

ONE HUNDRED FORTY-NINTH STATED MEETING MINUTES OF SALEM PRESBYTERY

February 10, 2026

The One Hundred Forty-Ninth Stated Meeting of Salem Presbytery, held on Tuesday, February 10, 2026, at St. James Presbyterian Church in Greensboro was called to order and opened in prayer by the Presbytery Moderator, Commissioned Ruling Elder Steve Braxton at 9:00 a.m.

ENROLLMENT:

Commissioners		Commissioned Ruling Elders	6
Elders	52	Lay Pastors	1
Ministers	64	Interim General Presbyter	1
		Stated Clerk	1
		Presbytery Moderator	1
		Presbytery Staff	1
		TOTAL:	127
		(+Visitors - 41)	168

The following were present for this meeting of Presbytery:

Ministers (64):

Asher-Lawson, Marybeth	Harris, Randy	Ostlund, Hannah
Barrett Todd, Katie	Harrison, Evan	Otterbacher, Glenn
Bates, Timothy	Henry, Dave	Perkins, Sam
Blankinship, Joe	Horan, Amanda	Peters, Rebecca Todd
Bowers, Erin	Hoyle, Felicia	Phillips, Jon
Burleson, Thom	Hoyle, William	Pitts, Wes
Bussell, Matt	Huddelson-Gillespie, Kate	Rigel, Jessica
Campbell, Kathryn	Johnson, John	Rummage, Brian
Clark, Gray	Lambeth, Jay	Schafer-Coates, Suzanne
Conley, Kevin	Lansden, Phanta	Sink, Paul
Cowan, Newton	Lawson, Scott	Smith, David
Crews, Evelyn	Layman, Debbie	Smith, Jay
Dew, Frank	Lee, Charlie	Smith, Jeff
Duffield, Jill	Lenger, Ruth	Stevens, Courtney
Eads, Will	Leshner-Thomas, Troy	Taylor-Troutman, Andrew
Ealy, David	Lunde, James	Todd, Mason
Fearing, Stephen	Martin, Jon	Vazquez, Jorge
Goodman, Kyle	Milam, Jud	Wilson, Alicia
Greene, Patricia	Milam, Travis	Wilson, Emily Schlaman
Griffin, R.C.	Moss, Stephen	Wisner, Leigh
Hamilton, William	Mullen, Lisa	
Harper, Kate	Musser Gritter, Joshua	

Ruling Elder Commissioners (52):

Alamance	Wells, Katherine	Concord	Kinney, Della
Alamance	Brinkley, Becky	Elkin	Ashman, Ron
Asheboro 1st	Batten, Bill	Faith	Gibson, David
Bixby	Robertson, Carter	Fellowship	Kirstner, Mark
Boone	Bahleda, Melissa	Fifth Creek	Bowman, Jared
Chapel in the Pines	Olson, Jeff	Grace	Worley, Ernestine
Church of the Cross	Becton Newman, Kay	Greensboro 1st	Gatten, Florence
Clemmons	Ring, Jennifer	Greensboro 1st	Gillespie, Tom
Clemmons	Sanford, Beverly	Greensboro 1st	Peddrick, Rob
Community in Christ	Gaddy, Bobbie	Griers	Morris, Bill

Guilford Park	McLean, Anthony	Parkway	Black, Ronald
Guilford Park	Swain, Ann	Pilot Mountain	Smith, Wilson
Hawfields	Trollinger, Ira	Pittsboro	Morel, Bobbie
High Point 1st	Briggs, Elizabeth	Rumple Memorial	Clay, Debbie
High Point 1st	Mellinger, Debbie	Rumple Memorial	Richardson, Rick
Highland	Duane, Hannah	Salisbury 1st	Coggin, Steve
Highland	Chalk, Ken	Salisbury 1st	Miller, Richard
Jamestown	Bean, David	Springwood	Crum, Mary Jane
Jamestown	Hjelmquist, Pam	St. James	Ward-Alexander, Lucia
John Calvin	Ward, Shannon	St. Paul, GSO	Lancaster, Gayle
Lexington 1st	Stalvey, Celia	St. Paul, HP	Davis, Doris T.
Logan	Tatum, Ronda	Starmount	Fitchett, Arthur
Mt. Vernon	Culbertson, Dwayne	Taylorsville	McCoy, Vickie
New Creation	Alexander, Loretta	Westminster	Fish, Marilyn
Oak Ridge	Dick, Eileen	Westminster	Gaffney, Lou Anne
Oak Ridge	Drugman, David	Westminster	Hooker, Larry

Commissioned Ruling Elders (6):

Blankenship, Jerry
Brooks, Rachael
Grissom, Hyatt

Harley, James
Parker, Tim
Purcell, Rick

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

Interim General Presbyter (1): Jodi Lingan

Stated Clerk, Salem Presbytery (1): Vaughan, David

Presbytery Moderator (1): Braxton, Steve

Presbytery Staff (1): Ratledge, Christine

CALL TO ORDER AND OPENING PRAYER

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

MORNING WORSHIP AND CELEBRATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

Acknowledging Black History Month, Salem Presbytery participated in worship and celebrated the Lord's Supper under the leadership of Rev. Dr. Phanta Lansden and CRE LaQreshia Bates. The Rev. Cecelia (Cee-Cee) Armstrong, Co-Moderator of the General Assembly of the PC(USA) presented a previously taped sermon based on John 11:38-44.

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.

APPROVAL OF DOCKET

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

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.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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

INTERIM GENERAL PRESBYTER REPORT

Reverend Jodi Ligan

God said, "Let there be light." And so light appeared.

*God saw how good the
God separated the light from
God named the light Day and*



*light was.
the darkness.
the darkness Night.*

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.*

Our Mission

*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.*

Epiphany Greetings Siblings of Light!

The very first thing God created was light. **We stand squarely in the Light** at the beginning of a new year, with new leadership, new opportunities, new committee assignments and a lot more 'newness' to come. In what can seem like a glacial rate of change in the Church, this Presbytery has been moving at a refreshing pace over past six months. This is necessary and gratefully welcomed.

You are used to hearing me share unpleasant facts about unpleasant realities, however...**One year ago**, the Presbytery Empowerment Assessment was presented focusing on the interplay of the budget, church statistics, and low spiritual energy. You embraced changing how we **connect, support and strengthen** this Presbytery. **In the last 6 months alone**, you have taken the critical step of creating the **STORM** task force

to re-evaluate our vision and its relevancy in light of our current realities, while proactively leaning into the place where God is calling us. They have also undertaken the enormous effort of addressing staffing, committee structures, revenue policies, and budget models. **You will want to pay special attention to their report at Presbytery.**

Empowered leadership will have a spotlight in this upcoming year. Resources are being engaged to assist us in leading **transformational ministry, vital mission, and dynamic leadership.** *Yours gifts and talents are needed more than ever in such as time as this.* **Welcome to a new Day in Salem Presbytery!**

With a grateful heart to be serving with you, jodi

STATED CLERK REPORT
Elder David Vaughan

For Information:

Administrative Commission for Unity Presbyterian Church

I have appointed the following individuals to serve on an Administrative Commission to work with the Session of Unity Presbyterian Church in their discernment to be dismissed to another Reformed denomination: the Rev. Timothy Bates, Elder Dwayne Culbertson, Elder Karen Fisher, the Rev. Lara Musser Gritter, and the Rev. Felicia Stewart Hoyle.

Annual Statistical Reports

Churches (clerks of Session, most notably) have until February 20, 2026 to report your 2025 statistics using the PCUSA reporting system. If you find that you cannot meet this schedule, reach out to me right away.

Administrative Commission for Reid Memorial Presbyterian Church

Reid Memorial PC has, at present, one active elder. I will soon appoint an Administrative Commission to assume original jurisdiction of the church in order to recruit, train, and ordain/install a suitably-sized Session.

For Action:

Dismissal of Administrative Commission for Dogwood Acres Presbyterian Church

This AC has completed its work and its final report is attached. I will move that the Presbytery dissolve this AC with our sincere thanks. The Rev. Brian Rummage moderated this group; also serving were Rev. Jodi Langan, Elder Mike Sherrill, and Elder Rosalie Watts.

ACTION:

2. Voted to dismiss (with gratitude) the Administrative Commission for Dogwood Acres Presbyterian Church, Asheboro.

PEACE & JUSTICE TASK FORCE
Reverend Amanda Horan

The Presbyterian Peace Fellowship (Peace USA) webinar series *Evicting the American Dream* continues, with remaining sessions on February 16 and 23. The Peace and Justice Task Force is considering the U.S. housing crisis as the focus for a 2026 in-person Presbytery event. Details will be shared via the Task Force newsletter and *Salem Matters*.

A vigil honoring Wyatt Outlaw will be held February 22 at 6:00 p.m. on the south steps of the Alamance County Courthouse. The event is sponsored by the Alamance County Community Remembrance Coalition in partnership with the Equal Justice Initiative.

The Coastal Carolina Presbytery and the New Hope Presbytery will host the United Presbyterians in Action Matthew 25 Conference on March 21, 2026, at First Presbyterian Church in Sanford. The keynote speaker will be Rev. Dr. Floretta Barbie Watkins of the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic. Registration details will be forthcoming.

The requirement to complete racial equity equipping every three years was reiterated. The next *What Lies Between Us* session will be held March 17 at Elkin Presbyterian Church. The program will be offered twice annually; cost is \$50, including materials and lunch.

REVIVING SALEM'S MISSION COMMITTEE

Reverend Dave Henry

It was reported that the Presbytery is not currently functioning with an active missions committee. Reference was made to Marge Carpenter, Moderator of the 207th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA), and her emphasis on the dual call of Christian mission—both local and global.

At the request of the Executive Council, work has begun to revitalize or reconstitute a Missions Committee for the Presbytery. Congregations were invited to nominate individuals interested in serving.

It was noted that many congregations are actively engaged in local mission work; therefore, the proposed committee's focus would be national and international missions. Current Presbytery partnerships in Kenya and the Democratic Republic of the Congo through the Hunger Committee would continue, with hopes of expanding international mission partnerships.

An invitation was extended to members of the Presbytery to participate in a July mission trip to the Amazon region of Peru, serving in and around Iquitos, in partnership with Medical Missions Incorporated. The mission work includes construction projects, medical clinics, Bible schools, water filtration initiatives, library support, and relationship-building with local churches and communities.

Those interested in serving on the committee or learning more about the Peru mission trip were asked to make contact.

CHURCH GROWTH AND TRANSFORMATION

Reverend Emily Wilson

It was reported that 2025 was an exceptional year for the Presbytery. Congregations and related organizations engaged their communities through creative ministry and outreach initiatives. These efforts resulted in lives being touched, people nurtured, and new energy brought into congregational life. Examples from grant recipients were shared to illustrate these successes. The grant application is available on Salem Presbytery's website.

A video featuring Reverend David Ealy was shared, in which he discussed the booklet *Discovering God's Future*. The booklet provides a step-by-step guide for discerning where God is at work in the local neighborhood and how congregations can engage in that ministry. It was noted that the discernment booklet can serve as a valuable tool in the congregational transformation process. The booklet is available for download at: <https://www.salempresbytery.org/church-growth-and-transformation> or contact Rev. Emily Wilson for printed copies at: RevEmilyWilson@gmail.com

COM TASK FORCE ON EXAMINATIONS

Reverend Newton Cowan, Co-Chair & Reverend Jeff Smith, Co-Chair

The Rev. Hannah Ostlund was successfully examined for membership in Salem Presbytery.

Hannah Ostlund - Faith Journey

I was born into a faithful family. My paternal grandmother is the one who brought Presbyterianism into our family, but both sides of my family history have roots in Catholicism and other forms of Protestantism. Born in 1998, I was baptized Catholic. However, after my younger sister Abby was born, my parents decided to raise us in my father's Presbyterian heritage.

My sister and I grew up in a military family with my father serving in the U.S. Army. This resulted in many moves around the continental United States. While I cannot name every school I attended or the neighborhoods we lived in, I do remember that each move came with its own new adventure of finding a church family. Therefore, most of my childhood memories revolve around church activities from Vacation Bible School and Sunday School to later adventures in youth groups and on youth mission trips. All of these memories have acted as the great foundation of faith I have built on as I journeyed toward being an ordained minister.

It was not until we moved for the last time as a family to Southern Pines, North Carolina, that my own sense of call began to take shape more clearly. As an attendee of Brownson Memorial Presbyterian Church, I was mentored by the Rev. John Hage through the end of high school and beyond. While I did not know it yet, I do believe that John sensed a deeper call to ministry that I could not begin to articulate.

After graduating from high school, I embarked on my undergraduate studies at Salem College. It was there that I began to engage in Interfaith Council, Presbyterian Student Ministries, and all of the lovely Moravian traditions that are so deeply infused in Salem's legacy. I also had the opportunity to work for three summers at Montreat Conference Center. It was during these summer months that I met many seminarians and began to discern a call to seminary. At this time, I was studying Non-Profit Management and Religious Studies, but had planned to work in the non-profit sector. "I'm not a pastor" was a common phrase for me. However, as I neared graduation in May of 2020, I knew that God was calling me to go even further, and all of those wonderful seminarians I had met in Montreat had shown me the endless possibilities that could come from a seminary education.

I began my MDiv studies at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary in August 2020, still not thinking I was going to be a pastor. God had other plans. During those three great years at PTS that included a field education placement at Crafton Heights Presbyterian Church, where I met another mentor of mine, Rev. Dave Carver, I felt even more called to congregational ministry and to being a pastor.

Staring down graduation in May of 2023, I realized that I desired more hands-on experience as we continued to exit the depths of the pandemic. This led me to look into pastoral residency programs and ultimately to the Lake Fellow Residency at Second Presbyterian Church in Indianapolis, IN. This residency provided me with endless opportunities for personal and vocational growth (including my ordination in November 2023) as well as access to incredible mentors and experiences. Second has prepared me immensely for all that the ministry has to offer. I look forward to continuing to learn, grow, and minister with the saints of First Presbyterian Church of Salisbury.

Hannah Ostlund - Statement of Faith

I believe in One, triune God. I believe in the Trinity; Creator, Christ, & Spirit, sharing in divinity & power, yet distinct. I trust in the sovereign Creator who breathed life into the earth. While God is ruler of all, God is also a companion to humankind, He calls each of us into community, knowing that all creation is good.

God's love for us, His beloved creation, is God's reason for sending His only son on our behalf. Jesus Christ was conceived by Mary & the power of the Holy Spirit. I believe Jesus is fully divine

& human. As the living incarnation, Jesus acts as a present reminder of the love & grace witnessed in Scripture. Jesus Christ taught creation the power of love. His teachings are what we are called to follow. Jesus welcomed children to his feet & ministered to those in need. Through Jesus' teachings, my faith & ministry are directly encouraged.

I believe in the redeeming power of Jesus Christ's death & resurrection. Having ministered so radically, Jesus was condemned to death & crucified. As women prepared to anoint his body, Jesus was resurrected to sit on the right hand of God. Jesus' resurrection reminds us of the power of the grace given by God. Through Jesus' death & resurrection, we are promised the forgiveness of sins & eternal life with God. The works of our human lives do not justify this promise, it is found in Jesus' sacrifice alone.

I believe in the movement of the Spirit. The Spirit guides us to emulate the love, hope, & healing of Jesus Christ that we are shown in Scripture. The Spirit not only encourages us toward a life more in tune with that of Jesus, but also gives us the skills to use along the way. Each of us is touched by the Spirit & pulled closer in relationship to God. We need the comfort of God, the guidance & sacrificial promise of Jesus, Scripture, the body of believers, & the glue of the Spirit to create a beautiful mosaic image where love & hope prevails.

I believe in the Sacraments of Baptism & Communion. They are physical signs of the Trinity's presence & promise through ordinary elements of water, bread, & juice. When we engage the Sacraments, we remind ourselves of the commitment to claim our faith boldly. I believe that Baptism reminds us God has called us into relationship with Him & the community of faith, before we know it. I believe the Communion seals the sacrifice made by Jesus for the forgiveness of sins & the promise of new life. As we take part in this Sacrament, we are reminded that at God's table, all are welcome & sent forth as disciples.

I believe in the power of the Church. I trust in the Church's mission to bring forth the teachings & love of the Trinity. We are called to be neighbors to all in the world whether we believe the same things. We are the hands & feet of God as members of His Church. Therefore, we are called to promote peace for all God's creation. I trust in God's calling in my life to lead faith communities toward a world that is more kind & just in the image of the Trinity.

COMMISSION ON MINISTRY
Reverend R.C. Griffin, Moderator

I. COMMISSION ACTION REPORTED FOR THE INFORMATION OF PRESBYTERY

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

1. Concurred with the Session of **Concord Presbyterian Church**, Statesville, North Carolina, in securing a contract with the **Reverend David True** as Transitional Pastor for a period of one year beginning November 30, 2025.

B. STATED SUPPLY RENEWAL

1. Concurred with the Session of **New Creation Presbyterian Church**, Greensboro, North Carolina, in renewing the Stated Supply contract with the **Reverend Gray Clark** for a period of six months beginning January 1, 2026.
2. Concurred with the Session of **Shallowford Presbyterian Church**, Lewisville, North Carolina, in renewing the Stated Supply contract with the **Reverend Leigh Wisner** for a period of one year beginning January 1, 2026.
3. Concurred with the Session of **Grace Presbyterian Church**, Winston-Salem, North Carolina, in renewing the Stated Supply contract with the **Reverend Dr. Pamela Mitchell** for a period of six months beginning January 1, 2026.
4. Concurred with the Session of **Faith Presbyterian Church**, Greensboro, North Carolina, in renewing the Stated Supply contract with the **Reverend Dr. Fred Beck** for a period of one year beginning January 1, 2026.

II. COMMISSION ACTIONS TAKEN ON BEHALF OF PRESBYTERY

A. COMMISSIONED RULING ELDERS/LAY PASTORS (RENEWAL)

1. Concurred with the Session of **Unity Presbyterian Church**, Woodleaf, North Carolina, in renewing the contract of **Sue Moore** to serve as their Commissioned Ruling Elder–Lay Pastor for a period of one year beginning January 1, 2026.
2. Concurred with the Session of **Bethany Presbyterian Church**, Graham, North Carolina, in renewing the contract of **Rick Purcell** to serve as their Commissioned Ruling Elder–Lay Pastor for a period of six months beginning December 31, 2025.
3. Concurred with the Session of **Shiloh Presbyterian Church**, Burlington, North Carolina, in extending the contract of **Tim Parker** to serve as their Commissioned Ruling Elder–Lay Pastor for a period of six months beginning February 1, 2026.

B. MODERATOR OF SESSION

1. That the **Reverend Bill Hoyle** was appointed Moderator of Session for **Spencer Presbyterian Church**, Spencer, North Carolina.
2. That the **Reverend Jennie Hemrick** was appointed Moderator of Session for **Danbury Community Presbyterian Church**, Danbury, North Carolina.
3. That the **Reverend Rob C. Evans** was appointed Moderator of Session for **Oak Ridge Presbyterian Church**, Oak Ridge, North Carolina for Sunday, February 15, 2026.

C. REQUEST TO CELEBRATE COMMUNION

1. That Commissioned Ruling Elder **LaQreshia Bates** be allowed to celebrate communion on January 4, 2026, at Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church.
2. That Commissioned Ruling Elder **Jeffrey Bumgarner** be allowed to celebrate communion at New Salem Presbyterian Church on November 23, 2025.
3. That **Reverend Rob Evans** be allowed to celebrate communion at Oak Ridge Presbyterian Church on February 1, 2026.
4. That Commissioned Ruling Elder **Richard Collier** be allowed to celebrate communion at First Presbyterian Church, Pilot Mountain on February 1, 2026, at Hills Presbyterian Church on January 4, 2026, and Pine Ridge Presbyterian Church on January 4, 2026.
5. That Commissioned Ruling Elder **Rachael Brooks** be allowed to celebrate communion at First Presbyterian Church, Pilot Mountain on December 21, 2025, and at Fifth Creek Presbyterian Church on January 11, 2026.
6. That Commissioned Ruling Elder **Paul Collins** be allowed to celebrate communion at First Presbyterian Church, Pilot Mountain on December 24, 2025.
7. That Ruling Elder **Jimmy Coore** be allowed to celebrate communion at Mount Vernon Springs Presbyterian Church on January 4, 2026.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE ACTION OF PRESBYTERY

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

That following her successful examination, the call of **First Presbyterian Church, Salisbury**, North Carolina, to **Reverend Hannah Grace Ostlund** 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 her 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 AAEEEO Policy adopted by Salem Presbytery (July 1993) in offering this call. The effective date is January 12, 2026.

Effective Salary

Cash Salary:	\$ 68,000
Supplemental Income (SECA):	\$ 5,202
Continuing Education	\$ 4,000
Moving Costs	<u>\$ 5,000</u>
TOTAL:	\$ 82,202

Other Paid Time Off

Days Off	2 days per week
Paid Vacation	4 weeks per year
Paid Continuing Education	2 weeks per year

*Full medical, pension, disability, and death benefit coverage under the Board of Pensions is provided. Twelve weeks family leave at full pay.

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.

ACTION:

3. Salem Presbytery approved the call to the **Reverend Hannah Grace Ostlund** from First Presbyterian Church, Salisbury, North Carolina.
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STORM (SALEM TASK FORCE ON REVITALIZING MINISTRY)
Reverend Kyle Goodman & Reverend Sam Perkins

I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth; do you not perceive it? Isaiah 43:9

The Strategic Taskforce on Reviving Ministry (STORM) brings you the following updates, approved by Executive Council as we work to be the church in real time.

New Staffing Model



Stepping out in faith and into our values, we are recommending a staffing model with two full-time presbyters who are co-equal in Christ-like leadership reporting to the Personnel Committee on behalf of Executive Council. With one dedicated to operations and the other to enacting vision, we believe this model will root us in the work of our mission and vision and create the environment for our leaders and congregations to thrive.

- Presbyter for Transformation & Leadership Development
- Presbyter for Administration & Stated Clerk

Endowing Funds



To invest in financial longevity for Salem as well as pay for our chosen models, STORM & Executive Council bring before the presbytery a recommendation to endow diverse accounts into a unified fund that will support our ministries and innovations in the years to come.

Renewed Presbytery Gatherings



We suffer a serious lack of spiritual energy. Connection revitalizes us. We are moving to a model where two of our presbytery meetings each year are predominantly business, and the other two are focused on leadership development. We believe the intentional work at the latter will feed into meaningful discourse at the former.

Salem Presbytery Staffing Model Proposal

S.T.O.R.M. (Strategic Taskforce on Reviving Ministry)

Approved by Executive Council: January 29, 2026

Salem Presbytery has been in a state of staff transition for nearly a decade. Our former General Presbyter, the late Sam Marshall, retired in 2017, at which time the presbytery employed four full-time ordained staff members. In 2019, the presbytery adopted the “Dream Team” model, creating three new full-time positions and effectively ending the tenure of Transitional General Presbyter Steve Scott and the other ordained staff roles. The search for those positions ended abruptly when it became clear that we lacked the financial resources to implement their model.

Before the presbytery could regain its footing, the COVID-19 pandemic began. During this time, we called Barbara Smith as Transitional Presbyter. She led the presbytery ably through the crisis. Her remote-working leadership fit the moment well, but it also highlighted the importance of hands-on leadership in our congregations. Using designated funds, the presbytery temporarily called Jodi Ligan as Presbyter for Transformation, partially fulfilling the Dream Team vision. At the end of 2023, we called Tony De la Rosa as the first installed General Presbyter in six years.

In January 2025, Jodi presented a Presbytery Empowerment Assessment (P.E.A.) to Council, building on her work in our congregations without installed leadership. That assessment revealed a lack of energy and investment in presbytery work, increasing reliance on burned-out volunteer leadership, and a stressed financial model overly dependent on reserve funds.

Executive Council formed S.T.O.R.M. in response to her report.

Further transitions followed. Longtime Stated Clerk David Vaughan retired and was succeeded by Paul Sink. Financial Administrator Renee Carter resigned, with her responsibilities assumed by Office Administrator Christine Ratledge. In late 2025, the presbytery parted ways with Tony. Paul Sink had already resigned, and funding for Jodi’s designated position expired in October. Without Jodi’s continued service and David Vaughan’s willingness to return to the Stated Clerk role, the presbytery would have been left with only two staff members.

S.T.O.R.M. has not been developing a new staffing model in a fair-weather moment for Salem. Our work has taken place amid yet another crisis. Yet we believe this difficult context offers a new opportunity. We are reminded why the Dream Team initially suggested substantive staffing changes, and we agree that those changes are needed. In a moment of dysfunction, we have sought a model oriented towards actual transformation, keeping Jodi’s prophetic P.E.A. in mind. We cannot continue doing the same old things over and over again.

Our proposal is rooted in the original Dream Team vision. It addresses the needs of the present moment. ***This is not business as usual.*** And most importantly... we do know how to pay for it.

Proposal: Two Presbyters Staffing Model

Overview

S.T.O.R.M. recommends that Salem Presbytery hire two full-time presbyters, both exempt employees. Each would be ordained as a Ruling or Teaching Elder in the PC(USA) and bring significant leadership experience appropriate to their area of ministry.

Presbyter for Transformation and Leadership Development

This presbyter would focus on ministries that equip, support, and strengthen congregations. Responsibilities would include:

- Engaging churches in new ministry initiatives
- Developing and offering training for clergy and laity
- Representing Salem Presbytery in denomination-wide mission conversations
- Providing particular support to BIPOC congregations
- Planning two presbytery-wide education and training events annually

Presbyter for Administration / Stated Clerk

This presbyter would oversee the administrative life of the presbytery, including:

- Fulfilling all Book of Order duties of the Stated Clerk
- Resourcing the Commission on Ministry
- Overseeing Budget and Finance
- Supporting Administrative Commissions and Task Forces
- Planning two annual presbytery business meetings

Shared Leadership Model

These two presbyters would be co-equal in compensation, authority, and accountability, analogous to a co-pastor model. Both would report to the Personnel Committee on behalf of Executive Council, jointly direct presbytery staff, and resource Council, committees, and commissions. Their work would be a proactive partnership; collaboration will be essential.

Assistant Stated Clerk (Part-Time, Designated)

In addition to these positions, S.T.O.R.M. proposes a temporary, part-time Assistant Stated Clerk to be called upon as needed. Paul and David have attested that the work of the Stated Clerk ebbs and flows significantly. This model allows the presbytery to contract short-term administrative support when needed. Imagine having a bullpen of folks like David Vaughan who can be called on to step in when the administrative work piles up. Having this additional staff member on hand would help ensure that the essential work of transformation and leadership development continues uninterrupted in Salem Presbytery.

Other Staff Considerations

The Office Manager and Communications Director would continue in their current roles under this model.

This proposal eliminates the Engagement Pastor positions. While S.T.O.R.M. affirms the value of that work, actual engagement from our clergy is just as varied as their

geography.

We recommend shifting our engagement focus toward four annual presbytery gatherings: two business meetings and two conference-style education and training events. We hope that those parish relationships can continue organically.

S.T.O.R.M. has been charged with proposing a financially sustainable model. While Engagement Pastor compensation represents a relatively small portion of our staffing cost, those funds are needed to support two full-time presbyter positions.

Compensation and Funding

S.T.O.R.M.'s mandate was not to present a staffing proposal without a clear funding plan. In our model, each presbyter would receive an effective salary of \$90,000–\$95,000, higher than the old Presbyter for Transformation position and slightly lower than the former General Presbyter salary.

Funding for both positions would come from four sources:

- Staff salary funds already included in our annual budget
- \$10,000 – Reallocated Engagement Pastor compensation
- \$40,000 – Savings from participation in the General Assembly Per Capita pilot program
- ~\$80,000 – Annual earnings from a newly established Salem Presbytery Endowment Fund. The Endowment fund will build on \$1.7-1.8 million currently in designated funds from the office building sale and Church Growth and Transformation funds.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
Reverend Courtney Stevens, Moderator &
Reverend Dr. Andrew Taylor-Troutman, Vice Moderator

The Executive Council met on December 11, 2025, January 15 and 29, 2026.

The Executive Council received regular reports from Jodi Ligan and David Vaughan. Tony De La Rosa provided the Executive Council with a final report on this work at the December 11 meeting.

FOR INFORMATION:

Actions Taken on behalf of Presbytery:

- Elected the Rev. Arlo Tysinger to the Executive Council, Class of 2028;
- Acted to formally dissolve the following churches: Dogwood Acres, Immanuel, Oakland, and Sandy Ridge; these dissolutions have been settled in a secular and ecclesial way; this action was required to meet PCUSA requirements;

- Agreed with the session of the Cleveland Presbyterian Church to sell its property to the Town of Cleveland;
- Authorized a technical/non-substantive correction to the Dismissal Policy.

Business of the Executive Council:

- Observed the “Covenants of Presence” as adopted by the Executive Council in 2022;
- Received verbal financial reports from Treasurer Jud Milam;
- Approved minutes of the October 2025 meeting of the Executive Council;
- Affirmed the EC’s electronic action (based upon recommendation of the Personnel Committee) to name the Rev. Jodi Langan as Acting Head of Staff, effective November 1;
- Agreed to hold the February 2026 meeting in person at St. James Presbyterian Church, Greensboro;
- Received a report and recommendations from the STORM task force, discussed and deliberated these matters, and reconvened two weeks later for further discussion. At the reconvened meeting, endorsed the plan presented by STORM with unanimity;
- Received a joyous message from Rev. Rosa Miranda, confirming her willingness to partner with Presbytery leadership to continue to advance an Hispanic ministry in Salem;
- Approved the proposed docket for the February 10, 2026, meeting of Presbytery, allowing the staff and officers to modify the docket if necessary (without substantive additions or deletions);
- Elected the Rev. Courtney Stevens as EC Moderator for 2026, and the Rev. Dr. Andrew Taylor-Troutman as EC Vice-Moderator for 2026;
- Acknowledged the fine contributions to the Executive Council of retiring members: Kyle Goodman (who will continue as Stewardship Chair), Phanta Lansden, and Rosa Miranda;
- Heard regular reports from Salem’s Black Caucus.

FOR ACTION:

- The Executive Council will move the following: “that the term of Interim Stated Clerk David Vaughan, which concludes on February 28, 2026, be extended as Stated Clerk until a new Stated Clerk has been elected, installed, and at work.” The Executive Council understands that Vaughan is willing to serve in this period.

ACTION:

4. Salem Presbytery approved the term of Interim Stated Clerk David Vaughan, which concludes on February 28, 2026, to be extended until a new Stated Clerk has been elected, installed, and at work.
-

INSTALLATION OF NEW PRESBYTERY MODERATOR

Reverend Matthew Bussell (First Presbyterian Church, Greensboro) was installed as the 2026-2028 Presbytery Moderator. Tribute was paid to CRE Steve Braxton (Trinity, Elon) for his two years of service as Salem Presbytery’s moderator.

ACTION:

5. Salem Presbytery installed Reverend Matthew Bussell as Moderator for Salem Presbytery.

ADJOURNMENT AND BENEDICTION

The Presbytery Moderator adjourned the meeting with the benediction.

Recorded by:
Christine Ratledge, Office Manager
David Vaughan, Stated Clerk

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Vaughan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Appendix A

Ministers Absent from the February 2026 Presbytery Meeting (excluding HR, unless she/he is currently serving a congregation)

Almeida, Margaret	**Heyward, William Bailey	Parker, Mark
Austin, Taylor	Higgins, Cindy	Porter, Timothy
Beach, Kathryn	Hoffman, Kymberley	*Pruitt, John
Beard, James	Ingle, Cynthia	Puryear, Sam
Beck, Frederick A.	Jordan, Stephen	Ratchford, Rainey
Berry, Kent	Joyce, Boyd	Ridolfi, Paul
Boger, David	Kim, Ki Seok	Robertson, Wayne
Brim, Marty	Kim, Peter	Sandlin, Mark
Bruner, Olen	Kim, Seulki (John)	Sarvis, Michael
Bumgarner, Jeffrey	Kirby, Barrie	Schaick, Steven
Caldwell, Lynne	Kisner, Jeff	Schooley, Christopher
Campbell, Kathryn Grace	Kunkle, Jacqueline Lynn	Scott, Stephen W.
Cannada, Charles	LaBonte, Thomas J.	Senior, John
Choplin, Patty	LaDew, Richard	Shores, Robert
Coppage, Jeffrey A.	Langston, Shannon	Simmons, Allison
Crunk, Sidney	Larsen, Eric	Speaks, Christopher
Davee Lomax, Amanda	Lee, Robert E.	Stiles, Steven
Donovan, John	Levens, Kristen	Summey, Larry
Durham, Larry	Marshall, Gordon	Sutphin, J. Grant
Finch-Burriss, Carrie	Martin, Susanne	Swetenburg, Betsy
Fletcher, Patricia	McClain, Chris	Taylor-Troutman, Mary Virginia
Freese, Scott	McLaughlin, Alberta	Tickle, Austin
**Fruits, Dana	Mitchell, Pamela	True, David
Fulp, William	Moore, Robert	Tysinger, Laura
Gaither, Otto	Moore, Sue	Weed, Larry
Gaska, Jonathan	Moore, Timothy	Weed, Mae
Gipe, Will	Musser Gritter, Lara	Williams-Berry, Nancy
Godbey, Sarah	Nesbit, Thomas	Wray, Tom
Greene, Sandra Lee Breeden	Newsome, Stedman	Zacarias, Rigoberto
Hankins, Stephanie	Oliver, (Gregory) Jones	

***Notes an excused absence**

****Present via livestream**