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August 27, 2026

MEMBERS OF SALEM PRESBYTERY –
(Pastoral leaders and Clerks of Session – please share this with the elder commissioner(s)
from your fellowship.)

The ADDENDUM to the Presbytery Packet is herewith attached.

This includes:

- a. A revised docket; please note that the schedule has been altered;
- b. The quarterly report from the COM Examinations Task Force; and
- c. The quarterly report from all other COM Task Forces.

I look forward to seeing you next Tuesday, September 1, at Clemmons Presbyterian Church.

David Vaughan
Interim Stated Clerk

September 1, 2026

151st Meeting of
Salem Presbytery

Docket

Our Vision

**By the grace of God and the working of the Holy Spirit, Salem Presbytery is a catalyst
for transformational ministry, vital mission, and dynamic leadership
in local congregations and worshipping communities.**

9:00amv	Call to Order and Opening Prayer	The Rev. Dr. Matt Bussell, Moderator
	Organization of Presbytery	Moderator
	Establishment of Quorum	
	New Business (Written proposed motions to be given to the Stated Clerk before the meeting begins.)	
	Approval of Docket	
	Moderator's Welcome	Moderator
	Corresponding Members (Teaching Elders from other Presbyteries and ministers of other Christian denominations)	
	Ruling Elder Commissioners attending for the first time	
	Visitors and Guests	
9:15	Land Acknowledgement p. 4	Elder Laura Gaylor, Member Peace and Justice Task Force
9:17	Keynote Address	The Rev. Dr. Byron Wade, Executive Presbyter Ms. Ann Waple, Disaster Recovery Coordinator Presbytery of Western North Carolina
9:47	Committee on Representation p. 5	The Rev. Sam Perkins
9:51	Search Committee for new Presbyters	The Rev. David Ealy
9:56	Proposed dismissal of Thyatira PC pg. 6	CRE Jerry Blankenship, Co-Moderator
10:10	Worship and Celebration of the Lord's Supper	
	<i>Worship has been planned and coordinated by the Rev. Troy Leshner Thomas and the Rev. Jodi Langan.</i>	
11:20	Break	
11:30	Greetings and Report from Interim General Presbyter p. 13	The Rev. Jodi Langan
11:35	Stated Clerk's Report pg. 14	Elder David Vaughan, Interim Stated Clerk
	• Installation/Ordination minutes • Annual report of Roll • Report from Committee on Preparation for Ministry p. 29 • Report from Church Growth and Transformation p. 30 • Synod Assembly highlights p. 33	

11:37	Commission on Ministry	SEE ADDENDUM	The Revs. Jeff Smith and R. C. Griffin
11:50	Report from GA227 Commissioners and YAAD		
12:00pm	Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program		The Rev. Dr. Sung-Joo Park
12:05	Executive Council	pg. 42	The Rev. Dr. Andrew Taylor-Troutman
	• Budget and Finance Committee	pg. 43	Elder David Pinson
12:15pm	New Business		Moderator Bussell
	Announcements		
	Lunch Blessing		The Rev. Jorge Vasquez
	Adjournment with Benediction		Moderator Bussell
12:20	Lunch and Table Fellowship (Pre-registration required)		Fellowship Hall
1:20	Workshops		
	• Digital Disciples		Sanctuary
	• Spirit in Motion		Fellowship Hall
	• Just Foundations		TBA

Next Presbytery Meeting:
Saturday, November 7, 2026 9:00am
First Presbyterian Church, Boone

Mission of Salem Presbytery
Salem Presbytery connects, supports, and strengthens local congregations and worshipping communities to carry out Christ's transformative work of love and justice in the church and in the world.

The Revs. Newton Cowan and Jeff Smith, Co-Moderators**For Information:**

The following have successfully been examined by our task force for membership in Salem Presbytery.

Lea Slaton**Faith Journey**

My family laid the foundation for both my faith and my sense of ministry. My parents were partners in church ministry: my father served as an ordained Baptist minister of music, while my mother served as church organist and pianist. As you can imagine, my sister and I spent much of our childhood within the walls of the church. The fellowship and belonging I experienced there, especially through my youth group, shaped my understanding of what authentic Christian community can be.

During college, I began to venture beyond the boundaries of my childhood faith tradition. I was introduced to contemplative prayer, meditation, and spiritual reading—practices that opened new dimensions of spiritual life for me. It was a season of profound growth and also the first time I began to sense a call to ministry.

After graduating in 1990, that call continued to follow me. Although I knew I wanted a life devoted to service, I was not yet convinced that the church was the place where I was meant to serve. I believed social work might be the answer, so I attended East Carolina University and earned a Master's Degree in Social Work in 1996. Through my work in various human service positions, I discovered that I longed to care for people not only from a secular perspective, but from a spiritual one as well. I realized I could not fully separate the two.

Eventually, I attended seminary, was ordained through the Alliance of Baptists, and began serving as a supply preacher in churches of various denominations. Soon afterward, I was called to serve as pastor of Wilson's Mills Christian Church, a Disciples of Christ congregation, where I remained for twenty years. Those years formed me deeply. I learned what it means to truly live in community. I learned the ministry of presence—simply showing up for people in moments of joy, grief, celebration, and uncertainty. When my own father died, I experienced firsthand the grace of others showing up for me.

After his death, I began visiting Well of Mercy Retreat Center for silence, solitude, and time in nature. Some of my deepest prayers happened there, and many of them had no words at all. I returned three or four times a year, drawn by the stillness and sacredness of the place. When I learned that the executive director was retiring, something stirred deeply within me, and I applied for the position. To my delight, the search committee and I connected immediately, and now I find myself serving in a role that feels both unexpected and deeply right. Through this work, I have gained a renewed appreciation for creation and the many ways God speaks through it. Just this morning, I stood outside listening to mourning doves, songbirds, the breeze, and the babbling creek, and I thought: if the Holy Spirit has a voice, surely it sounds something like this.

Over the past year, my greatest spiritual challenge has been serving as caregiver for my mother after she fell and broke her hip. Since then, she has become fully dependent on others for daily care. This experience has stretched me far beyond my comfort zone, yet it has also deepened my understanding of love, humility, and service. On Maundy Thursday this year, while others gathered for worship, I was at home feeding my mother, brushing her teeth, and helping her into her pajamas. In that moment, those simple acts of care felt every bit as sacred as any worship service I have ever led.

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Although I deeply love my work at Well of Mercy, I do miss preaching from time to time. That longing is what led me to reach out to you. Rev. John Milholland, who attended Wilson's Mills Christian Church for a season, encouraged me to make contact. I believe the Presbyterian and Disciples traditions share much in common, and I would welcome the opportunity to offer supply preaching for churches in the area.

Lea Slaton

Statement of Faith

Writing a one-page statement of faith is difficult for someone who loves words. Having been raised in a household of church musicians, however, I find myself returning not first to doctrine books, but to hymns. Hymns have always carried faith into my heart long before I could fully explain it with language. The core of my faith can still be summed up in the very first song I learned: Jesus loves me. That simple truth, passed down to me by my parents, remains the foundation beneath everything else I believe. Jesus loves me. And Jesus loves us all — “red and yellow, black and white, they are precious in his sight.”

I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. I believe that in Jesus, humanity and divinity meet fully and beautifully. In his life, we see the very nature of God revealed to us — and that nature is love. Jesus entered fully into human life not only to save us, but to show us how to live in right relationship with God, with one another, and with ourselves. His life embodied compassion, mercy, justice, humility, and sacrificial love. He demonstrated freedom from the bondage of ego and self-centeredness, and he calls us into that same freedom.

I believe Jesus lived sacrificially to the point of death on a cross, and I believe death was not the final word. God raised him from the dead, and through the resurrection we are given hope that love is stronger than death, grace stronger than sin, and life stronger than despair. Christ's Spirit remains with us still — guiding, comforting, convicting, and renewing.

This is what that belief means to me: Jesus is a constant turning of my heart toward God. Jesus is not simply my ticket to heaven someday; Jesus is the beginning of heaven breaking into the world right now, and I am called to participate in that work. Because of Christ, sin and ego no longer have to be my default settings. In every moment, grace offers another way.

An unlikely image from my high school years in drama camp often helps me explain this. Each summer we memorized monologues, and many of them sounded stiff and lifeless when recited. One instructor introduced us to the acting concept of a “through line.” She taught us that actors must understand not only the words they speak, but the deeper motivation connecting every scene and every action. The through line is the steady force that drives the character from beginning to end.

Jesus Christ is my through line. His life, teachings, death, and resurrection are what I hope shape my life and inform my ministry. Whatever changes or challenges may come, Christ remains the constant thread running through it all. His Spirit — the Holy Spirit — is the driving force behind my faith, my hope, and my calling.

I believe God's fingerprints are all over scripture. Through study, prayer, worship, and faithful conversation, scripture becomes a living witness that guides us into deeper relationship with God. Within its pages are poetry, stories, lament, wisdom, and testimonies of divine encounter that continue to inspire and shape our own encounters with the holy. Scripture does not merely inform us; it forms us. It contains, indeed, “wonderful words of life.”

I believe the church, at its best, is an outpost of heaven on earth — a community of worshipers, disciples, servants, and healers. The church exists not only to make disciples, but to love one another, bear one another's burdens, and participate together in God's work of reconciliation and compassion in the world. At its best, the church is a place where grace is practiced, where all are welcomed as beloved children of God, and where people are reminded that they are never alone. We welcome people into our life of faith through baptism, and we remember God's love for us together through communion. Truly, “blest be the tie that binds.”

Larke Blanton**Faith Journey**

My faith journey flows from the grace of God, through the love of Jesus, by the power of the Holy Spirit. There are three main movements of this journey that impacted my calling. These movements include women of faith, wilderness experiences, and the will of God.

Much like the prophet Samuel and Paul's protege, Timothy, God moved first in my faith journey through the faith of a woman, plus three more. The first is my mother who activated her faith in the sovereignty of God in the suffering places as she navigated three life threatening experiences of mine before birth, at birth, and before I turned one year old. Her trust in God's providence is evident in her commitment to dedicate me, as Hannah did Samuel, to the Lord. The other women who impacted my faith journey were ordained ministers to roles of associate pastor, senior pastor, and college pastor across childhood, adolescence, and college. Each instilled in me the importance of knowing God more intimately and responding to the grace that was freely given. They encouraged study, speaking, and seminary pursuits. These women also had bodies like mine letting me know from an early age that women could be in, and are called to, leadership in ministry. Their faith encompassed those pursuits, too. In their love, I cannot remember a time when I did not know the love of Jesus that flowed from them. Upon completing confirmation, I publicly professed my faith and was baptized. My faith deepened in adolescence.

As I entered young adulthood, I also entered wilderness times when I found myself wondering and wandering (possibly wrestling) with how to practice that love and my faith. I pursued other career options until I was led, literally, to a wilderness called Camp Tekoa. As I wandered trails and waded under waterfalls, I embraced a calling to be the example of God's grace I saw in the four women of faith mentioned, for summer campers. I led devotions about courage in the face of fear using the lake high dive as an image. I talked about trust when doing the challenge course blindfolded and being led by a partner. I shared about faith— how we embrace it and encourage others in it (from Hebrews 11). My second summer there I heard and answered God's call to serve in ministry by the power of the Holy Spirit.

That is where the will of God for my life became abundantly clear. I aligned myself with God's call to be a beacon of hope and a bridge for belief using education and experience. I even got to preach young adult Sunday at my church! It was a full circle moment from the days I used to sit in the pew and write children's time messages. Two years later I graduated from App State and entered formal theological education at Wake Forest University's School of Divinity. I served a local church during that time as the youth and children's director. Completing my M.Div. opened the door to be ordained and installed as the lead pastor of ReGeneration Church, a unique congregation needing healing and hope as well as teaching and ways to practice the faith we professed in our community. God's will for education at Wake Forest along with the experience of pastoring ReGen provided the framework to pursue my pastoral purpose and participate in it. Three years ago, the will of God led me to First Pres Boone.

My faith journey highlights my response to the seal and covenant of a God who created, chose, and called me to ministry. The faith of those four women, the wilderness, and the will of God flamed passions placed in me by the grace of God, through the love of Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit. Those passions have become my purpose and calling. Thanks be to God!

Larke Blanton**Statement of Faith**

I believe in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The triune God is three persons in one being. They are the same in their oneness.

Genesis 1:1 speaks of God's process of creation. Through spoken word and the breath of life God created all that was made ex nihilo. I believe creation was good, as God created, until sin entered the world through deception and disobedience. Sin separates us from our Creator as we hide, rebel, and ignore God's commandments. It is a heart issue even more than a breaking the rules issue. Redemption is the way to return to our relationship with God. Through God's

love, mercy, and justice, God is faithful still. God offers redemption through salvation in Jesus, the only one ever without sin.

Acts 4:12 NRSV reads, “There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved.” I believe salvation comes only through faith in Jesus Christ, the cornerstone, as Peter declares one verse before. It is the work of God through Jesus delivering believers from sin and death to life. Jesus, bearing the cross, in his death and resurrection tore the veil that separated us from a relationship with God. It is through faith in Jesus’s death, burial, and resurrection, by the grace of God alone, that we are saved.

Jesus justifies us and the Holy Spirit sanctifies us. John 14:26 NRSV reads, “But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all that I have said to you.” Jesus promises a helper, to teach and remind, who lives within us, who convicts, comforts, and opens eyes to understand and see scripture.

John 1:1 NRSV reads, “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.” I believe scripture is the authoritative word of God, inspired by God, and points to God. Scripture is central, continual, and to be read in context. In addition to being written, The Word is also personified in Jesus and spoken through preaching. Scripture is, according to Hebrews 4:12 NRSV, “living and active”.

There are two sacraments: Baptism and The Lord’s Supper. Both are ordained by God and instituted by Jesus. In and through both we are drawn into the promises of God’s presence. In Baptism we are sealed and marked as belonging to God by God. The Lord’s Supper practices remembrance and a symbolic sharing of Christ with one another. This meal is more than remembrance. It is an act of participation, of God’s presence with us, bridged by the Holy Spirit, where we are nourished and sent to the world. Both are outward signs of an inward grace and experiences of God’s grace shared in a community of believers. Faith is personal but it is not private.

Acts 2:32 NRSV reads, “This Jesus God raised up, and of that all of us are witnesses.” I believe the Church is a group of witnesses who share a unified mission and ministry to glorify God and share the good news of Jesus Christ as they welcome others into the faith family. The church is a body of believers brought together in a covenant community to respond to the salvation received, honor the sacraments, and serve through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Tim Parker

Faith Journey

I do not recall a time in my life when the Christian Faith was absent. My mother was a single parent, and her family was always there, looking after us when she worked and provided for us. My grandmother was the single most influential person of faith in my life. For those years before I went to school, she was my daytime caregiver. Every morning was a careful routine for this homemaker, who had once taught school in one room buildings. When she studied her Bible each morning, I was expected to be quieter, and it was evident she was in deep study. I also remember she had a written prayer list that seemed to include every family member as well as others. My aunt would later tell me that the reason for this was that if she ever started forgetting our names, she would still remember it was still important to pray for us. I wanted the faith my grandmother had, and to this day I strive for it.

Shortly after I started school, we moved into the town nearby and I would spend all my youth growing up in Pilot Mountain, NC. When a friend of mothers offered to take us to Sunday school nearby, we began attending First Presbyterian Church. Prior to that time, we had attended small congregations at Jessup’s Grove Baptist and Pine Ridge Presbyterian. Both churches were started by our relatives, and many family members are interred there. I still consider those three churches as home. Summers of Vacation Bible School at each filled my mind with adventures in Old Testament stories, as well as New Testament lessons of Jesus. His miracles and parables are some of my favorite passages and I love to teach them.

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My interest for teaching the Bible began with two influential teachers at first Presbyterian who always taught with cheerfulness and a gentleness of love. They were sharing His word and His love where it was needed with these young hearts and minds. It was there as a young teenager at First Presbyterian Church that I would accept salvation and declare my faith in Jesus, my savior and redeemer. It was there that I learned the shorter catechism, sang in the choir, and even played the part of Stephen the Martyr in a play. I died a very dramatic Stephen death on the stage. I was about twelve years old at the time.

After I had attended College and started a family, I was asked to teach in a church we attended at that time. Preparing and expanding my knowledge and love for scripture became something that I loved and tried to do with depth of preparation. I would teach Sunday school for most of the next 40 plus years. My church passion will always be strongly connected to teaching scripture. I have taught in Methodist, Baptist, Moravian, and Presbyterian and I loved them all.

My first encounter with the pulpit occurred while serving in Afghanistan in 2008. I had become friends with the only army chaplain in Helmand Province, assigned to the Royal Irish, UK. We were coalition partners and he often attend a Bible study with us. In July that year, he made a three week trip back to the UK and asked if I could help with his Sunday worship. When I asked what part, he smiled and said, "Well, all of it." I preached for three Sundays, and it humbled me greatly.

When I came back to the Presbyterian Church about five years ago, I soon became an elder at Wentworth Presbyterian. I had considered going back to graduate school in Christian Counseling, but more grandchildren started arriving in our life and things got busy. Our pastor was commissioned as a CLP and that piqued my interest. I discovered the Church Leadership School in Morganton with the Western Presbytery almost two years ago, enrolled and will soon graduate this June. This intense two school years has answered many questions in my faith.

I just wanted to be a better Elder and not mess up when the Pastor asked me to fill in. Since then, my internship for the Presbytery at Shiloh Presbyterian in Burlington with Lee Shores has taught much more. I have discovered joy in pastoral care, especially to those nearing end of life. I teach twice a week and since my co-intern's passing, I realize how much he taught me about pastoring. I am becoming more confident in the pulpit but never want to be there without the leading of the Holy Spirit. The people at Shiloh have responded with kindness and encouragement as we share the journey for now. I love them. As much as I love serving in His church, my greatest personal joy still comes from conversations of faith with my family, especially my grandchildren.

The Holy Spirit has been my companion since my salvation was made sure decades ago, but in the last two years I have experienced a relationship with Him that is even more powerful and humbling. I do not know where my journey will take me, but I trust the Shepherd that leads me. I love sharing the scripture and striving to give God's people His word and His presence through worship and fellowship. I confess, I still ask Him to not let me mess things up. I believe we should always strive to be authentic and true.

Love God and love each other the same way he has loved us. I seek to be his faithful servant and serve Him as he leads me to do it.

Tim Parker

Statement of Faith

I believe in the one true God. I believe he is true in his word and message found in the Bible. I believe God created all things. I believe he had a plan from the beginning, for our rescue from the curse of sin. His love was so great for us that he gave of himself as atonement for our return. His love is so great for us that he sent his Son, Jesus, to teach us about himself, his character, his personality, his righteousness and glory. His amazing grace and love. Jesus sacrificing himself willingly as the shepherd and the lamb. The perfect lamb, the perfect man. All of this for us. And He sent his Spirit to be our guide, our comforter, and our teacher. The Spirit who opens God's message and seals it in our hearts. Jesus said we are to go and tell. The Spirit of God leads us to who we tell and what we witness.

It can be difficult to understand one God, in three forms, but still one. I see it clearly when I look at the three purposes in which God is in communion with his redeemed people. I see a God who, in love, created all things to be good. He demonstrates this constantly as the God of justice and mercy. Through His love he demonstrates his power over sin and its curse. As our atonement and resurrected Savior, Jesus demonstrates God's love is sacrificial and serving, kind and gentle. I believe God finds us, we don't find God. I believe what John Balchin stated when he wrote that Jesus shows us God's truth, glory and love by his life and by his death. And that He is the only way back to God.

The Holy Spirit of God has always been acceptable and somewhat understandable in purpose, but recently I began to see how much I did not know. The Holy Spirit is a promised gift from Jesus. We should be eager and diligent to know as much as we can about the presence of God's Spirit, who lives and dwells in our hearts and minds. We should teach this more.

I believe in the power of Scripture. Dr George Thompson, Jr tells us, that in scripture, God is revealing himself and His story to us. Scripture is His love story to us. The sacraments are a sign God has inserted Grace within us. I believe Baptism demonstrates we are an adopted member of the family of a loving God, washed by the cleansing blood of Christ. Our Sin, dying in his death; and our redemption raised in His resurrection. God has established communion to remember that in Jesus we are brought into God's presence through His broken body and shed blood. I believe that at the Last Supper, Christ offered the cup and bread to everyone, and they all took it. I believe it was his sign that grace was extended to all. It is an invitation to worship God and to remember His grace.

I believe God is the God of all. For everyone cursed by sin, God has paid an enormous price to pay our sin debt. I believe God chooses, and even though I do not understand how, I trust him. It's not conditional on your sex, race, heritage or any condition the world sees as exceptional. It is not a matter of being good enough because all fall short and all need his grace for the same reason. Regardless of how you fall short, Jesus measures up.

The fact that a loving God, as Creator, Saviour and Spirit, through undeserved merit on my part, chooses to love me and then entrust me with His message of reconciliation is humbling. It is overwhelming and hard to fully understand, but it's also too magnificent to ignore. I love to see his Church, his body of believers enter the church building, worship in Him and with Him. And I rejoice when that same church, leaves the building, being led by his Spirit to go where the Spirit leads and proclaim the Gospel to those whom the spirit directs.

He loves us, He saves us, He equips us and He sends us. I pray to be obedient to his will and purpose.

Alex Bowers

Faith Journey

I was raised in a Christian family who were part of a small Baptist church in Randolph County. As founding members of this church, my parents were heavily involved in that church. During a revival service when I was young, I was moved to make a confession of my sins and to accept Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior. It was in that church that I was baptized, first took the Lord's Supper and was extended the right-hand of fellowship as a member. I have many wonderful memories of that church as a child and as a youth. However, during my college years at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and during early adult years, I fell away from the church.

Thankfully, I was drawn back to the fellowship of the church in 1988 upon my marriage to my wife, Kelly. We first attended Whispering Pines Presbyterian Church, which her family was attending and which her mother was an elder. Upon the birth of our sons in the early 1990's, we moved our membership to Frist Presbyterian Church of Asheboro. However, changes in my job caused us to relocate to Rocky Mount NC in 1995 and then again in 2012 to Springboro OH (just outside of Dayton). We attended Presbyterian churches in both Rocky Mt and Springboro in which I served as a ruling elder at various times. As an elder, I served on various committees, lead Bible studies, and participated in the local missions of these churches.

While at Englewood Presbyterian Church in Rocky Mount, I was called and trained to be a commissioned lay minister through New Hope Presbytery. As a lay minister, I was asked, from time to time, to fill the pulpit not only in my

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home church but also in other small churches. Likewise, during our time in Ohio with Covenant Presbyterian Church, I was also trained and allowed by the Presbytery of the Miami Valley as a ruling elder to preside over the Lord's Supper within my home church when our ordained minister was absent. God blessed me not only by allowing me to proclaim His Word in worship, but also by calling me to visit the sick in hospitals, to comfort those in mourning, and to help with missions to feed the hungry. It was through these experiences that I learned that God blesses us not only with what He provides to us, but also more importantly, He blesses us by using us in the service of His kingdom.

In 2021, Kelly and I relocated back to Asheboro to assist with her aging father. After being away for over 26 years, we returned to First Presbyterian Church of Asheboro and found many of the brothers and sisters that we had known in the past. During the four years since our return, I have come to know and love many at FPC from the in-home fellowship, study, and prayer times. I currently serve as a ruling elder, on the endowment team, and on the service and outreach team. In the past, I have also served on the congregational care team at FPC.

In early 2026, I was approved by the Presbytery of Charlotte to preach and assist both Star Presbyterian Church and Macedonia Presbyterian church in Montgomery County while their called minister is on medical leave. I am scheduled to preach at these churches approximately once a month through August of this year. I believe that being an elder and lay minister is not about leadership, but about servanthood. I pray that all servants of Jesus Christ our Lord will hear his voice clearly through the written Word of the Bible and through the guidance of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Alex Bowers

Statement of Faith

I believe in one God, the Father, creator of all things and who was, is, and will always be in control of all things. I believe in God's unfailing love for all of humankind and in his desire to have a relationship with us. I believe in Jesus Christ, the Father's only son, who was sent by the Father to be the savior of the world through his death on the cross and his resurrection from the grave. I believe that the life and words of Jesus are the revelation of God in its fullest to the world and that when we see and hear the words of Jesus, we gain our clearest understanding of God. I believe in the Holy Spirit that was with God when the world was created and when Jesus Christ was conceived, but who is with us still to empower us into full enjoyment in our relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ, our Lord and savior. I believe that God the Father, Jesus Christ the Messiah, and the Holy Spirit, who are three in one and one in three (i.e. the Trinity), that are bound and inseparable from each, but which speak to us in distinctive ways so we as humans can related and know the one true and holy God of all.

I believe God created all things good for his glory and enjoyment, but that humankind, beginning with Adam, rebels against God and becomes separated from God and his purposes. In his love, God provided his commandments and the prophets of old to show humankind where they have rebelled and fallen short of his glory and to call them back into a relationship with Him. But like lost sheep, humans are unable to find their own way back to God.

I believe Jesus Christ came to world as both fully God and fully human to restore that lost relationship. While in the world, Jesus not only taught of God's love, but expressed his authority through signs and miracles. Through his love and authority, Christ Jesus lived a perfect life that allowed him to be a willing sacrifice to atone for the sins of the world. His death and resurrection provided redemption for all that believe in Him to be forgiven of sins and to live in an eternal relationship with the holy God of the universe. Through the Sacrament of Baptism, we are sealed and adopted into God's family as his child for His purposes. Likewise, through the Sacrament of Communion, we remember that Christ Jesus suffered and gave his blood for the new covenant of the forgiveness of our sins. Both Baptism and Communion are outward signs of internal grace offered to us by Jesus Christ, our Lord.

I believe the Holy Spirit was given to provide comfort and power to share the Gospel with others in the world through both words and deeds. The community of believers in Jesus Christ is the church through which we are to express God's love, mercy, grace, and forgiveness to everyone. The church is called to walk humbly and yet to speak boldly in its desire for justice. I believe the Holy Scriptures speak the authoritative Word of God to be used by the church. Other historical documents such as creeds and confessions are also useful to guide the church and prevent fallacies in individual interpretations.

Finally, I believe that Christ Jesus, our Lord and King, will come again to fully restore all things in His kingdom. As no one except God the Father knows the time of His coming, we must keep watch and be prepared. I believe prayer opens our hearts as to how we should prepare for His coming and to respond in an attitude of gratitude as we await His promise of restoration to be fulfilled.

Nolan Chilton

Faith Journey

I vividly remember myself standing outside the church at FPC Burlington upon returning back from a summer service trip to the local “Meals on Wheels” prior to my sophomore year of High School. While waiting for my ride, I remember my youth pastor at the time approaching me and asking if I had interest in being a Youth Elder and representing the youth group as an advisor in meetings. This was the moment for me that I felt my understanding of call begin. The thought that somebody within the church felt as if I would be a good fit to lead and wanted to hear what I had to say, shifted my experience of church and faith from something that I just did because that was what everyone did, to something that became profoundly meaningful and a part of my identity. It was from that point on I would go to find myself intricately involved in the workings of the church, from asking my parents to go on Sunday morning even when we were not planning on going as a family, to constantly finding myself in the mix of whatever youth ministry opportunities were presented to me and even then asking for more to be available. It is through this that I truly felt like I had grown in faith and understanding.

By the time I shipped off for college I found myself wondering what the next step in my faith journey looked like in a context that was so unfamiliar to me. During this time, I bounced around from several different fields of study that I thought would point me in the direction of my future. In my time in sports science classes and communication classes, I couldn’t help but find myself utterly disinterested in the material. Growing more and more distraught, I finally met with my academic advisor who shared with me a simple but profound thought that I credit to where I am today. He said that “your field of study should meet at the intersection of what you’re passionate about and what you’re good at”. For me, this instantly clicked. There is nothing I was more passionate about than the faith that I had grown up with and came to love and find belonging in. The second part of my advisor’s guidance intrigued me. If what I am passionate about is my faith, then what does it mean to be “good” at it? Being someone who was raised in athletics, my mind synced that to be “good” at something is to practice it. This is when I began to think about God calling me towards the possibility of ministry.

Towards the end of my time studying, I began to look for opportunities to put into practice the education I had been learning when I came upon an interim youth ministry position at FPC Greensboro. Reminded that youth ministry was what had drawn me to this call, I thought what a wonderful opportunity to serve others in the same role and ministry that served and meant so much to me. I served at FPC Greensboro for 9 months and in that time, I came to find a passion and a joy in youth ministry. Since then, I have moved on and have been served in several youth related roles. First as the Director for Children and Youth at Mt. Bethel Presbyterian Church Durham for 3 years while completing my M.Div. at Duke Divinity School and also as a Youth Director at FPC Greensboro. Through this time of ministry and discernment, I like to think I have come to know what it means to be “good” at faith. For me, being “good” at faith now looks like having confidence in my beloved-ness, a child of God, called by God to walk with others in their faith journeys, to seeing faith develop through their eyes and ultimately leading them to knowing, trusting and believing in their beloved-ness also.

Nolan Chilton

Statement of Faith

I believe in one God, maker of heaven and earth, of things seen and unseen. I believe in the triune nature of God, appearing in three persons, the father, son and the holy spirit. I believe we are made imago Dei, called into relationship with God and each other. I believe humanity, while created good, is born into a life of sin due to the fall. This sinfulness separating us from God required an intercessor in the person of Jesus Christ to come and conquer sin on our behalf. I believe through this act of God’s grace we are justified and brought into right relationship with God. Through the work of the Spirit, we are continually sanctified in the process of turning towards God and becoming more Christlike.

ADDENDUM 9

I believe in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, the Word become flesh, both fully human and fully divine. I believe in his virgin birth, his sinless life, his miracles and his teachings, his vicarious atonement, his earthly resurrection, his ascension into heaven and his return during the hour we do not expect.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, God's power in action, that dwells inside of all believers and in the world. I believe in the sanctifying work of the Spirit, making the believer more like Christ.

I believe the Bible is the authentic word of God, crafted by divinely inspired human hands. The Word of God for the People of God. I believe in the Bible containing history, wisdom and prophecy that points us to the truth revealed in the gospel of Jesus Christ. I believe in the Bible as a road map of life with God and each other.

I believe in the sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist as visible signs of God covenant of grace. I believe in one Baptism as a sign and seal of God's grace in which we are claimed as members of Christ's body and the church. I believe in a Baptism, once administered and not repeated, preceding and not depending on our own response and understanding. I believe in the Eucharist as a means of grace in which all are called and invited to the Lord's table. I believe Christ himself extends the invitation, not the church. I believe the bread and cup to represent the body and blood of Christ, broken and shed for us as reminders of Christ's atoning sacrifice that we are to remember until he comes again. I believe in the real spiritual presence of Christ in the meal, received by faith through the power of the Holy Spirit. I believe in the Eucharist as a foretaste of the Kingdom of Heaven in which we share communion with Christ.

I believe in the Resurrection of the Body and the life everlasting.

I believe in the Church as the body of Christ. Composed of believers of every time and place here to participate in the good news of the gospel. I believe we are called to share this good news with others. As members of the body of Christ, I believe we are called to love ourselves and each other in the same way Christ loved us. I believe as the body of Christ, the church is called to seek justice, welcome the stranger and work towards reconciliation in a broken world. I believe the unity given through Christ to the church is a unity that holds diversity and that all people, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, ability, sexual orientation or economic standing bear the image of God and are called into full participation in the life of the church. I believe the gospel moves the church outward towards the poor, marginalized and suffering, because Christ himself is present there with them.

I believe in the government of the church, in which Christ alone is the head of the church and all authority in the church is derived from him and not owned by any individual or office. I believe in connectional polity in which no person governs alone but in which decisions are made through the shared discernment of sessions, presbyteries, synods and the General Assembly. I believe in equal footing among ministers and elders, in which teaching and ruling elders together exercise leadership and guidance of the church, reflecting the priesthood of all believers and the wisdom of the Spirit given to the whole body. I believe in the role of a teaching elder to order worship and prepare the people for ministry in Jesus' name.

COMMISSION ON MINISTRY
The Rev. R. C. Griffin, Moderator

I. COMMISSION ACTION REPORTED FOR THE INFORMATION OF PRESBYTERY

A. SECURING AN INTERIM PASTOR/TRANSITIONAL MINISTER

1. **Reverend Dr. Tim Auman** has been approved to serve as the Interim Pastor at **Danbury Community Church**.

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

1. Concurred with the Session of **First Presbyterian Church**, High Point, North Carolina, in renewing the contract with the **Reverend David Smith** as Transitional Pastor for a period of six months beginning June 1, 2026.

C. SECURING A TEMPORARY SUPPLY

1. Concurred with the Session of **Mt. Vernon Presbyterian Church**, Woodleaf, North Carolina, in securing a Temporary Supply contract with the **Reverend Ladale Benson** for a period beginning October 1, 2026, and ending September 30, 2027.

D. SECURING A DESIGNATED ASSOCIATE PASTOR

1. Concurred with the Session of **First Presbyterian Church**, Boone, North Carolina, in securing a Designated Associate Pastor contract with the **Reverend Larke Blanton** for a period beginning July 5, 2026 and ending July 4, 2027.

E. TEMPORARY SUPPLY RENEWAL

1. Concurred with the Session of **New Creation Community Church**, Greensboro, North Carolina, in renewing the Stated Supply contract with the **Reverend Gray Clark** for a period of one year beginning July 1, 2026.
2. Concurred with the Session of **Springwood Presbyterian Church**, Burlington, North Carolina, in renewing the Stated Supply contract with the **Reverend Evelyn Crews** for a period of six months beginning June 1, 2026.
3. Concurred with the Session of **Grace Presbyterian Church**, Winston-Salem, North Carolina, in renewing the Stated Supply contract with the **Reverend Pamela Mitchell** for a period of three months beginning July 1, 2026.

F. LABORING OUTSIDE THE BOUNDS OF SALEM PRESBYTERY

1. Approved the **Reverend Diane Givens Moffet** working outside the bounds of Salem Presbytery as the Transitional Pastor of Germantown Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia Presbytery.

G. REQUEST TO CELEBRATE COMMUNION

1. That **Reverend Lea Slaton** be allowed to celebrate communion on July 5, 2026, at **Fifth Creek Presbyterian Church**.
2. That **Elder Janet Pence** be allowed to celebrate communion at **Third Creek Presbyterian Church** on August 9, 2026.
3. That **Commissioned Ruling Elder–Lay Pastor Tim Parker** be allowed to celebrate communion at **First Presbyterian Church**, Morganton, North Carolina.
4. That **Commissioned Ruling Elder–Lay Pastor LaQreshia Bates-Harley** be allowed to celebrate communion at **Spencer Presbyterian Church**, Spencer, North Carolina on October 4, 2026.

5. That **Elder Jimmy Coore** be allowed to celebrate communion at **Mount Vernon Springs Presbyterian Church**, Siler City, North Carolina on October 4, 2026.

II. COMMISSION ACTIONS TAKEN ON BEHALF OF PRESBYTERY

A. SECURING A COMMISSIONED RULING ELDER/LAY PASTOR

1. Concurred with the Session of **First Presbyterian Church**, High Point, North Carolina in securing an internship contract with **Elizabeth A. Cooper** to serve as their Commissioned Ruling Elder-Lay Pastor for a period of twelve months beginning January 1, 2026.

B. COMMISSIONED RULING ELDERS/LAY PASTORS (RENEWAL)

1. Concurred with the Session of **First Presbyterian Church**, Mount Airy, North Carolina, in renewing the contract of **Rachael Brooks** to serve as their Commissioned Ruling Elder-Lay Pastor for a period of one year beginning August 1, 2026.
2. Concurred with the Session of **Second Presbyterian Church**, Salisbury, North Carolina, in renewing the contract of **James Harley** to serve as their Commissioned Ruling Elder-Lay Pastor for a period of one year beginning June 1, 2026.
3. Concurred with the Session of **Shiloh Presbyterian Church**, Burlington, North Carolina, in renewing the contract of **Tim Parker** to serve as their Commissioned Ruling Elder-Lay Pastor for a period of one year beginning August 1, 2026.
4. Concurred with the Session of **New Salem Presbyterian Church**, Stony Point, North Carolina, in renewing the contract of **Rainey Ratchford** to serve as their Commissioned Ruling Elder-Lay Pastor for a period of one year beginning June 1, 2026.
5. 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 15, 2026.

C. VALIDATED MINISTRY APPROVED

1. That the validation of the ministry of the **Reverend Kristine Miles** at Well-Spring was approved for 2026.

D. MINISTER TRANSFERRING TO SALEM PRESBYTERY

1. That the **Reverend Kristine Miles** a member of the Presbytery of the Coastlands, was received by Salem Presbytery on December 4, 2025.
2. That the **Reverend Meredith Gantt** a member of the Presbytery of Eastern Virginia, was received by Salem Presbytery on April 23, 2026.
3. That the **Reverend Lynn Bryant** a member of the Presbytery of Charlotte, was received by Salem Presbytery on April 23, 2026.
4. That the **Reverend Sandy Lacey** a member of Central Florida Presbytery, was received by Salem Presbytery on March 26, 2026.

E. MODERATOR OF SESSION

1. That **Commissioned Ruling Elder-Lay Pastor Hyatt Grissom** was appointed Moderator of Session for **Community in Christ Presbyterian Church**, Greensboro, North Carolina.

F. MODERATOR OF CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

1. That the **Commissioned Ruling Elder-Lay Pastor David Boger** was appointed Moderator of Congregational Meeting for **Dellabrook**, Winston-Salem, North Carolina to take place on September 6, 2026.

G. SABBATICAL PLAN APPROVAL

1. That the sabbatical plan for **Reverend Jorge Vasquez** was approved.

H. DISSOLUTION OF PASTORAL RELATIONSHIPS WHERE BOTH PARTIES AGREE

1. Dissolved the Pastoral relationship between the Reverend Kristen Levens and Stony Creek Presbyterian Church, Burlington, North Carolina, effective September 30, 2026.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE ACTION OF PRESBYTERY

A. ORDINATION OF CANDIDATE ACCEPTING A CALL OUTSIDE SALEM PRESBYTERY

1. That following his successful examination by Salem's Task Force on Examinations, Salem Presbytery ordain **James Nolan Chilton**, a candidate under care of Salem's Committee on Preparation for Ministry, to the office of Teaching Elder (Minister of Word and Sacrament) and to concomitantly transfer his membership to the Presbytery of East Tennessee. Mr. Chilton has accepted a call to Westminster Presbyterian Church in Knoxville and has been successfully examined by the Presbytery of East Tennessee. The effective date for this action is September 6, 2026.

B. MINIMUM COMPENSATION STANDARDS FOR 2026

1. That Salem Presbytery adopt the attached changes in the minimum compensation of Ministers of Word and Sacrament (both installed and non-installed), Commissioned Ruling Elders, and Certified Christian Educators, for 2026.

C. REQUEST FOR RETIREMENT

1. That the **Reverend Lisa Mullen** be granted the status of Retired effective March 1, 2026.

D. SERVICE OF RETIREMENT

1. That Salem Presbytery recognize the **Reverend Lisa Mullen** with a service of Retirement.

Welcome into membership of Salem Presbytery

Kristie, Meredith, Lynn, Sandy, Larke and Nolan have been received into membership of Salem Presbytery, and we welcome them to labor among us. Let us join in celebration as Kristie, Meredith, Lynn, Sandy, Larke and Nolan are welcomed.

Presbytery Moderator: As a people striving to participate fully in God's mission, we delight in the newness of fellowship as more saints join in God's work in Salem Presbytery -

**All: saints called again into service,
and new voices and visions that join the strain!**

Presbytery Moderator: Our celebration becomes more joyful in worship and work as people of all ages, races, ethnicities, and worldly conditions join together as the body of Christ at work in the world.

All: We delight in the brilliant diversity of mind, body, and spirit that God calls into such hard and holy work.

Presbytery Moderator: So bless these new faces and voices, bodies and beings, striving ever-faithfully to respond to the call to serve you.

All: And bless us all as we learn to work joyfully together.

Presbytery Moderator: Most importantly, we rejoice this day in the gift of remembering our common call:

All: seeking, by God's grace to pray for and serve the people with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love.

Presbytery Moderator: And we serve this common call better as we are faithful to one another, praying for and supporting our new members as they discover their gifts in this new ministry.

All: Come, Holy Spirit, and move in us that we may become of one heart - loving all people and working for the reconciliation of the world.

Presbytery Moderator: Let us join our hearts in prayer –

Spirit of Unity, Covenant God, we have come from many places for a little while. We have come on journeys of our own to a place where journeys meet here in this time and place. Charge us to be ever-grateful for the gifts to share and celebrate as new passion, energy, and service join the teeming saints of Salem Presbytery. Guide us faithfully forward, most gracious Jesus, as we work together to be your hands and feet in the world. For the sake of the kingdom - here and coming - we pray,
Amen.

**2027 MINIMUM ANNUAL COMPENSATION
FULL-TIME INSTALLED MINISTERS OF THE WORD AND SACRAMENT**

Salary:	\$38,194.73
Housing Allowance (or free use of manse including utilities)	\$11,832.03

(Note: if given a housing allowance, it must be specified in writing and recorded in the minutes of the Congregational Meeting that approves the Terms of Call.)

Auto Reimbursement:	Provided
(This means that all business miles approved by the church's treasurer are to be reimbursed at the current Federal Allowable Rate)	

The church shall include supplemental income to the Pastor for ½ of Social Security costs. As the Pastor is considered self-employed by the government, the Pastor is responsible for paying 100% of this cost.

Board of Pensions	
Pension & Disability Dues:	Provided

Medical Dues:	*Provided
(Use BOP Dues Calculator at www.pensions.org)	

Continuing Education and/or Book Reimbursement	\$1,500
It is recommended that this time be used creatively and with flexibility.	

Vacation:	4 weeks
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Study Leave:	2 weeks
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Family Leave (with full pay) includes but is not limited to:	12 weeks
Leave to accommodate the birth, foster placement, or adoption of a child; Leave to provide care to an ill or disabled family member; Leave to heal following a loss or tragic event.	

Days off per week	2 days
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Moving (to the field) expense reimbursement	Provided
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Triennial Boundary Training Expense	Provide
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If the ministers are provided with a manse in which to live, the churches to which such ministers are called are encouraged to establish an equity allowance for the minister.

In the seventh year of service, the congregation is expected to provide for a three-month Clergy/Educator Renewal Leave (Sabbatical), continuing the salary and benefits for that period, and providing for supply in the educator's absence. Congregations unable to provide this leave shall consult with the Commission on Ministry.

These figures do not include the cost of someone to fill the pulpit when the pastor is away, or the cost of Worker's Compensation Insurance, or other similar expenses.

Updated 11/15/2025

**2027 MINIMUM ANNUAL COMPENSATION
PART-TIME MINISTERS OF THE WORD AND SACRAMENT NOT IN INSTALLED POSITIONS**

Salary: Compensation is to be calculated at a percentage of the full-time minimum of \$50,026.76	¾ time: \$37,520.07
	½ time: \$25,013.38
	¼ time: \$12,506.69

Housing Allowance:	A portion of the above compensation may be designated as "Housing Allowance" per IRS rules.
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Vacation:	Four (4) weeks commensurate with the work week, including four (4) Sundays
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Part-time workers (less than 20 hours) are not eligible for Pension and Medical participation offered by the Board of Pensions PCUSA. However, employing organizations may offer eligible BOP products to eligible employees, and should they choose, provide some or all of the cost of the product. See www.pensions.org.

Auto Reimbursement: Provided (This means that all business miles approved by the church's treasurer are to be reimbursed at the current Federal Allowable Rate)

In the seventh year of service, the congregation is expected to provide for a three-month Clergy/Educator Renewal Leave (Sabbatical), continuing the salary and benefits for that period, and providing for supply in the educator's absence. Congregations unable to provide this leave shall consult with the Commission on Ministry.

Updated 11/15/2025

2027 COMMISSIONED RULING ELDERS MINIMUM COMPENSATION

Salary:	\$40,021.41
(based on 80% of the minimum annual compensation for full-time installed Ministers of Word and Sacrament	(\$769.64/week divided by number
In addition, please add \$100 for every year of service, up to ten (10) years.	contracted hours)

Vacation	
(Four (4) weeks commensurate with the work week, including four (4) Sundays	4 weeks

Updated 11/15/2025

2027 MINIMUM ANNUAL COMPENSATION CERTIFIED CHRISTIAN EDUCATORS

Salary:	\$50,026.76
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Auto Reimbursement:	Provided
(This means that all business miles approved by the church's treasurer are to be reimbursed at the current Federal Allowable Rate)	

Board of Pensions	Provided
Pension & Disability Dues:	

Medical Dues:	
(Use BOP Dues Calculator at www.pensions.org)	Provided*

Professional Development:	\$1500
It is recommended that this time be used creatively and with flexibility.	

Vacation:	4 weeks
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Study Leave:	2 weeks
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Family Leave (with full pay) includes but is not limited to:	
Leave to accommodate the birth, foster placement, or adoption of a child; Leave to provide care to an ill or disabled family member; Leave to heal following a loss or tragic event:	12 weeks

Days off per week

2 days

Triennial Boundary Training Expense

Provided

These figures do not include position costs such as Worker's Compensation, Social Security and Medicaid tax.

In the seventh year of service, the congregation is expected to provide for a three-month Clergy/Educator Renewal Leave (Sabbatical), continuing the salary and benefits for that period, and providing for supply in the educator's absence. Congregations unable to provide this leave shall consult with the Commission on Ministry.

* "It is the ethical duty of the church, and therefore all churches are mandated to provide 100 percent of the cost of the major medical insurance premiums to cover Teaching Elders/Certified Christian educators and members of their families."

Updated 11/15/2025

SALEM PRESBYTERY**The Rev. Lisa Florence Mullen
Retirement**

The tale of Pastor Lisa is a tale as old as time. I hesitate to put her career in the past tense because, as all of you retired clergy know, your service to Presbytery never ends. Just today Lisa took part in a COM Transition Team meeting online that lasted a couple of hours. A common concern voiced by those on the cusp of retirement runs something like this: "What will I do with all that free time?" As a nearly lifelong pastor's spouse, I can thank you that you have solved that problem in advance.

Lisa found her pastoral calling after stints as a recreation therapist, chaplain intern, and summer church camp director, among other posts. She carried the PCUS banner at the reunification of the northern and southern Presbyterian churches. After a crash course in French (in France), she studied at the Ecumenical Institute in Switzerland, where she did not disturb John Calvin at his work, but did take a side trip to the Vatican, where she shook hands with Pope John Paul II. She told him her name and where she was from, whereupon the pontiff cryptically replied, "Ah – the United States" and moved on to the next admirer. Afterward, she visited with Christians behind the Iron Curtain. Perhaps most astoundingly, she spent six weeks at the Grandchamp Community, a silent Swiss Reformed sisterhood. I can't say how silent she was while there, but at least she tried.

There is so much to say about her 37 years of ordained ministry that I won't even try. Instead, I will share some magical moments from her time at Union Theological Seminary in Virginia. During most of my time there she was across the street at PSCE, but Brook Road was hardly an insuperable obstacle between us.

Our paths continued to crisscross for the next three plus years, with many a lively confabulation over the dinner table in Lingle Hall.

We all know Lisa as a person of great spiritual depth who balances that deep religious introspection with an irrepressible extraversion that draws everyone and everything into her orbit like a benevolent black hole.

Lisa's convivial approach to life has always been balanced by deep reflection upon theological matters. In a theology class with the jovial John Leith, Lisa challenged her professor's assertion that the sacrament of the Lord's Supper had to be received at a level of cognitive understanding with her own question of how, if that were true, persons with mental disabilities could take the sacrament. Dr. Leith paused and said he would have to think about that. Lisa's life, both in and out of the ministry, has been about eliciting that "I'll have to think about that" response in everyone in her expansive orbit.

At a later examination, this one before this presbytery, she was asked to discuss a favorite parable of hers. It takes a lot to cause a shining star like Lisa to freeze. As she related the encounter to me, it degenerated into "Tell us about a parable, Lisa – any parable." Her acceptance was never really in doubt, though, was it? How could God's frozen people ever be denied the warmth of Lisa's loving embrace?

ADDENDUM 19

Many of you know that Lisa's first full-time pastoral call was to First Presbyterian Church in High Point. All of the aforementioned experiences served her well at First, where in one eventful year she conducted or helped conduct fifty funerals. Suffice it to say that right away her parishioners began to experience the depth of Lisa's insight and care, in the faces of infants she baptized as well as the faces of the ill, the aging, and the dying. Lisa has always been an ever-present help in all sorts of trouble. I've marveled at her pastoral sensitivity and ability to find the right words, or just as often, to simply listen, as I eavesdropped (unintentionally) on her calls with members of the church.

Quite recently I have heard Lisa talk about missing working in the church, and considering taking up part-time employment at another church, with so many of them needing pastors. I hope you all will not encourage this for at least a little space of time, as I want to selfishly keep her to myself for a while. After all, she's my pastor too.

John Christopher Mullen