewal Leave (Sabbatical), continuing the salary and benefits for that period, and providing for pulpit supply in the pastor's absence.

3. That the call of **First Presbyterian Church, Greensboro**, North Carolina, to the **Reverend Newton Cowan** to serve as Associate Pastor be found in order; and the terms of the call (printed below) be approved; and that the call be placed in his hands. The Commission on Ministry is satisfied that this congregation has complied with the EEO provisions of the Book of Order (G-3.0307) and the AAEEO Policy adopted by Salem Presbytery (July 1993) in offering this call. The effective date of this action is June 1, 2023.

Effective salary

Cash Salary: \$63,000

Housing Allowance: \$25,000

TOTAL \$88,000

Reimbursable expenses (by voucher)

Professional expense/Continuing Education/Mileage \$3,000

Full medical, pension, disability, and death benefit coverage under the Board of Pensions. Two months maternity leave at full pay or one month paternity leave at full pay.

2 Days off per week

4 Weeks Paid Vacation

2 Weeks Paid Continuing Education

In the seventh year of service, the congregation will provide for a three-month Clergy Renewal Leave (Sabbatical), continuing the salary and benefits for that period, and providing for pulpit supply in the pastor's absence.

#### D. REQUEST FOR HONORABLE RETIREMENT

1. That the **Reverend Lee Ellenwood** be granted the status of Honorably Retired effective May 16, 2023.
2. That the **Reverend Paul Rhodes** be granted the status of Honorably Retired effective June 4, 2023.

#### E. SERVICE OF HONORABLE RETIREMENT

That Salem Presbytery recognize the **Reverend Lee Ellenwood** and **Reverend Paul Rhodes** with a service of Honorable Retirement.

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#### ACTION:

4. Salem Presbytery approved that **Steve Marks** be commissioned as the Commissioned Ruling Elder-Lay Pastor at First Presbyterian Church, Boone, North Carolina beginning May 29, 2023 to September 4, 2023 and be allowed to celebrate the sacraments and moderate session meetings at First Presbyterian Church, Boone, North Carolina.
5. Salem Presbytery approved the call to **Michael Sarvis** from Graham Presbyterian Church and the call was placed in his hands.
6. Salem Presbytery approved the call to **Rev. Matthew Bussell** from First Presbyterian Church, Greensboro, and the call was placed in his hands.
7. Salem Presbytery approved the call to **Rev. Peter Kim** from First Presbyterian Church, High Point, and the call was placed in his hands.
8. Salem Presbytery approved the call to **Rev. Newton Cowan** from First Presbyterian Church, Greensboro, and the call was placed in his hands.

9. Salem Presbytery approved granting of the status of Honorably Retired to the Reverend Lee Ellenwood effective May 16, 2023, and participated in a Liturgy of Retirement.
  10. Salem Presbytery approved granting of the status of Honorably Retired to the Reverend Paul Rhodes effective June 4, 2023, and participated in a Liturgy of Retirement.
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## SALEM PRESBYTERY

**Rev. Paul L. Rhodes**  
Honorable Retirement

“I am an ordinary person following our extraordinary Lord in the real world.” So wrote Rev. Paul Rhodes many years ago. Humble beyond measure, Paul perhaps misses the significance his ministry has had on those crossing his path. He is, indeed, an extraordinary pastor.

Paul was ordained in July of 1985. Following calls in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Minnesota, Virginia, Pennsylvania and Missouri, God called him to Bethel Presbyterian Church in McLeansville, North Carolina.

And so, southward he came, with his wife, Nancy, bringing a deep devotion to Christ and a heart filled with multitudes of Godly, sacrificial love for this new flock. For years and years, Paul served his congregation and Salem Presbytery with energy, honesty, integrity, courage and forthrightness.

Through his ministry, he extended Christ’s invitation to people of every age and stage in life to connect with the living God, through worship and prayer, faithful teaching and preaching, and pastoral care rarely surpassed in the history of ministry.

His ministry has been a blessing to those in need, and an example to those in the pulpit. He has helped countless individuals seek Christ in time of need. He and Nancy have opened their house to all in need, including refugees and those in need of daily care. Nancy and Paul ministered to and cared for these folks selflessly, all the while thanking God for the opportunity.

Paul has led numerous Bible studies and for years has taken a leading roll in our ministers’ prayer group.

And, he has always taken the time to listen. The Bible tells us, “If anyone is a worshipper of God, God listens to him.” (John 9:31) In this, God has an able assistant in Paul. Central to his ministry (and to his rich friendships) is this willingness to listen, with interest, to another’s plight. His listening is punctuated by attention to hearing the hopes of others and the Holy Spirit’s presence in the conversation. Certainly, a welcome light in this world of loud conflict.

In all the years I have known him, Paul has been a courageous warrior for our Lord and Savior. Time and again he has spoken on the floor of Presbytery, pointing to Scripture and elaborating on its meaning to help guide us all in the discernment process.

... And regardless of the outcome, there was Paul, gathering with others on every side of the issue, leading in a prayer of thanks to Jesus Christ.

So, then, we can all be thankful to have had Paul in our lives as a colleague, fellow prayer-warrior, guide ... and friend. Perhaps there is no better tribute one could bestow on this humble preacher than this: he is, indeed, a man of God.

Rev. John C. Elam  
May 16, 2023

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## INVITATION TO LUNCH AND PRAYER OF BLESSING

Rev. Amanda Horan led Salem Presbytery in a prayer of thanksgiving for lunch.

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## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION AND THANKSGIVING LITURGY OF NECROLOGY

The Moderator, Elder Catreliia Hunter reconvened Salem Presbytery after lunch and led Salem Presbytery in prayers for intercession and thanksgiving, and observed a liturgy of Necrology.

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## CHURCH GROWTH AND TRANSFORMATION COMMITTEE

Rev. Lee Zehmer, Moderator

The Rev. Emily Larsen continued the seven-part series on vital congregations with the focus on the sixth mark of Caring Relationships. Rev. Larsen shared four ways to cultivate caring relationships within a church. First, to create opportunities for people to share their stories. Next, churches can create specific structures and procedures that can facilitate the caring ministry of the church. Thirdly, churches can develop a clear process for addressing conflict and seeking reconciliation during times of disagreement. Finally, churches can cultivate an attitude in the church that errs on the side of grace.

The Rev. Larsen also spoke about the dismissal of Epiphany New Church Development, led by Lou and Chris East, who ministered faithfully for years in Greensboro. As the pandemic began, Epiphany recognized that the time for their ministry was coming to an end. Rev. Larsen offered a prayer in celebration for their many years of ministry.

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## CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

David Vaughan

The following amendments to the Book of Order, approved by the 225<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (2022), were presented: 22E, 22O, 22P, 22S, 22U, 22CC, 22GG.

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### **ACTION:**

11. Approved motion to suspend standing rules requiring written vote on constitutional amendments.
  12. Motion passed to affirm the following constitutional amendments proposed by the 225<sup>th</sup> General Assembly: 22E, 22O, 22P, 22S, 22U, 22CC, 22GG.
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## EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Rev. Jennie Hemrick, Moderator

The Executive Council (EC) met on March 16, and April 20, 2023.

Regular reports were received from Barbara Smith (Transitional General Presbyter), Jodi Lingan (Designated Presbyter), and David Vaughan (Stated Clerk).

**For Information –** The Executive Council:

*Acting on behalf of Presbytery:*

- Approved the terms of sale for the Covenant Presbyterian Church (Winston-Salem) as conveyed by the Property Committee;
- Approved the recommendation of the Property Committee to sell the property of the long-closed Southminster/Waughtown Presbyterian Church at absolute auction;

*Business of the Executive Council:*

- Approved the docket for the May 2023 meeting of Presbytery;
- Received regular, detailed financial reports from the Budget and Finance Committee;
- Approved a draft of the "Campus Ministry Committee - Manual of Operations";
- Agreed to nominate the following for service on the Search Committee for a General Presbyter: Elder Jae Hoon Lee to serve a vacancy created by the resignation of Elder Charles Wallington;
- Approved minutes of previous meetings of the EC;
- Approved a plan recommended by the Property Committee that focuses on the process that Presbytery shall follow when a church closes;
- Agreed to nominate Elder David Vaughan for an extension of his term as Stated Clerk, from November 1, 2023 until February 28, 2024;
- Asked the Stated Clerk to arrange for live-streaming and ZOOM participation for the May Presbytery meeting;
- Heard an update on Camp Grier, and agreed with the current board's position to allow a non-Presbyterian presence on the board;
- Was informed that Rev. Paul Sink (Taylorsville) and Elder Donna Hines (Mt. Jefferson) will co-moderate the General Presbyter Search Committee.

**For Action –**

1. The Executive Council moves that the Presbytery elect Elder Jae Hoon Lee to the General Presbyter search committee.
2. The Executive Council moves that the Presbytery elect Elder David Vaughan to continued service as Stated Clerk through February 28, 2024.
3. The Executive Council asks the Moderator to recognize Elder Ronda Tatum to address the Presbytery on behalf of the Budget and Finance Committee.
4. The Executive Council asks the Moderator to recognize Rev. Kyle Goodman and Rev. Kim Priddy to speak to the Presbytery on behalf of the Stewardship Committee.

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**ACTION:**

13. Salem Presbytery elected Elder Jae Hoon to the General Presbyter search committee.
14. Salem Presbytery elected Elder David Vaughan to continued service as Stated Clerk through February 28, 2024.
15. Salem Presbytery received a thorough report from the Executive Council's Budget and Finance Committee regarding the Presbytery's financial sustainability.
16. Salem Presbytery received a report from the Stewardship Committee: The Mission Challenge Fund is used by the Presbytery to encourage churches to increase their mission funding. Each year the Presbytery selects two churches each to receive 50% of the fund's income. The churches' use of the money will be restricted to a mission project of their choice. The first award will go to that church achieving the highest

percent increase of annual funding for the Presbytery's mission budget during the most recent fiscal year. This year's recipient is Unity Presbyterian Church. The second award goes to the church spending the highest percent of their annual budget on mission during the most recent fiscal year. This year that award goes to Prospect Presbyterian Church in Statesville. The Committee gave thanks to the congregations who are giving and sending their pledges to support the Presbytery.

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#### ADJOURNMENT AND BENEDICTION

The Moderator announced the date of the next Presbytery meeting, September 9, 2023, in person only (live stream/Zoom participation TBA) at First Presbyterian Church, Burlington, North Carolina. The Moderator adjourned the meeting with the benediction.

Recorded by:  
Christine Ratledge  
Administrative Assistant



David Vaughan Stated  
Clerk

These minutes approved by Salem Executive Council, 8/17/2024.

## Appendix A

### Ministers Absent from the May 2023 Presbytery Meeting (excluding HR, unless she/he is currently serving a congregation)

Bates, Bill	Gipe, Will	Rives, Wilborn
Beard, Jim	Hanlin, Maria	Roberson, Angela
Beck, Fred	Hemrick, Jennie	Robertson, Wayne
Brim, Marty	Higgins, Cindy	Robison, Lee
Bumgarner, Jeffrey	Joyce, Boyd	Roseman, Dana
Burleson, Thom	Kim, Ki Seok	Sandlin, Mark
Cannada, Charles	Kunkle, Lynn	Schooley, Christopher
Choplin, Patty	LaDew, Richard	Smith, Jay
Conner, Deborah	Layman, Debbie	Spangler, Laura
Coppage, Jeffrey	Levens, Kristen	Stiles, Steven
Crainshaw, Jill	McLaughlin, Alberta	Sutphin, J. Grant
Crews, Evelyn	McLeroy, Douglas	Terry, Fred
Cyre, Ashley	Mitchell, Pamela	Tickle, Blake
Davee Lomax, Amanda	Moore, Sue	Todd, Mason
Dodd, Kevin	Nesbit, Thomas	Trapp, Danny
Durham, Larry	Oliver, Jones (Gregory)	Tuttle, Caroline
Dyer, Jack	Otterbacher, Glenn	Weed, Mae
Elam, John	Peters, Rebecca Todd	White, Curtis
Freeman, Keith	Porter, Timothy	Wood, Virginia
Freese, Scott	Purcell, Rick	Wray, Tom
Fulp, William	Puryear, Sam	
Gaither, Otto	Rivers Mesa, Francis	