



Presbytery of Central Carolinas 6th Stated Meeting
Threshold Church Matthews, NC
April 26th & 27th, 2024

Address: 3501 Antioch Church Rd, Matthews, NC

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Proposed Docket for the
Presbytery of the Central Carolinas
Sixth Stated Meeting
Threshold Church
Weddington, NC
April 26-27, 2024

**Our Mission: Mobilizing church leaders to make disciples and
plant churches for gospel-transformation.**

He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Acts 1:7-8 (NIV)

Friday, April 26, 2024

- 8:30 AM Registration & Team / Committee Meetings
- 1:00 PM Call to order – Moderator – TE Jim Braswell
Host Welcome – TE Gabe Swing
- 1:10 PM Opening Prayer & Worship – TE Nate Wolcott, Chaplain
- 1:40 PM Preliminary Matters – Moderator TE Jim Braswell and Stated Clerk TE Robert Howard
Declaration of a quorum & adoption of the docket
Communications and referrals
Welcome to first-time commissioners and corresponding members
- 1:55 PM Video Presentation by Michelle Munger: Presbytery Information Technologies Specialist
Church Track Orientation
Web Site Updates
- 2:10 PM Report of the PCC Stated Clerk – TE Robert Howard
Motions (see packet for details)
Announcement of upcoming GA overture from New River Presbytery
Attendance and Parity report for today's meeting
Other matters
- 2:25 PM Report of the Stewardship Committee – RE Dan Barry
2024 YTD financial Update
Church Property Announcements
- 2:40 PM Report of the Missions Committee (Global Focus) -- RE Amy Russo
Recommendation: Motion to Adopt Punjabi People Group
Announcements
- 2:55 PM Break for fellowship
- 3:15 PM Order of the Day:
Church Equipping Session – Church Planting
The Church Planting Committee

Presbytery of the Central Carolinas

- 5:00 PM Recess for Fellowship & Dinner
Grace/Blessing
- 7:00 PM Worship and Celebration of the Lord's Supper
Preaching & Communion by TE Gabe Swing
Intercession Focus: The Missions Committee
Prayer ministry and fellowship available after the close of the service

Saturday, April 27, 2024

- 8:30 AM Call to Order – Moderator TE Jim Braswell
- 8:35 AM Devotional Message
Chaplain Candidate Katie Piquette
- 9:00 AM Report from the Ad-Interim Committee on “*Pastoral Letter of Racial Lament and Hope*”
RE: Carol Williams, Presbytery of the Alleghenies
- 9:45 AM Report from Church Development Committee – RE Anita Hill
Report of Church Health Coordinator – TE Rob McClelland
- 10:05 AM Report of the Church Planting Committee—TE Logan Keck
Recommendation: Change of status for Asheville Hope Mission Group
- 10:20 AM Report from the Missional Director—TE Brian Land
Recommendation: Adoption of Regional Church Planting Coordinator
- 10:30 AM Report of the Missions Committee (Local Focus) – RE Amy Russo
“Mothers of Preschoolers”
- 10:45 AM Special Order: Motion from the Session of Lighthouse Church
(Time Allocated: Fifteen Minutes)
- 11:00 AM Break for fellowship
- 11:15 AM Report of the Ministerial Committee – RE Butch Hill
Examination of Candidate Katie Piquette
Service of Ordination
Omnibus motion
- 12:35PM Expression of appreciation to the host church— TE Jim Braswell, Moderator
- 12:40 PM Doxology, Prayer, & Charge – TE Nate Walcott, Chaplain
- 12:45 PM Adjournment

**Seventh Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of the Central Carolinas
Siler Presbyterian Church, Wesley Chapel, NC
September 27-28, 2024**

Stated Clerk Report
Presbytery of Central Carolinas
Threshold Church
April 26th & 27th

Communication from the Office of the General Assembly

- PCC Churches that have NOT submitted their 2023 Annual Church Reports.
 - Banks Presbyterian Church Marvin, NC
 - Christ Community Church – Montreat Montreat, NC
 - Christ Fellowship Church Southern Pines, NC
 - Grace Haven Presbyterian Church (Mission) Lexington, NC
 - House of Mercy Asheville Asheville, NC
 - Indian Hill Presbyterian Church Stanfield, NC
 - Lighthouse Evangelical Presbyterian Church Mooresville, NC
 - McBee Presbyterian Church McBee, SC
 - Rocky River Presbyterian Church Calhoun Falls, NC
 - St. Matthews Presbyterian Church St. Matthews, NC

 - Contact: Scott Blanchette, IT Lead
Evangelical Presbyterian Church
5850 T.G. Lee Blvd, Suite 510
Orlando, FL 32822
(407) 930-4373

- Pastoral Letter of Racial Lament and Hope to be voted on at the 44th EPC General Assembly: A Gospel Priority Summit in Memphis, TN

- Ascending Overture from New River Presbytery “Amend G.9-3 to Disqualify from Office Persons Identifying as Homosexual”

- EPC Disaster Relief Mission Purpose Statement Draft

- EPC Benefit Resources

Communication from the Executive Council of the PCC.

- Letter to Presbytery of Mid-America
 - Executive Council approved and sent a pastoral letter to Presbytery of Mid-America, all Stated Clerks of the Presbyteries of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, and the Clerks of Sessions within the PCC. A copy is in minutes of the Executive Council from February 28, 2024, in your packet.

- Introducing to the PCC how to use new Chuchtrac to improve the PCC’s communication.

- Upcoming Thematic Issues for Future PCC Meetings.
 - The Executive Council received a letter from Lighthouse Presbyterian Church suggesting the need to address the sanctity of marriage and the response the PCC should give in facing the future cultural battles local congregations are facing. TE Nate Wolcott and TE Brian Land volunteered to write a pastoral letter acknowledging this concern and the possible future planning of the PCC meetings.
- Property Issues over churches closing in the PCC.
 - The Executive Council approved that the Stewardship Committee formulate an initial proposal for the management of church buildings and other assets deeded to presbytery through church closures.
 - The Executive Council appointed the Stewardship Committee to secure the appropriate property and liability insurance on real assets titled to the presbytery.
- Procedure for Receiving Congregations from other Denominations.
 - Ministry Committee is seeking to finalize a draft on the procedure for those congregations wishing to unite with the EPC within the jurisdiction of the PCC. A task force consisting of TE Brian Land, RE Anita Hill, RE Butch Hill, and RE Don Kirkey was created to revise and update the drafted procedures for welcoming new churches.
- The Session of Valley Hope Community Church, Swannanoa, NC overture to concur with the Presbytery of the Pacific Northwest proposed changes to the Book of Order Chapter 8-2.C.; 8-3.B.2. and Book of Worship 3-3.J.
- The Session of Lighthouse EPC motion that the Presbytery of Central Carolinas remove the secret ballot voting for approval of Pastoral Candidates following Examinations on the floor of Presbytery. This proposal will be addressed by the court at the beginning of the Ministerial Committee's Report.

Session Minutes Received by the Stated Clerk since the formation of the PCC

- Bethlehem – November 2021 through September 2023
- Centre – 2022 (Please turn in 2023)
- Christ Church EPC – September 2021 through August 2022 (Please turn in 9/22-2023)
- Christ Community – Montreat – 2022 (Please turn in 2023)
- Garden Memorial – 2021 through 2022 (Please turn in 2023)
- Greenville PC – 2021, 2022 & 2023
- Hendersonville PC – 2021 (Please turn in 2022 & 2023)
- Kershaw – 2021 through 2022 (Please turn in 2023)
- McBee – 2021 through 2022 (Please turn in 2023)
- McLean EPC – 2021 (Please turn in 2022 & 2023)
- New Cut – 2021(Please turn in 2022 & 2023)
- Riceville Valley Community Church – October 2021 through 2023

- Rourk PC – January 2021 through August 2023
- Siler PC – 2023
- St. Giles – September 2021 through August 2023
- Storyhill – December 2021 through April 2023
- Threshold – January 2023 through July 2023
- Valley Hope – 2022 through 2023
- Walkersville PC – 2020 through 2023

Church Sessions who have not submitted Minutes from 2021-2023 (Out of Order)

- Altan
- Banks
- Bensalem
- Benton Heights
- Cameronian
- Christ Fellowship
- Faith Liberation Community Christian Church
- Grace - Brevard
- Indian Hill PC
- Lake Forest PC
- Lighthouse PC
- Nell Townsend PC
- Overbrook PC
- Rocky River PC
- St Matthews PC
- Warehouse 242
- Warrenton PC

Mission Groups and Churches of the PCC

- Asheville Hope Community Church
- Grace Haven Presbyterian Church
- House of Mercy
- Living Life Church

Humbly Submitted

Robert M. Howard
Stated Clerk

Executive Council Meeting Minutes
Overbrook Presbyterian Church Gaffney, SC.
February 28, 2004,
9:30 AM-3:00 PM



07-01. Present: TE Jim Braswell, CP Corrina Gambrell, RE Butch Hill, RE Bob Pearson, RE Dan Barry, TE Brian Land, RE Anita Hill, RE Amy Russo, RE Don Kirkey, TE Nate Wolcott and TE Robert M. Howard

Excused: Rob McClelland

07-02. Moderator, TE Jim Braswell, called the meeting to order at 9:30 AM and lead the group in a devotional on “Dealing with Complaints”. He read from Acts 6:1-6 and discussed the importance of hearing complaints and the opportunity they offer in understanding and following the will of God. TE Brian Land opened the group in prayers for the group in its deliberations today and the guidance to deal with the questions the Council will be discussing and the plans of future presbytery meetings.

07-03. The Moderator asked the Council to look through the Docket and determine if there were any other items needing to be discussed. Once the additions were added the Moderator asked if there was a motion to approve of the docket as amended. The motion to approve the docket as amended was made, seconded, and approved by voice vote.

07-04. Discussion of our Winter Meeting on

- What went well? The facilities were wonderful, the presentation on feeding the poor was helpful, the debate over Letter to Mid-America was well done.
- What tweaks might be useful? A presentation of the bio on the host church would be helpful. The tables were not designated for the presenters, and it would be helpful to do so in future meetings. Having all the host volunteers acknowledged at the end of the meeting.
- What did we learn?

07-05. The Moderator recognized the draft of a letter to Presbytery of Mid-America sent out to the Executive Council to review and improve. Discussion ensued over who should receive a copy and the Council agreed by consent that the Moderator and Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Mid-America, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, all Stated Clerks of the Presbyteries of the EPC and TE Brian Land, Missional Director, would electronically disseminate a copy to the churches of the Presbytery of Central Carolinas. Motion to approve the draft of the letter to the Presbytery of Mid-America and send it immediately to the recipients. The motion was made, seconded, and passed by voice vote.

[Beginning of Letter]

The Presbytery of Mid-America
TE Joel Keen, Moderator
RE Dexter Kuhlman, Stated Clerk
51 Village View Drive Apt. 3209
Chesterfield, MO 63017



Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ! Grace and peace from our Lord! It is our hope and prayer that this letter finds the Presbytery of Mid-America and our sister churches continually abiding and flourishing in the presence of our Lord.

The Presbytery of Central Carolinas has become aware of the application to the Presbytery of Mid-America from Pastor Greg Johnson and Memorial Church. We are aware they are seeking to be examined and received into the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. We also appreciate the weight you all must feel in this decision regarding the history this Pastor and congregation have had with the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA). Indeed, emotions are already strong beyond your presbytery and perspectives vary. God, in His wisdom, has sent this to you all for prayerful deliberation. We are sure He has chosen well.

We humbly suggest that this is an opportunity for the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC) to become united in a clear representation of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and His redemptive message to our U.S. culture and the world. This is a potentially defining moment in the EPC's witness. Discernment of the best course of action on this application has great magnitude in faithfully representing the apostolic teaching on concupiscence, the new nature verses the old nature, identity in Christ, gender, sexuality, the church's relationship to culture and the standards of ordination. Given that our ordination is national in scope (though expressed locally within a particular presbytery), we respectfully suggest that you defer on this matter, requesting that the General Assembly appoint a commission to take up this issue.

The EPC has a long history of working through complex and potentially divisive issues in ways which build trust, unity, and consensus (*i.e., the resolution of the relationship between "The Essentials" and The Westminster Standards as well as concerns regarding ordination of women*). The General Assembly, with ample input from presbyteries through the representative process, found solutions that honored Scripture (and the Westminster standards) as well as forged a path of unity and peace. We believe this is another opportunity to do so again and avoid the potential confusion we are seeing in other denominations. The topic of how one who is sexually broken embraces the redemption of our Lord has a potential of being divisively confusing. This seems especially true among Evangelicals in our day. We suggest an approach where careful,

representative, Scriptural, and prayerful discernment might occur with a General Assembly appointed study that would encourage a united expression and foster a trust we have known in the EPC.

Please be assured that, as fellow presbyters, we hold you up before the Lord as you carry your responsibilities in this moment. Let us endeavor to jointly be united in our partnership in the Gospel by humbly praying and seeking the mind of Christ on this matter. We are in prayer with you over this matter.

Warmly in Christ,

The Central Carolinas Presbytery Executive Committee

TE James Braswell, Moderator

TE Robert M. Howard, Stated Clerk

CC: Dean Weaver, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly
Dana Opp, Stated Clerk Alleghenies
Marlene Becker, Asst. Stated Clerk Alleghenies
Ken Van Kampen, Stated Clerk Central South
Duke Lineberry, Stated Clerk Coastal Mid-Atlantic
John Dorr, Stated Clerk East
Don Nichol, Asst. Stated Clerk East
Bryan Knedgen, Stated Clerk Florida & Carriibbean
Kermit Opprieht, Stated Clerk Great Plains
Jeff Sparks Asst. Stated Clerk Great Plains
Michael Herrin, Stated Clerk Gulf South
Dexter Kuhlman, Stated Clerk Mid-America
Pete Scribner, Stated Clerk Midwest
Andy Warner, Asst. Stated Clerk Midwest
Rufus Burton, Stated Clerk New River
Ed Cummings, Stated Clerk Pacific NW
Larena Mills, Asst. Stated Clerk Pacific NW
Mark Eshoff, Stated Clerk Pacific SW
Cathy Cole, Asst. Stated Clerk Pacific SW
Annie Rose, Stated Clerk Rivers & Lakes
William Dudley, Stated Clerk Southeast
Diane Mizell, Asst. Stated Clerk Southeast
Greg Daniels, Stated Clerk West

[End of Letter]

07-06. The Executive Council received a letter from Lighthouse Presbyterian Church Motion to send a pastoral letter TE Nate Wolcott and TE Brian Land.

07-07. The Moderator asked the Council to approve by unanimous consent to move to the discussion of management and disposition of church assets. The Council consented to the change in the docket. Two motions were moved with discussion.

Motion: That we ask the Stewardship Committee to formulate an initial proposal for the management of church buildings and other assets deeded to presbytery through church closures. Motion was seconded and approved unanimously by voice vote.

Motion: To empower the Stewardship Committee to secure the appropriate property and liability insurance on real assets titled to the presbytery. Motion was seconded and approved unanimously by voice vote.

07-08. The Executive Council had an order of the day to join a Zoom Meeting with Ms. Michelle Munger for introduction to Churchtrac and website improvements. This was an introductory instruction on the new data system being implemented.

07-09. RE Butch Hill presented a draft protocol of the procedure for those congregations wishing to join the EPC. Discussion and reflection on the best ways to help these churches regarding church transfer (incoming) and being helpfully assimilated into the life of the PCC was discussed with some earnestness. A task force consisting of TE Brian Land, RE Anita Hill, RE Butch Hill, and RE Don Kirkey was created to revise and update the drafted procedures for welcoming new churches.

07-10. Committee Reports, Updates and Recommendations.

- Ministerial Committee. RE Butch Hill gave an update on the responses of those who have turned in their yearly pastoral reports.
- Church Development. RE Anita Hill reported on the drafting of a CDC manual and the work the committee is hoping to accomplish with the new database system the PCC is implementing.
- Church Planting. RE Bob Pearson gave a report on the mission groups and endeavors to identify where new church plants might be considered. Proposal to include the information on the conference was affirmed without a formal vote.

- TE Brian Land discussed the new Elder training presented by New River Presbytery at every meeting and agreed to ask New River for the content for our review and possible implementation.
- Missions Committee. RE Amy Russo gave an update on the networking being done by the committee and the hope of helping to assist the Dinns in their new project. Discussion over how to help our presbytery join the “To Adopt Engage 2025 people group” effort in supporting missions to unreached peoples.
- Stewardship. RE Dan Barry reported that our giving is matching our expenses.
 - **Motion: That the PCC will pay the Institute of Biblical Leadership \$1,500.00 for the January 2024 presentation the presbytery enjoyed as the Order of the Day.**
- Missional Director:
 - TE Brian Land reported communication from Scott Waters who is asking if there is a way the PCC have a platform for shared resources? In development on the PCC’s new system.
 - Eureka Presbyterian Church, Eureka, NC wants to chat about transferring from PCUSA. TE Brian Land and TE Rob McClelland will follow up with contacting their church.
 - Include promo in next emails (and Presby?) for PRMI “Growing the Church in the Power of the Holy Spirit” - [Growing the Church in the Power of the Holy Spirit— Black Mountain, NC - Presbyterian-Reformed Ministries International \(prmi.org\)](#)
 - Petition to GA from Pacific Northwest to (essentially) allow for those with mental disabilities to take communion. Anthony Rodriguez asked if we could bring it forward to also sign off on it (Presby of SE likely is as well). Executive Council referred action to the Session of Hope Valley instructing them that the Council does not have the authority to comply with this request, but the Hope Valley Session could vote to offer a motion for the PCC to concur with the Presbytery of the Pacific Northwest proposed overture to the EPC GA2024 at the April 2024 meeting.
 - GA / Tom Ricks - Church Planting Staff for our 3 new presbyteries - \$20k each for Elizabeth Gibson / Northampton. The Council was reminded of the PCC’s need to be given to NHCPN to fund church planting. Others are giving some (Coastal is currently \$5k). Action was referred to the Church Planting Committee.

07-11. Update On Commissions and Inquiring Churches looking at the EPC

- Update report on Commissions.
 - Rocky River Presbyterian Church
 - St. Matthews Presbyterian Church
 - Park Avenue Presbyterian Church

- Troy Presbyterian Church
- Churches that are in the Inquiry phase
 - First Presbyterian Church Abbeville, S.C.
 - Verina Presbyterian Church
 - RE Don Kirkey noted that Plumtree Church and Buck Hill Presbyterian Church would likely to be transferring into the Presbytery after the GA meeting. TE Brian Land agreed to reach out to them for preliminary conversations.

07-12. The Moderator brought to the Council’s attention that the hour and entertained a motion to extend the meeting for 20 minutes. The motion was made from the floor to extend 20 minutes. It was seconded and approved by voice vote.

07-13. Recommendations for Upcoming Meetings of Presbytery will be proposed by the following Presbytery Committees. The Moderator entertained a motion to approve the schedule. The motion was made from the floor, seconded, and approved by voice vote.
 “Speaker of the Day” April 2024: Church Planting Committee
 “Speaker of the Day”: September 2024: Mrs. Kim Hock

07-14. Location of September Meeting Recommendation: The Moderator entertained a motion to approve the following date for Upcoming Executive Council Meetings. The motion was made from the floor, seconded, and approved by voice vote.

- May 22, 2024, 9:00 AM Zoom Meeting
- Jul 10, 2024, 10:00 AM In Person Meeting at Overbrook
- Sep 11, 2024, 9:00 AM Zoom Meeting
- Oct 22, 2024, 9:00 AM Zoom Meeting
- Nov 26, 2024, 10:00 AM In Person Meeting at Overbrook

07-15. The Moderator entertained a motion to adjournment the meeting in prayer. The motion was made from the floor, seconded, and approved by voice vote.

**Executive Council Meeting
 April 10, 2024, 9:00 AM-10:00 AM
 Zoom Meeting**

A New Database System

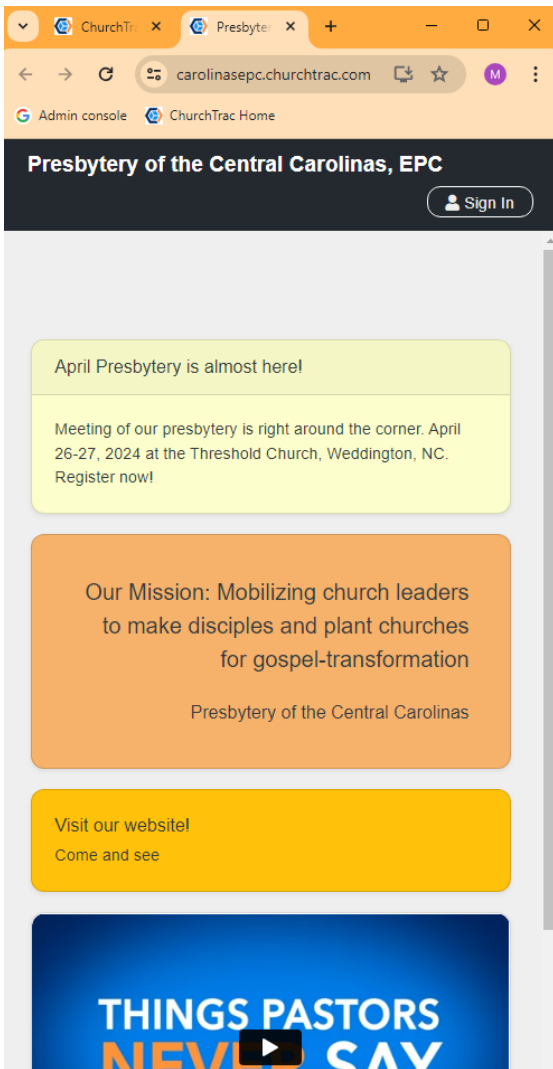
Our PCC Leadership will be utilizing Churchtrac to help us keep track of everyone. We invite you to scan this QR code which will give you an APP for your device where you can access announcements and even a directory once you are verified.



If you are struggling with loading the app on your phone, please check out this website. It has a video and step-by-step instructions on capturing the app for either the Apple or Android device. (It is NOT accessed from your App Store.)

<https://www.churchtrac.com/support/connect/install-church-connect-app>

When you click the Sign-In link, you will need to Create an Account.

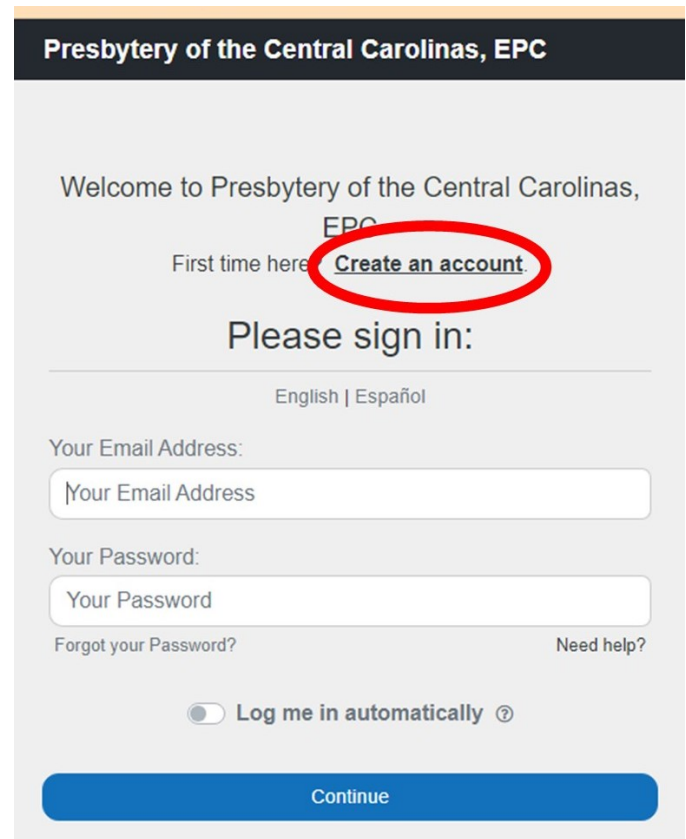


Once you have created an account, it will take a couple days to get everyone verified. Please be patient. Once verified you will be able to update your contact information, add a picture, and determine what information is shared in the online directory. By default, your name, phone number and email address are listed.

NOTE: The APP will look like this:



If you have questions, reach out to Michelle Munger our webmaster at webmaster@carolinasepc.org



MEMO: Communication from EPC Benefit Resources, Inc.

TO: The Presbytery of Central Carolinas

RE: Display Volunteer



My name is Savannah Baker, and I am the communications coordinator for EPC Benefit Resources, Inc. We are responsible for the operation of the denomination's health and retirement benefit programs. It is our goal that all EPC churches and staff, especially ministers, are fully aware of our many health and wellness benefits and the financial management resources we provide. Although our website serves as a great resource, we would like to provide the presbytery with handout materials that can be displayed at presbytery meetings and distributed to your churches, ordination candidates, and churches considering joining the EPC.

In that pursuit, I am looking to find an individual from your presbytery who I can work with to make sure you have access to these benefit materials. This volunteer ideally will set materials out for display during presbytery meetings and provide the materials to the appropriate parties as needed. If you have an individual in mind who can fill this role, feel free to either send me their contact information or have them contact me directly and I can fill them in on the specifics.

Additionally, would you like Director of EPC Benefit Resources Bart Francescone to present at one of your 2024 presbytery meetings? We often get questions regarding topics in retirement planning such as proper investment of retirement account funds, the housing expense tax exemption, personal financial planning, and the new plan features that have become available because of the Secure Act. Regarding health benefits, we have heard widespread concerns about the general state of staff health especially related to chronic condition management and mental health challenges. The EPC Benefits office can address these and other topics on the minds of your pastors and administrative staff during a presentation and Q & A at your meeting, either virtual or in-person.

Please contact me if you believe this would be helpful for your presbytery. I sincerely appreciate your time and partnership in this!

Savannah Baker

Communications Coordinator

Evangelical Presbyterian Church

5850 T.G. Lee Blvd., Suite 510

Orlando, FL 32822

(407) 930-4354

Savannah.baker@epc.org

Mission Purpose Statement
EPC Disaster Relief Committee (DRC)



Our vision summary

- To reach EPC Congregations and their communities, who experience a natural disaster, by bringing prayer, education, order, emergency assistance, and strategy to the chaos.

Our Mission

- To provide guidance, education, and emergency assistance to local EPC congregations, and when needed to their community. When appropriate, cooperation with governmental agencies and other relief organizations.
- Assistance may occur through pre-disaster education, volunteer working teams, temporary housing, building materials, clothing, water, food supplies and other areas of need.
- Bring servant support leadership in the aftermath of the disaster; bring clarity and organization so that a greater amount of work can happen in a short amount of time.

Threshold

- After a disaster occurs, identify the impact that has been brought upon the EPC Congregation in the affected geographic area. A **DRC** Member will contact the local Pastor to do a basic evaluation. When there is substantial damage to an EPC congregation, the **DRC** may activate appropriate designated responses, within the capabilities and capacity of this committee.

Programs and Services

DRC responsibilities may include:

- When necessary, set up regional hubs in EPC geographic areas for storage of critical emergency relief supplies, tools, and materials.
- Develop and train individuals in interested EPC Congregations, who can assume a leadership role, and assist in setting up a command center, in the event a disaster occurs.
- Working with the local congregation to identify those families who are in need, and what resources are necessary. Damage assessments.
- Assisting in setting up local qualified work teams to assist those families in need.
- Create local pickup centers for distribution of needed supplies, or delivery of those supplies directly to families in need.

Organizational Overview

- **DRC** is comprised of 9 members on a three-year class system, including 3 teaching elders, 3 ruling elders, and 3 who need not be elders, but have experience in areas of emergency management, disaster relief mobilization or other areas essential to the committees' duties.

- Board members should be readily willing and able to publicly communicate the vision of the **DRC**, as well as being able to assist in fundraising.

Marketing

- Education on the purpose of the **DRC**, and the availability of services being offered, should be given to every EPC church. The creation of a website should be considered to educate and disseminate information to congregations. This platform would also legitimize this committee and enable us to better partner with other established relief organizations.

Existing Relief agencies

- Red Cross
- Samaritans Purse
- United Way
- Salvation Army
- All Hands & Hearts (www.allhandsandhearts.org)
- Inspiritus Disaster Relief (www.weinspirit.org)
- Stormwise (www.stormwisefoundation.org)
- Pathfinder Mission (www.pathfindermission.org)
- Adventures in Missions (AIM) (www.adventures.org)
- Crisis Relief and Recovery (CRR) (www.crisisreliefandrecovery.org)
- Fuller Center Disaster Rebuilders (www.disaster-rebuilders.org)
- 8 days of Hope (www.eightdaysofhope.com)
- Rebuilding Together (www.rebuildingtogether.org)
- Disaster Response Service (Grand Rapids, MI... CRC)
- VOAD – Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster (every state has a VOAD chapter).

OVERTURE from New River Presbytery
“Amend **G.9-3** to Disqualify from Office Persons Identifying as Homosexual”

Whereas, God created Adam and Eve and ordained the first marriage and family consisting of one man and one woman in sexual union, establishing the context for the biblical sexual ethic (Gen. 1:27-28; 2:24; 4:1); and

Whereas, God has established the one flesh sexual union between a husband and wife, as a great mystery in reference to Christ and his Church (Eph. 5:25; 31-32); and

Whereas, the Holy Scriptures declare that the sexual union and desire between one man and one woman, in the covenant of marriage, is righteous and holy, and all other sexual activity is unrighteous and sinful, including homosexuality, which the Holy Scriptures describe as “degrading passions” (Rom. 5:18-19; Rom. 1:26-27; 1 Cor. 6 9-11; Eph. 5:3-5; Heb. 13:4, *WCF* 24:1 & 2; *WLC* 138,139); and

Whereas, the application of the 7th Commandment forbids the sins of homosexuality, unnatural lusts, and unclean affections, affirming that homosexual acts and the desires to commit those acts are both sinful (*Matt.* 5:27-28; *WLC* 139); and

Whereas, the Biblical qualifications for a church officer require him to be “above reproach” and the “husband of one wife,” officers and candidates for office must conform their lives to Biblical sexual ethics, which include denying and mortifying all sexual passions and desires toward anyone to whom they are not married (1 Tim. 3:2); and

Whereas, identification as a “homosexual,” is sinful and against nature itself, is something God detests, and is not fitting for an officer of the Church of Christ (*Lev.* 18:22; 1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:5-6); and

Whereas, the Christian’s identity is rooted in Christ so that he is a “new creation” in Him, his identity cannot be defined by sexual and/any other desires or lifestyles that are contrary to the Holy Scriptures; for the Christian there is a clear distinction between self conception (“this is who I am”) and their remaining indwelling sin (“this is what I must daily mortify”) (*Rom* 6:1-14; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; 2 Cor. 5:17; Col. 3:1-5); and

Whereas, the sexual revolution and LGBTQ+ movement are infiltrating many quarters of the Church and causing no small amount of confusion; and

Whereas, the *Pastoral Letter on Human Sexuality* adopted by the 38th General Assembly of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in order to guide the churches within the EPC affirms that “Those who make their S[ame] S[ex] A[ttractive] tendencies their primary identity are not comprehending and embracing their full identity as image bearers of God.”

Therefore, be it resolved that the New River Presbytery overtures the 44th General Assembly of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church to amend the Book of Government Chapter 9 such that a new clause, G.9-3C, be added which reads as follows (new words underlined):

C. Men and women who identify as homosexual, even those who identify as homosexual and claim to practice celibacy in that self-identification, are disqualified from holding office in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.

Adopted unanimously by the New River Presbytery at its 005 Meeting, 3 February 2024, at Reynolda Kernersville, Kernersville, North Carolina.

Attested by /s/ Rufus T Burton, Stated Clerk

**A PASTORAL LETTER OF RACIAL
LAMENT AND HOPE**



INTRODUCTION



The goal of the writing committee is to provide a tool for Teaching and Ruling Elders, helping them shepherd followers of Jesus as they address racism and race-related topics in their churches or communities. This work is part of the larger movement of God within the EPC to engage with our churches, communities, and country on this divisive topic. Our committee looks forward with hope to the further work of the EPC as we continue deploying the Gospel in racism-eradicating ways. To that end, we write:

To our beloved EPC brothers and sisters in Christ, Teaching and Ruling Elders—shepherds all.

We thank God as you faithfully follow our Lord in loving service to all under your care and as you teach and guide, comfort and warn the sheep with the Word of God that they may flourish to his glory. In sharing their lives through a multitude of changing, challenging, and troubling matters and relationships, you have built into their being, helped bear their burdens, and shown sacrificial love.

We write to you, elder shepherds, mature in the faith, as you care for your flock.

We write to you, young shepherds, mindful of your youth as you undertake to care for those older in years and in the faith.

We write to you, shepherds, caring for those who regularly stand in harm's way in service to our country.

We write to you, shepherds, serving in hospitals and institutional settings.

We write to you, shepherds, serving our Lord in formal educational settings by honing minds and stretching hearts.

We write to you, shepherds, proclaiming the Gospel on far-flung frontiers amid myriad uncertainties.

We write to you, shepherds, who know the sting of racism and loneliness in ministering.

We write to you, shepherds, who enter this discussion uneasily.

OUR COMMISSION

We write with heavy hearts of a matter that so troubles our flocks and deeply affects our faithful obedience to our Lord's command in John 13:34-35: "Just as I have loved you, you should also love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." Sadly, the bitter reality of racism is not restricted solely to culture wars fostered, fomented, and fought by groups in our society. Our sinful nature has permeated every human institution and system with the world's values, including Christ's bride. Systemic injustice (which we will define and discuss later in this letter), based on advantages/disadvantages, favor/disfavor and bias/prejudice in service of

vested interest, exists due to a host of factors including perceived race, ethnicity, gender, economic levels, and educational attainment. We must not pretend that the EPC is immune from the poisonous influence and impact of racism. As such, the 42nd General Assembly appointed our committee to write to you about the difficult subject of racism, both personal and structural, and explore its presence in the EPC.

We can feel some of you shudder or balk as we use words such as “racism”— “institutional” and “systemic.” We, too, wrestle with secular nomenclature and charged vocabulary attached to a variety of agendas, so *how* we talk about racism is as important as actually talking about it. The world and its language, biases, politics, and perspectives cannot rule over a Christian’s perspective. And while we seek to be culturally relevant, we write to you as fellow shepherds in the EPC with the aim to remain true to our evangelical,¹ Presbyterian, and church identity. This three-fold identity shapes our language as we deliberate and carve a way forward through this troubling reality toward reconciliation and hope. Throughout this letter you will find references to the Westminster Standards in hope that you seek further confessional reflection on this topic. As the Church, we hold scripture as the final rule in all matters of faith and life: the Bible must remain our North Star. Let our conversations remain grounded in and from the biblical perspective, our Reformed and confessional heritage, and the shared experiences of our brothers and sisters.² And so, we attempt to set forth a common language to have this discussion.

DEFINITIONS

Race. There is one human race. “And he made from one man every nation (*ethnos*) of mankind to live on all the face of the earth” (Acts 17:26). Each person shares 99% commonality in DNA with every other person. Over time, slight differences in genetic information combined with environmental factors created physical distinctions among people groups. The term **race** often is used to categorize physical characteristics of skin color, facial form or eye shape and may include ancestry, shared culture or historical affiliation.³ In current cultural conversations, **race** is the frequently used term. Yet, our research and discussions reveal that race is not a neutral term. Historically, this term has been used to divide the divinely ordained one human race into a *hierarchy* of races, legitimizing a multitude of abuses. These days, when race means distinguishing and defining by color, such use narrows the diversity of ethnicities that contribute to who we are. It strips away the depth of individual contexts, connections, and varied histories, reducing identity to a single word.

Ethnos/Ethnicity, as used in common language and in Revelation 7:9, more accurately defines the grouping of people sharing a common and distinctive culture, religion or language, and incorporates aspects of geography, historical background, allegiance or association.⁴ Therefore, as we examine racism, the use of *ethnicity*, not *race*, is the biblical, more accurate descriptor of diversity within humanity.⁵

1 *Evangelical* also is a highly charged word in our culture but in our context captures the “Essentials of the Faith” as set forth by the EPC.

2 *Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms in Modern English*, 3rd ed. (Livonia, MI: EPC, 2010), 1.10.

3 *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, s.v. “Race”; National Human Genome Research Institute; *Cambridge English Dictionary*, s.v. “Race”; US Census Bureau.

4 *Cambridge English Dictionary*, s.v. “Ethnicity”; National Institutes of Health; *Merriam-Webster*, s.v. “Ethnicity.”

5 One of the crimes of racism is that many who descend from slaves cannot discover their ethnicity through genealogical ancestries. Our preference for the use of the term “ethnicity” should not be understood to discount this wrong or to discourage the use of the term “race” in popular discourse. Rather, our preference for the term “ethnicity” should be understood as an eschatological hope, a protest of the way things are and a longing for the day when every person’s knowledge of ethnic identity is restored.

Racism is the unbiblical belief that there is a *causal link* between ethnicity and traits of personality, intellect, morality, and behavior, typically resulting in personal or collective discrimination or favoritism.⁶ Racism is not a binary Black/White problem, nor one unique to the United States, but is historically entrenched within the whole human race, sowing deep discord and distrust as those of minority ethnicities are marginalized.

Institutional and Systemic Racism have varying culturally popular meanings that sow immediate discord and raise presumptions interfering with an honest discussion on how racism impacts institutions, even within the EPC. We begin with first discussing what **Institutional/Systemic Racism** is *not*. We do not believe the United States is irredeemably racist. Nor do we believe that people in any given institution or system are presumptively individual racists. Nor are individuals personally guilty of or complicit in past actions committed by others of the same ethnicity.

However, as Americans, we inherit a national history that includes heinous ethnic discrimination, most notably the enslavement of Africans with all its atrocities, the displacement and slaughter of Indigenous peoples, and internment of Japanese-Americans; all deep stains on the American soul. The impact of racism on our society's institutions—educational, judicial, financial and even religious—continues to reverberate to present day injustices. Therefore, our commission charges us with addressing this reality.

Institutional/Systemic Racism refers to behaviors, policies or practices of an organization or system that result in or otherwise support an unfair advantage to some people, and/or unfair or harmful treatment of others, based on ethnicity. Too often we fail to see and empathize with the suffering of those under the continuing oppression of racism that permeates perceptions, expectations and even systems of law, economics, culture and church culture. Indifference is the great ally of bias and racism. We fail to see why dealing with racism matters and that indifference, in turn, perpetuates the reality of racism at work in human systems.

THE SIN OF RACISM

Racism is a sin because it violates God's principles and commands. Racism belittles and dehumanizes people, stripping them of their created dignity as image bearers of God.⁷ The doctrine of adoption stated in *WCF* 12.1 leaves no room for misunderstanding our equality before God.

God guarantees the adoption of all those who are justified in and for the sake of his only son, Jesus Christ. Those adopted enjoy the liberties and privileges of God's children, have his name put on them, receive the Spirit of adoption, have access to the throne of grace with boldness, and are enabled to cry, Abba, Father. They are pitied, protected, provided for, and disciplined by him as a father. They are never cast off, however, and are sealed until the day of redemption and inherit the promises as heirs of everlasting salvation.⁸

We must also recognize racism as a poisoned fruit of spiritual warfare—a powerful attack on God's people by the ancient enemy Satan and his allies, cosmic powers and spiritual forces of evil.⁹ Our enemies' strategy is to fracture the Body of Christ, assault our identity as God's people, distract and divide us from our unity in and with Christ.¹⁰

⁶ Gal. 2:11-14; James 2:1-10.

⁷ *WCF* 4.2.

⁸ *WCF* 25.2, 35.1. See also *Westminster Larger Catechism* Q.62, Q.63, Q.74; *EPC Essentials of our Faith* #5.

⁹ Eph. 6:11-13; Rev. 12:7-9.

¹⁰ 1 Jn 2:9-11; *WCF* 16.6, 26.1,2.

Racism blinds us to the anticipation of the glorious gathering to come revealed to us in Revelation 7:9. “A great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands” is God’s triumph of all his people together. Having our lives hidden with Christ in God does not obliterate our uniqueness or consume us in a bland sameness. To be in Christ, with all glory directed to him, undergirds the preciousness of every created distinction.

CATEGORIZING/OTHERING

As people who understand that all humanity suffers from total depravity and the pervasive effects and deadly consequences of sin, we cannot be surprised that hateful attitudes and actions, violence, injustice, brokenness, fear of others and profound distrust abound.¹¹ Ever since the Fall, human beings have been ‘othering’ each other. Every human heart is prone to make such judgments. Every human group is prone to utilize such distinctions to the extent it has power to do so. We distinguish others and then make judgments, elevating some qualities and denigrating others. We group, actively and subconsciously, around shared distinctives and exclude based on differences, from children bullying on the playground to ethnic genocides. We deny. We tribalize. We accuse. We excuse. And this sin of partiality and even hatred is most inappropriate, hurtful and toxic when found among God’s people.

Whether personal or collective, through actions or indifference, such behavior compromises our witness, questions our integrity, and diminishes the goodness of the Gospel we proclaim and our ability to go into the world and make disciples. As followers of Christ, our response to the sins of racism should reflect an uninhibited resolve to love one another and reach the nations with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.¹² Yet racism directly harms our mission because these sins necessarily deny that all humans are created in the image of God and relativize the atonement according to perceived differences that affect how people are valued.

WITHIN THE EPC

As Presbyterians, we are united in a shared confessional commitment that faithfully presents the system of doctrine contained in scripture. The theology of the Westminster Standards leaves no room for participating in sins of racism and partiality. It provides the framework needed to develop a Reformed understanding of ethnic diversity and kingdom unity. Throughout the Bible, the sins of racism are condemned while proclaiming redemption by the Triune God. Through this redemption, God is creating a kingdom mosaic of his children from all people groups, bringing glory to himself.

Racism, as Satan’s tool against this redemption, promotes divisions that prevent us from truly loving one another. As a predominately majority culture denomination, we usually go about our church business without considering why it matters that we become a denomination more reflective of a Rev. 7:9 reality. We neglect to address who is unreached and welcomed into our churches. Ingrained biases can make it hard to recognize the abilities, strengths, and spiritual gifts of those from other ethnicities. These same biases also keep us from seeing how little power and influence we share with people not of our ethnic majority. We also are largely unaware that there are pastors in the EPC who have been deeply wounded by sins of racism. People of color often experience the need

¹¹ Isa. 53:6; Rom. 3:23; *WCF* 6.

¹² Matt. 28:19-20; *Essentials* #7.

(actual or implied) to prove that they are Reformed or conservative *enough* for the EPC, experiencing suspicions that cast shadows on their viewpoints and question the validity of their stories. Graduates of various seminaries, and historically Black seminaries in particular, find their qualifications examined more strenuously and their opportunities to serve the church fully in leadership and decision-making roles more limited. The Gospel calls us beyond such diminishing to the robust valuing Jesus embodied (*WLC* Q. 131, 132).

In communities or churches with little to no exposure to people of other ethnicities, the issue of racism may seem overstated and harder to recognize. “I have no problems with those people.” “These things do not happen where we live.” “*Our* police are not abusive.” While acknowledging another racist or racially-charged event has occurred, physical distance seems to allow or excuse detachment or lack of empathy which settles into wrongly thinking, “This is not my problem. I don’t know anyone there.” However, we are *Presbyterians*, bound together as a global Church family. Whether or not these hurts are in our particular community, they impact our Church. If something causes pain and suffering to a fellow Christian, whether or not we can understand it or relate to it, we are called to weep with those who weep. The pain and injury, grief and fear experienced by members of our church family should not go unrecognized or unacknowledged.

Indifference to the pain of our brothers and sisters or to the sin that causes their suffering is not the call of kingdom people. Scripture teaches us to think differently. We are not to conform to the world and its values, but to love one another genuinely, with brotherly affection and outdoing one another in showing honor (Rom. 12:2-3,9-10). In the church there “is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you all are one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:27-29). We are called to “walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which we have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:1-4). How can we say that we love God while merely tolerating or even distrusting our brother or sister in Christ?

We live in a time when the EPC is more exposed to and aware of the sin of racism and its many manifestations than ever before. A key purpose of this letter is to invite our shepherds to lament the suffering and sorrow racism has created in our nation. And, while it may not be within the power of the EPC to end racism in our country or culture, we are charged to recognize and end racism in our denomination and prophetically shine light into the world: to seek the welfare of the city wherein we dwell (Jer. 29:5-7). We are to tell our story of God’s perfect creation, our tragic fall, Christ’s costly redemption, the church’s world-reaching mission and the glorious final re-creation of heaven and earth. Our hope contradicts narratives that view humanity merely through a story of unguided emergence, brute survival, oppression, struggle, liberation, and eventual earthly utopia. This letter is not about convergence with worldly values. Rather, we seek to identify the world’s wounds within our church and apply the salve of Christ’s sorrow, mercy, and love.

We feel burdened that the EPC has left this widespread, multifaceted, and profoundly troubling issue largely unaddressed. We are called to bravely consider how our beloved denomination has participated in our neighbors’ continuing experience of racism. To truly love our brothers and sisters in obedience to our Lord, together we will reflect deeply on racism and learn to recognize its sinfulness in our own lives. We want to give voice in lament on behalf of those who suffer from, or otherwise experience, racism.

WHAT IS LAMENT?



Lament is a biblical way to publicly grieve our sorrows and express our anger to God: sorrow and anger we experience in the face of suffering, sin, and brokenness. It is the response of believers when confronted with unabating, faith-shaking injustice and gives voice to an equally persistent faith—refusing to give up hope. We are invited to bring our real concerns to the throne of grace, pouring out our hearts before the God who loves us, and know that he hears us (Heb. 4:16). Laments are expressed in words of hope that the God who is in covenant with us because of his word will once again remember his people, forgive our sins and rescue us. Unlike the grumbling of the Israelites in the wilderness, a lament always has hope, however apocalyptic its anchor. The hope is that although a solution to my plight may be elusive, I trust that despair will not have the last word.

LAMENT IN THE BIBLE

Lament characterizes much of scripture and varies from personal to corporate expressions. The Psalms are replete with prayers of lament; over one-third of the Psalms fit in this category. Some examples are: Psalm 3; 10:1,12,16-18; 12; 77:1-20; 88 (which contains no resolution). Lamentations records the prophet's heart-rending lament over the fall of Jerusalem.

Why is lament such a prominent feature in the Bible? Because suffering sits at the center of sin-plagued human experience. We live in a fallen world, with nothing but our groans and our wordless idols to give us respite. And so we groan, even if only with the voice of the Holy Spirit who groans on our behalf when we ourselves are wordless (Rom. 8:18-26). This experience is common for God's people and, as Bruce Waltke argues from the prayers of Israel, normal for those living in a fallen world.¹³ R. W. L. Moberly similarly finds:

The predominance of laments at the very heart of Israel's prayers means that the problems that give rise to lament are not something marginal or unusual but rather are central to the life of faith.... Moreover, they show that the experience of anguish and puzzlement in the life of faith is not a sign of deficient faith, something to be outgrown or put behind one, but rather is intrinsic to the very nature of faith.¹⁴

Psalms 13 is a paradigmatic lament that helps us understand the posture and structure of this form of prayerful expression.

Verses 1-2 are an expression of pain.

How long, LORD? Will you forget me forever?

How long will you hide your face from me?

How long must I wrestle with my thoughts

and day after day have sorrow in my heart?

How long will my enemy triumph over me?

¹³ Bruce K. Waltke, James M. Houston and Erika Moore, *The Psalms as Christian Lament: A Historical Commentary*, Kindle ed. (Eerdmans), 1.

¹⁴ R. W. L. Moberly, "Lament," *NIDOTTE*, IV, 879.

Verses 3-4 contain an appeal to God for help.

Look on me and answer, LORD my God.

*Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death,
and my enemy will say, "I have overcome him,"
and my foes will rejoice when I fall.*

Verses 5-6 are an expression of faith in God.

But I trust in your unfailing love;

my heart rejoices in your salvation.

I will sing the LORD's praise,

for he has been good to me.

As we encounter suffering, pain, and injustice, let us discipline ourselves to turn to God in lament, knowing that he is the holy and righteous one who can and will make things right.

LAMENT DOES NOT REQUIRE PERSONAL GUILT

Sometimes we resist the call to lament because we think it necessarily includes an admission of personal guilt; the Bible teaches us otherwise. We see in scripture the people of God joining the heart of God in lamenting the brokenness of the world. Daniel cried out in prayer to God over the sin of all Israel and asked the LORD to turn his wrath away from Jerusalem (Dan. 9). Nehemiah, too, confessed sin on behalf of the people of Israel and called on the LORD to keep his covenant promises (Neh. 1:4-11). The idolatry witnessed by Paul in Athens prompted him to make a faithful declaration of the Gospel (Acts 17:16-34).

Scripture also teaches us that lament is not unique to humans: our triune God himself expresses lament. In Genesis 6:6, God observed the wickedness of humanity. "The LORD regretted that he had made human beings on the earth, and his heart was deeply troubled." The LORD also expressed lament in the face of Saul's disobedience, saying to Samuel, "I regret that I have made Saul king, because he has turned away from me and has not carried out my instructions" (1 Sam. 15:11). The Holy Spirit can be grieved by human sin (Isa. 63:10; Eph. 4:30). The Lord Jesus expressed lament in the face of sin and the suffering it brings.

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! See, your house is left to you desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again, until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord' (Matt. 23:37-39).

And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it, saying, 'Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. For the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation' (Luke 19:41-44).

Jesus also grieved and lamented over the death of his friend Lazarus (John 11:33, 35, 38). As he faced his crucifixion, he experienced deep grief and cried out in prayer to the Father (Matt. 26:36-46; Mark 13:32-42; Luke 22:39-46; Heb. 5:7). Does our being in Christ, who offered up prayers of lament, shape us as a people who do likewise?

WHY LAMENT NOW?

The scars of racism have afflicted our world for millennia. In our nation's history, we can see pivot points of racial strife and their impact on society: the Civil War and emancipation; the Sand Creek massacre; the Chinese exclusion laws; the Montgomery bus boycotts and Rev. Martin Luther King's assassination – to name a few among several. These moments coagulate groups unified in an agenda, and likewise provoke a response from those who disagree or otherwise disregard that agenda. Polarization and conflict many times are the fruit of these events, with the church weaving its way through in an attempt to insert the peace of Christ.

In our day, among many racially charged tragic moments, the death of George Floyd particularly stands out. While we may not want to revisit the painful details, it is important for us not to flinch or otherwise look away; the heart of lament is to enter into the pain caused by sin and to cry out to the Lord in response. Vividly captured on video, Floyd's death became a pivot point in our national conversation about racism. To summarize, during a police encounter in Minneapolis on May 25, 2020, for over 9 minutes an officer knelt on the neck of an unarmed Black man suspected of buying cigarettes with counterfeit money. Three other officers stood nearby and did not intervene. As the officer knelt on his neck, Floyd repeated, "I can't breathe!" until he died.

This tragic event, resulting in a conviction of the officer for second-degree murder, sparked a firestorm of racial unrest in the U.S. It also prompted protests in other parts of the world. Before Floyd's murder, many in the U.S. thought that racism was a problem of the past or confined to isolated areas of our country. But cell phone video footage and social media have universalized local events, causing many to rethink that optimistic position. Unfortunately, this horrific crime was not an isolated incident. Notwithstanding gains made toward legal justice and equality, persistent acts of racial injustice, indignities, and police brutality continue. Floyd's death raised awareness of how violence, and even deaths, remain overlooked.

Our society, and even our churches, are polarized on who is to blame in these events and the root causes of violent crime. Yet, the church can and should grieve the loss of life, the societal causes of these deaths, and the public divisions these pivotal moments expose.

And so we pray...

How long, LORD? How long will you allow the powerful to crush the powerless?

You who are near to the brokenhearted, will you not bring justice to the earth? You have sent Jesus, your Messiah, into the world to usher in peace, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim the year of your favor. He took our sin upon himself and paid the penalty on the cross. Your Spirit raised him from the dead, and he lives and reigns in victory with you. When will he return to bring final victory to the earth? When will Jesus come to judge the living and the dead?

As we wait, LORD, comfort us in our grief. Bring peace to those whose minds are filled with terror. Bring justice through the imperfect working of our courts. Keep us from perpetuating violence. Reassure us that vengeance is yours, that you will repay those who do evil deeds and do not bend the knee to you in repentance.

You are our only comfort and hope, LORD. You are the one we trust when no one else is trustworthy. We look to you. Come, Lord Jesus!

THE WESTMINSTER STANDARDS AS GROUNDS FOR RACIAL LAMENT

Despite clear and consistent teaching in our Standards on unity, we acknowledge that our practice of that unity has not been consistent. Sadly, living into the adoption shared by all God's children has been and still is a stumbling block.

Adoption is an act of God's free grace in and for his only son, Jesus Christ, by which all those who are justified become his children, have his name put on them, have the Spirit of his Son given to them, are provided for under his fatherly care, are welcomed to all the liberties and privileges of the sons of God, and are made heirs of all the promises and fellow-heirs with Christ in glory (WLC A. 74).

WCF Chapter 26 teaches on the fellowship of all believers united to Jesus Christ and therefore to each other.

26.1 All believers are united to Jesus Christ, their head, by his Spirit and by faith, and have fellowship with him in his grace, suffering, death, resurrection, and glory. United to one another in love the saints have fellowship in each other's gifts and grace and are obliged to perform those public and private duties which nourish their mutual good, both spiritually and physically.

26.2 By their profession of faith saints are bound to maintain a holy fellowship and communion with each other in the worship of God and in the performance of other spiritual services for their mutual improvement. They are also bound to help each other in material things according to their different abilities and needs. This fellowship is to be offered, as God gives the opportunity, to everyone in every place who calls on the name of the Lord Jesus.

When we participate in the sacraments, we are celebrating the covenant relationship we have in and with Christ and with all others who are in Christ regardless of their tongue, tribe, or ethnicity. In the sacraments, we bear witness to the essential oneness we share in Christ and practice "holy fellowship and communion with each other." Speaking of baptism, Richard Mouw stated in 1978, "To make covenantal promises on behalf of a black child is to commit ourselves to the black struggle. If society tries to treat him like a second class citizen, we will have to protest on his behalf since he is our brother in a holy nation!"¹⁵

LAMENTING RACISM

Being in covenant together means that when one part of the body has trouble, it becomes trouble for all and prompts us to lament accordingly. Scripture clearly teaches us to care about and share in our brothers' and sisters' pain:

Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep (Romans 12:15).

If one part [of Christ's body] suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it (1 Corinthians 12:26).

Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ (Galatians 6:2).

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others (Philippians 2:3-4).

15 Richard J. Mouw, "Baptismal Politics" *Reformed Journal* 28, no. 7 (July 1978): 2-3.

The EPC has people of color who experience the ongoing painful effects of racism. When we acknowledge the pain and destruction brought about through racism and prejudice, we see the wounds of our brothers and sisters and join our voices together, crying out to our God for intervention. Put another way: when we consider the damage done through racist attitudes, words, and actions, it may not be your fault, but it is *our* problem. Together as the people of God, we can maintain our holy fellowship with one another in Christ through the practice of lament in the face of hatred and injustice. We lament a situation that does not reflect God's design for his world, and we turn to him for justice, comfort, and transformation.

As we live into our covenant union, listening to one another's expressions of pain and lament creates awareness of ways in which we possibly participate in the racial brokenness of the world. The Holy Spirit may prompt us to turn to God in confession and repentance. Lament can open our hearts to one another and to God and invite the healing work of Christ's Spirit, overcoming our earthly divisions (Eph. 2:11-22) and demonstrating the truth of the Gospel (John 17:20-23).

If we refuse to join our brothers and sisters in lament, or if we move too quickly to gospel victory without taking time to grieve with those who are hurting, we communicate to them that their pain is their own—we are not part of the same body. In so doing, we fail to bear one another's burdens, and the chance for unity and solidarity is lost.¹⁶

The depth of human depravity and the unrelenting fruit of the sin of racism means that lament can never be "one and done." As long as there is suffering on the earth, the people of God will join their voices in lament. As long as there are brothers and sisters who experience the pain of hatred and injustice, we will persist in crying out to the Lord.

When we hear of, see, or experience the dehumanization of those created in God's image, how can we *not* express our pain and disgust to the Lord? How can we not turn to the Holy One for relief when we reflect on the suffering and destruction wrought by racial division?

Heavenly Father,

We acknowledge your eternal goodness and the gracious covenant you have established with us. It is not our own righteousness that has brought us into this relationship but the righteousness of Christ, covering us and restoring us to our purpose as image bearers chosen to reflect your glory.

We grieve over how individuals who bear your image and likeness are subjected to abuse. We lament the discrimination and denial of dignity experienced by those in America who have been marginalized, not only by those distanced from you but even by those who declare Jesus as Lord. Regrettably, the church has fallen short in taking action, speaking out against and publicly or privately condemning and lamenting racism in any form toward any individual or group. This racism is evident in acts of antisemitism, ethnic hate, and immigrant hate. We lament racism in both personal and structural contexts.

We humbly pray for healing, unity, and justice. May your love permeate our hearts and communities, transforming us into reconciliation agents and advocates for equality. Grant us the strength to confront and dismantle the structures that perpetuate discrimination and grant us the courage to stand against racism in all its forms.

We pray in the name of Jesus, our Lord and Savior. Amen.

¹⁶ Waltke, Houston and Moore, *The Psalms*, 2.

OUR HOPE



The realism of lament can seem like a path only of gloom, but the opposite is the case! When we enter the grief of people without dismissing, qualifying, or blaming, we find ourselves bearing one another's burdens and showing love, in communion with Jesus who gave himself utterly on the cross. Engaging in lament, we live out our faith that Jesus will bring a new heaven and a new earth. In that hope we live and minister.

As Christ's people, let us seek the opposite of ethnic-discrimination and race-hatred. Let us long for the communion of true *kingdom harmony*. Scripture pictures a unity that does not obliterate ethnic distinction, but weaves uniqueness into oneness. The church, in the power of the Spirit, can demonstrate this vision to a world weary from ethnic strife. Let's consider how.

JESUS RECONCILES US TO GOD AND ONE ANOTHER

Amidst the constant human tendency to tribalize around ethnic distinctions, we have yet one great reason for hope. "In Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them" (2 Cor. 5:19). Through Jesus' sinless life, atoning death, mighty resurrection, and glorious ascension, the great divide has been crossed and a new and living way to God is open.

Moreover, Jesus has created in himself reconciliation for humanity with one another. "For he himself is our peace," wrote Paul to the variety of ethnicities in the Ephesian church. Christ "has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility" (Eph. 2:14). Jews and Gentiles, people intently declaring "the other," discovered a deeper oneness.

Every person who is united to Jesus by the Holy Spirit through faith and repentance becomes a new creation. We die to the sinful self. Paul testified, "I have been crucified with Christ" (Gal. 2:20). Previous identity markers recede before the primary identity of being in Christ. Let us repent of any identity marker we held as supreme. Nation, language, social class, education, ethnicity in all their manifestations remain part of us, but they yield in priority to the one supreme marker, signified in baptism, of our having died and risen with Christ Jesus. Nothing from the old humanity may remain elevated above the new Adam, Jesus. "The old has passed away; behold, the new has come" (2 Cor. 5:17).

This dying to self and rising in Christ, being joined to his humanity as the only reconciliation with God, *is also the only basis of being truly reconciled to others*. Kingdom harmony can only occur if the very basis for relationship is set at this deeper, grace-filled level—to deal with personal sin, of course, but also to provide the bridge whereby we can find connection, even unity, turning "others" into "one another." An angry, polarized world cannot provide real reconciliation. This is why the church takes responsibility to engage this topic of racism in all its forms.

THE WORK OF RECONCILIATION

Regarding this unifying work, “We should also harbor charitable thoughts, love, compassion, meekness, gentleness, and kindness. Our speech and behavior should be peaceful, mild, and courteous. We should be tolerant of others, be ready to be reconciled, patiently put up with and forgive injuries against us, and return good for evil” (WLC A. 135).

These reconciling actions arise from understanding how people of diverse ethnicities share *equal* standing in Christ. “Equals are required to pay attention to the dignity and worth of each by honoring each other above themselves and by rejoicing in each others’ gifts and success as if their own” (WLC A. 131). In other words, we live out the prayer our Lord taught us: “Your kingdom come, your will be done, *on earth*, as it is in heaven.

Our evangelism, our telling of this good news, will be real when we live out visibly this kingdom harmony. Our witness can shine brightly as we demonstrate reaching across ethnic lines. We can pursue the unity that exists in Jesus only as we lay down our own cherished identity markers for finding deeper identity with one another in Christ. Then our blood-washed robes will dazzle. Our songs will be beautiful.

Before we get there, may we each bow on our faces at the foot of the cross. Let us acknowledge our inability to save ourselves or cleanse our sins of racism. From that common ground we will look up and see in Christ’s nail-pierced palm all the names of the redeemed written, including our own. And from that common ground, we will look left, right, fore and aft, and see each other, see every other whose name is also engraved in the Redeemer’s hand. And we will say, “You, too? Hallelujah!”

EXERCISING THE GIFTS ALREADY GIVEN

Through the person and work of Jesus and the gift of the Holy Spirit, the EPC already has:

1) Power to engage humbly in the lives of people from different ethnicities and *ask to listen*. Kingdom harmony requires two sides to meet, listen, work out problems and pursue unity. We can intentionally set aside time on a regular basis to allow open discussions between ethnicities to occur. Candidness and respect for diversity will be the key to successful conversations. We encourage participation and input from every tribe and nation represented in the Kingdom of God. This is a crucial first step. Truthful discussions will allow for forgiveness and lament to occur. Truthful discussions transform hearts. Truth gives hope. We deeply desire to be in line with the Word of God by pursuing racial reconciliation on the basis of Ephesians 2 and the vision of Revelation 7. We already see our churches taking responsibility to vigorously pursue activities that will foster such kingdom harmony. We can strive for steps that will produce meaningful progress.

One example is Hope EPC in Memphis which developed a course called *Ethnos*. It is an 8-week multi-ethnic, intergenerational small group which includes three outside joint class spiritual adventures. *Ethnos* features a hot meal eaten together, Bible studies, guided table-talk and biblical deliberation on ethnicity and culture from a Scripture-centered view, not just a socio-economic viewpoint. Active listening, praying, caring, and sharing each other’s life experiences allow the group to appreciate and celebrate their God-given varieties, while breaking through the barriers of ignorance or fear to promote kingdom harmony and their commonality in Christ.

2) Courage to embrace the lives of the overlooked, gazing in love until we are deeply moved with compassion out of which arises Spirit-prompted acts of love. As relationships develop, we can risk an exchange of ethnic stories. This would include, in time, sharing experiences of the effects of racism. Those whose stories express pain and suffering will find such exercises riskier and more burdensome. Those whose ethnic stories have nurtured and sustained us will want to be grateful for the effort it takes to tell painful stories. We all want to be patient as we begin noticing as precious people those we have not seen or seen only through a lens of dismissal or blame.

Congregations could recognize and celebrate the different ethnicities in their congregations. If a church is largely homogenous, the congregation could seek relationship with another church in its community. For example, the staff of First Presbyterian in Baton Rouge met with the staff of a neighbor church, Abounding Love Ministries. They shared stories of their history, their people. In particular, the mainly Caucasian staff of FPC listened, grieved, and prayed over the stories of those who grew up Black in Louisiana. A few weeks later, together they visited the River Road African American Museum together, and then over lunch, processed the visit, sealing their friendship in gentle tears.

3) Commitment to lament alongside others who have experienced the effects of racism. We know that the Spirit leads us into the sorrow of creation over the Fall of humanity (Rom. 8:22-23). This includes daring to grieve racism and its consequences before trying to defend, justify, deny or possibly even own our part in the destruction wrought by racism. Regular confession of sin lays down the tracks along which regular, honest, and healing lament over racism can occur. Every week we willingly participate in Reformed worship with its sacred emphasis on calling each and all of us to confess our sins before God and one another. We frequently offer prayers aloud for sins we may not personally have committed that week, but we confess in solidarity with the body of Christ and in humble awareness that we have the capacity, if not the propensity, for those very sins.

Similarly, our worship services could regularly include prayers of confession that draw us to lament and repent of various aspects of racism. Ethnic indifference, blindness to racial pain, acts of diminishment, discrimination or hostility, stereotyping and blaming can all be acknowledged. Such lament is healing and uniting. We can dare it because we possess the wonderful heritage of the declaration of pardon. All we name goes to the cross of Jesus for cleansing that enables us to live in a new way.

In our wider communities, we can find a model in Mother Emmanuel AME Church in Charleston, SC. In 2015, a racially motivated shooter killed nine members gathered at the church. At the shooter's bond hearing, family members of the slain openly grieved, named the wrong and then deliberately offered forgiveness. The pastor of the church has since begun a ministry called One New Humanity, which in November 2022, organized a Prayer Procession through seven places in Charleston, including the Old Exchange Building where slaves had been traded. The multi-ethnic event focused on lament, repentance, forgiveness, and unity. Such creative ways of shared sorrowing for sin can lead the church to a richer experience of faith, hope and love.

4) Do justice in our communities. As our churches take responsibility to address racism and its effects, we can seek more just communities. This can include churches partnering with public schools or even creating Christian schools in disadvantaged neighborhoods. Jobs and training programs can open paths for prisoners returning to society. Our churches

can encourage members to serve on town/city councils and task forces that address transportation access, housing, policing, and economic initiatives. Churches can host or organize community festivals that welcome a variety of ethnicities to participate. There are limitless possibilities for creative engagement cultivating kingdom harmony.

5) Knowledge to resist narratives that respond to the pain of racism without lament, empathy, confession, repentance or reconciliation in Christ. Genuine resolution can only come by being born from above, out of the old self and into the new creation begun by Jesus the last Adam.

We want to become aware of and counter the non-Gospel strategies which define liberation as moving *into* more of ourselves and our tribes. These philosophies set people of different ethnic, economic or social groups against one another. We know they are doomed to fail, dividing others and furthering hostility. We offer the Gospel as the truly freeing alternative. We require liberation *from* ourselves into Christ, by whom alone forgiveness for sins committed against us as well as by us can occur. The EPC can encourage teaching that clearly distinguishes true from false models for kingdom harmony.

6) Authority to wield scripture, prayer, and the truths of our Confession against the principality of racism in the church. Even as we expose errant narratives of liberation, we are also bold to shine the light of scripture into our individual hearts and the ways racism has affected the EPC as a whole. We can find energy and motivation to pursue kingdom harmony when we courageously allow the truth of scripture and the Confession to speak to our racial/ethnic sins. We may well come to realize how we have overlooked the painful effects of racism on our own members and in the culture to which we bring the Gospel.

Revelation 7 envisions glorious multi-ethnic worship of the true God. It offers a great picture of unity and equality. Has our largely homogenous denomination intentionally opened doors for service and leadership by those not of the majority ethnicity? Have we risked our preferred styles of worship to be enriched and challenged by the worship flavor others may bring? The Word slices even to the division of joint and marrow, soul and spirit. Let us more boldly proclaim a message of kingdom harmony, and the change it calls for, even at risk of creating initial discomfort or anger.

7) Inspiration to plant more multi-ethnic churches, to encourage mono-ethnic churches to envision a widening reach in worship and mission, and to engage varied and creative interaction with believers across ethnic lines. At the presbytery level, we are encouraging new church development leaders to focus more intentionally on fostering churches whose initial DNA is living now the future promised in the Word.

For example, Forge Church is an EPC multi-ethnic church plant in Greensboro, NC. Their leading edge of evangelism is through children's sports leagues. *Pay It Forward* promotes multi-ethnic and socio-economic integration by offering participation at no charge. Sports for children becomes an invitation for families to participate in the church. Multi-ethnic sports leagues have readily led to a diverse worshipping community.

8) Finally, the joy to celebrate the many places and ways in the EPC where the biblical vision of kingdom harmony is occurring now. We're beginning to tell the stories of people of color in our own church history. The Tim Russell Memorial Scholarship prepares African American EPC candidates for church leadership. Intentionally multi-ethnic churches in

places such as Houston, Ferguson, Cleveland, Greensboro, Memphis, New York, Detroit, Philadelphia, and other cities live forward our vision. Ministries in and with non-majority ethnic communities display our commitment to kingdom harmony. Increasing ethnic variety in leadership of churches and General Assembly indicates our willingness to share influence and authority. We embrace the great joy of meeting together around the table of the Lord who makes us one body, one temple, one church and one new reconciled humanity in which each member offers a consecrated distinctness to enrich the whole.

CONCLUSION

Writing this letter has brought us the sad realization that throughout our country's history, there have been Presbyterians participating in, or even benefitting from, racism. At the same time, we've given thanks that we serve in a denomination that courageously confronts this reality. We've sought to engage in honest self-reflection about our failures. But we've also rejoiced that there have been Presbyterians at the forefront of abolition, civil rights, ethnic equality, and continuing reform. We stand on their side. The purpose of our letter has been to lament any complicity, by omission or commission, in racism. Yet, alongside lament, we rejoice in the atoning, harmonizing, embodied grace of Jesus Christ. Our beloved EPC bravely seeks to reflect the kingdom harmony envisioned in Revelation 7. We pray for your energy, courage, imagination, and zeal in *lamenting* racism with us, so deeply that the *hope* of the Gospel flows in a river of tears that Christ Jesus is making new as a river of everlasting life.

BENEDICTION

May the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus, to whom be glory forever and ever (Heb. 13:2-21).

With you in Christ,

The Ad Interim Committee

TE Sean Boone
RE Ken Chang
TE Gerrit Dawson, chair person
TE Joe Kim, assistant chair person
RE Linda McDaniel
TE Marcos Ortega
TE George Robertson
TE Annie Rose
RE Carol Williams

TE Michael Davis, GA Staff
TE Rufus Smith, Advisor

Scan below to submit feedback
on the pastoral letter:



Mr. Stated Clerk:

The Session of Valley Hope met on March 11th.

Having examined the overture coming out of the Presbytery of the Pacific Northwest and finding its reasoning to be both theologically justified, consistent with our polity, and pastorally wise, we would make the following motion:

The Session of Valley Hope Church wishes to move that the Presbytery of the Central Carolinas concur with the Presbytery of the Pacific Northwest to amend the Book of Order with the following Ascending Overture approved by the P-PNW to the 2024 General Assembly in Memphis, TN. The text of that overture reads:

Proposed Overture to the EPC GA 2024 Ascending from the Presbytery of the Pacific Northwest

Whereas, the Book of Order offers no path into church membership apart from verbal/ written “evidence of true commitment to Jesus Christ...and determination to live...,”

Whereas, the covenant community includes baptized individuals, who are developmentally disabled, unable to profess faith and promise commitment,

Whereas, the words of Jesus Christ (John 9) clarify that infirmity, deformity and the like, may stem from the common curse, the suffering individual not at fault, the condition not a consequence or punishment of his/her sin, but for the glory of God,

Whereas, our Lord Jesus teaches us to know God as a Father who delights to give good gifts to his children far more abundantly than we can imagine (Matthew 7, Ephesians 3),

“Whereas, in 1 Corinthians 11 the Apostle Paul more specifically defines “unworthy” participation in the Lord’s Supper as “getting drunk” and/or eating so much that one humiliates the poor “who have nothing to eat,”

Whereas, the Westminster Confession of Faith 10.3 not only considers, “elect infants, dying in infancy,” to be among the regenerate, but also, “elect persons, who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the word,”

Be it resolved, that the Book of Order be amended by adding the italicized words below to the citations listed:

Book of Government, Chapter 8-2C

The Session shall satisfy itself that each applicant for membership demonstrates evidence of true commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord and determination to live as becomes a follower of Christ. It is appropriate for the Session to ask for testimonials of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and a sharing of one’s growth in faith. *In the case of baptized, covenant children and adults, who are developmentally disabled, unable to demonstrate the above-listed evidence, the Session may consider them as members in good standing, admitting them to the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper.*

Book of Government, Chapter 8-3B.2

Persons may be received into active membership in the following manner:

a. By profession of faith

Ordinarily the person(s) being received on profession of faith shall make that profession in a public service of worship in the presence of the congregation. If not previously baptized, each person shall be baptized in accordance with the Book of Worship as it deals with adult baptism. If already on the baptized roll, the person shall be transferred to the active roll. *The Session may receive into active membership any baptized covenant child or adult, who is developmentally disabled, unable to cognitively and verbally profess faith.*

b. By reaffirmation of faith

Persons who have previously made a profession of faith who apply for active membership may be unable to secure a certificate of membership or may wish to reaffirm their faith.


c. By transfer of membership

Persons may be received by transfer of membership from another Evangelical Presbyterian Church or from some other body recognized as a part of the true Church. The Session may not deny membership for any reason not related to profession of faith and obedience.

Book of Worship, Chapter 3-3J

Baptized children may be admitted to the Lord's Supper provided they have appeared before the Session and professed their faith in a manner acceptable to the Session. At its discretion, the Session may admit such persons to full membership. *Also at its discretion, the Session may admit to the table developmentally disabled persons who have been deemed members in good standing.*

Submitted: March 18, 2024



Pastor, Moderator of Session



Clerk of Session

9:14 PM

04/08/24

Accrual Basis

Presbytery of the Central Carolinas
Balance Sheet
As of March 31, 2024

	<u>Mar 31, 24</u>
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
Operating Account	75,906.28
Savings Account	100,062.70
Total Checking/Savings	<u>175,968.98</u>
Total Current Assets	<u>175,968.98</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>175,968.98</u>
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Equity	
Unrestricted Net Assets	81,949.23
Temp. Restricted Net Assets	
Donor Designated	
Missionary Emergency Fund	5,076.62
Women's Ministry	4,352.56
Total Donor Designated	<u>9,429.18</u>
Board Designated Funds	
Benevolence	3,119.67
Church Development	81,733.75
Total Board Designated Funds	<u>84,853.42</u>
Total Temp. Restricted Net Assets	94,282.60
Net Income	<u>-262.85</u>
Total Equity	<u>175,968.98</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	<u>175,968.98</u>

Presbytery of the Central Carolinas Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual January through March 2024

	Jan - Mar 24	Budget	\$ Over Budget
Ordinary Income/Expense			
Income			
Per Member Asking	32,346.13	40,749.99	(8,403.86)
Individual Giving	725.00	750.00	(25.00)
Church Health Coordinator- GA	0.00	0.00	0.00
Presbytery Offering	1,689.00	0.00	1,689.00
Interest Income	9.95	0.00	9.95
Total Income	34,770.08	41,499.99	(6,729.91)
Expense			
Missional Director			
Salary	8,000.01	7,999.98	0.03
Total Missional Director	8,000.01	7,999.98	0.03
Stated Clerk			
Salary	5,011.98	7,500.00	(2,488.02)
Benefits	3,317.36		
Total Stated Clerk	8,329.34	7,500.00	829.34
Church Health Coordinator	3,000.00	3,000.00	0.00
Personnel Expenses			
Travel-Missional Director	2,525.15	1,500.00	1,025.15
Travel-Stated Clerk	765.31	375.00	390.31
Travel-Other	0.00	450.00	(450.00)
Office	280.57	300.00	(19.43)
Zoom and IT Expenses	171.09	337.50	(166.41)
Total Personnel Expenses	3,742.12	2,962.50	779.62
Professional Fees			
Information Technology-Stipend	900.00	900.00	0.00
Web & Database Expenses	369.36	300.00	69.36
Treasurer- Stipend	2,250.00	2,250.00	0.00
Treasurer Expenses	177.22	200.06	(22.84)
Payroll Expenses	0.00	250.03	(250.03)
Liability Insurance	156.65	87.56	69.09
Total Professional Fees	3,853.23	3,987.65	(134.42)
Committee Expenses			
Executive Council	116.31	125.06	(8.75)
Presbytery Meetings	0.00	1,666.68	(1,666.68)
Ministerial	911.92	1,000.03	(88.11)
World Missions	0.00	375.00	(375.00)
Stewardship	0.00	37.50	(37.50)
Total Committee Expenses	1,028.23	3,204.27	(2,176.04)

Presbytery of the Central Carolinas Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual January through March 2024

	Jan - Mar 24	Budget	\$ Over Budget
Benevolence			
Pastoral Needs and Support	330.00	1,312.50	(982.50)
Commissioner Assistance	0.00	150.00	(150.00)
Chaplain Travel	0.00	150.00	(150.00)
Total Benevolence	330.00	1,612.50	(1,282.50)
Church Planting			
El Buen Samaritano-Lake Forest	3,000.00	2,499.99	500.01
House of Mercy	3,750.00	3,000.00	750.00
New Plant Support	0.00	2,374.98	(2,374.98)
Church Planter Coaches	0.00	499.98	(499.98)
North Hampton Network	0.00	375.00	(375.00)
GA Church Planting Conference	0.00	1,500.00	(1,500.00)
Church Planter Training	0.00	750.00	(750.00)
Church Planter Internship	0.00	499.98	(499.98)
Networking Dinner	0.00	150.00	(150.00)
Total Church Planting	6,750.00	11,649.93	(4,899.93)
Church Development Expenses			
Small Church Network			
Small Church Grants	0.00	499.98	(499.98)
Total Small Church Network	0.00	499.98	(499.98)
Church Vitalization Team			
Vision Team Coaches Training	0.00	375.00	(375.00)
Vision Team Coach Resourcing	0.00	750.00	(750.00)
Total Church Vitalization Team	0.00	1,125.00	(1,125.00)
CDC Equipping			
CDC/MC Transition Pastor Train	0.00	499.98	(499.98)
Team Travel/Zoom	0.00	750.00	(750.00)
Total CDC Equipping	0.00	1,249.98	(1,249.98)
Total Church Development Expenses	0.00	2,874.96	(2,874.96)
Total Expense	35,032.93	44,791.79	(9,758.86)
Net Ordinary Income	(262.85)	(3,291.80)	3,028.95
Net Income	(262.85)	(3,291.80)	3,028.95

9:18 PM

04/08/24

Accrual Basis

Presbytery of the Central Carolinas Percentage of Income Giving January through March 2024

	Jan - Mar 24
Altan Presbyterian Church	0.00
Banks Presbyterian	1,000.00
Bensalem EPC	1,763.54
Benton Heights	1,550.00
Bethlehem Presbyterian Church	780.50
Cameronian	0.00
Centre Presbyterian	0.00
Christ Church	0.00
Christ Community Church	4,046.25
Christ Fellowship Church	250.00
Faith Liberation Christian Church	0.00
Garden Memorial EPC	396.25
Grace Brevard	0.00
Grace Haven	0.00
Greenville Presbyterian	0.00
Hendersonville	0.00
House of Mercy	0.00
Indian Hill	535.63
Kershaw	500.00
Lake Forest	0.00
Lighthouse	0.00
McBee Presbyterian	0.00
McLean Presbyterian	0.00
Nell Townsend Presbyterian	0.00
New Cut Presbyterian	920.00
New Vision Church	0.00
Overbrook	0.00
Park Avenue Presbyterian	0.00
Riceville Valley Community	0.00
Ridgecrest Presbyterian	0.00
Rocky River Presbyterian	0.00
Rourk Presbyterian Church	1,575.00
Siler Presbyterian	1,875.00
St. Giles	1,045.84
St. Matthews Presbyterian	0.00
Storyhill Church	4,663.11
The Village Church	0.00
Threshold	708.00
Troy Presbyterian	0.00
Valley Hope Church	8,662.00
Walkersville	450.00
Warehouse	1,625.01
Warrenton Presbyterian	0.00
No name	0.00
TOTAL	32,346.13

Presbytery of Central Carolinas
5th Stated Meeting
January 26th-27th, 2024
Benton Heights Presbyterian Church
Monroe, NC

05-01. Attendance

Altan Presbyterian Church

1. TE Robert Childs
2. RE Fran Caldwell, Phyllis Hill, John McNeil

Banks Presbyterian Church

1. TE Eric Bartel, Stated Supply
2. RE James Hasty, Curtis Reinhart

Bethlehem

1. CP Josh Herrin
2. RE Amy Moore, Patricia Sloan

Bensalem

1. TE John Stone, Stated Supply
2. RE Kurt Barnhart

Benton Heights Presbyterian Church

1. TE Paul Saleeby
2. RE Rick Haslett, Kim Schwab

Centre Presbyterian Church

1. TE Logan Keck
2. RE Roger Hamilton, Rick Wagner

Christ Church – Anderson

1. TE Nate Wolcott
2. RE Dennis Burt, Nathan Turner

Christ Community Church Montreat

1. TE Richard White, David Taylor
2. RE Dan Newcomer, Lloyd Davis, Russell Boardman

Christ Fellowship Church

1. TE Jim Thyne
2. RE EXCUSED

Faith Liberation Community Church

1. VACANT
2. RE Betty Alexander

Garden Memorial EPC

1. TE Rob Chambers
2. RE

Grace Brevard

1. TE Brian Land
2. RE Joe Kirk, Chris Godley

Greenville Presbyterian Church

- 1. TE Donovan Campbell
 - 2. RE Chuck Marion, Genie McDill
- Hendersonville Presbyterian Church
- 1. TE Rob McClellan, Charles Reed (Excused)
 - 2. RE Doug DiRienzo, Robert Wallace
- House of Mercy (Mission)
- 1. TE Chad Smith, Evangelist
- Indian Hill Presbyterian Church
- 1. Vacant
 - 2. TE Remy Huneycutt (Excused), Joe McLester
- Kershaw EPC
- 1. TE Kevin Hartley
 - 2. RE Tom Orred, Thomas Bryant, Jesse McDonald
- Lake Forest Huntersville
- 1. TE Mike Moses
 - 2. RE Allen Roes, Darrell Lipe, Kristin Bryan, Kathy Boone
- Lake Forest West
- 1. Aron Gibson (NOT EXCUSED)
 - 2. RE Dennis Moore, Harold Cherry
- Lighthouse EPC
- 1. TE Any Schuster
 - 2. RE Mike Wood, David Price
- McBee Presbyterian Church
- 1. TE:Mark Dickinson
 - 2. RE: Kemp McLeod, Gail McLeod
- McLean Presbyterian Church
- 1. TE Jamie Smith
 - 2. RE:
- New Cut Presbyterian Church
- 1. Vacant
 - 2. RE Joe Clark, Joe Ghent
- Overbrook Presbyterian Church
- 1. TE: Bill Wade
 - 2. RE: Bob Campbell
- Riceville Valley Community Church
- 1. TE: Howard Quach
 - 2. RE: John Babour
- Rocky River Presbyterian Church
- 1. CP: Corrina Gambrel
 - 2. RE: Marcus Gambrel, Michael Bulluck
- Rourk
- 1. CP: Michael Price
 - 2. RE:
- Siler Presbyterian Church
- 1. TE: Michael Krauter

- 2. RE: Perry Somers, Scott Bulluck
- St. Giles Presbyterian Church
- 1. TE: Nate Atwood, Tim Carey
 - 2. RE: John Price, Bryan McFarland, Roby Wallin, Jeff Wong, Reggie Wood
- Storyhill
- 1. TE Michael Flake, Grey Segars
 - 2. RE Chad Larrabee
 - 3. Candidate Under Care Katie Macturk
- The Village Church
- 1. TE Scott Walters
 - 2.
- Threshold
- 1. TE Gabe Swing
 - 2. RE Jamie Dyer, Frank Mummert, Amy Russo
- Valley Hope Community Church
- 1. TE Anthony Rodriguez
 - 2. RE Ben Lillard, Randy Stephens
- Walkersville EPC
- 1. TE Paul Rankin
 - 2. RE Rick Gay, Ann Rose, Larry Schott
- Warehouse 242
- 1. TE Mike Lawrie
 - 2. RE Ross Cole

TEACHING ELDERS OUT OF BOUNDS

- | | |
|------------------------------|---|
| TE George Schwab | Erskine Seminary |
| TE Stephanie Ann Vander Lugt | Changing Choices |
| TE Wes Vander Lugt | Prof. GCTS-Charlotte |
| TE Doug Vinez | Assoc. Member, TE Global Training Network |

TEACHING ELDERS, RETIRED

- TE James Bucky Brown
- TE Brian Holt
- TE Jim Braswell Moderator
- TE Kenneth Thomas
- TE Don Fortson
- TE Jimmy Carr

TEACHING ELDERS, WITHOUT A CALL

- TE Robert M. Howard, Stated Clerk
- TE Larry Pittman
- TE Michael White

EXCUSED FROM THE JANUARY 2024 STATED MEETING

TE Michael Kruger	Out of Bounds, RTS Charlotte, President
TE Joe Carvajal	Out of Bounds, Chaplin
TE Rachel Toone	Montreat, Dean of Spiritual Development
TE Nicole Unice	Out of Bounds
RE Mike Rashid	Lake Forest Huntersville
RE Warren Dumford	Lighthouse
RE Mazella McDowell	Faith Liberation Community Church
RE Remy Huneycutt	Indian Hill Presbyterian Church
TE Jennifer Cooper	U.S. Army Chaplain, Out of Bounds
	Christ Fellowship Church, Southern Pines, NC

THOSE NOT EXCUSED

TE Peter Cha	Evangelist, New Vision (Mission) Matthews, NC
TE Jeff Cook	Lake Forest Huntersville, NC
TE Aron Gibson	Lake Forest West
TE Mark Hunter	Montreat Assoc. Prof. of Psy. and Human Services
TE Joshua Joohyung Jo	Evangelist, Living Life Church (Mission)
TE Brian Martin	PastorServe, Out of Bounds
TE Jaye Morgan	Evangelist, Grace Haven (Mission) Irmo, SC
TE Josh Schatzle	Christ Community Church, Montreat
CP Phil Joines	Cameronian PC

CHURCHES NOT EXCUSED

Cameronian Presbyterian Church	Rockingham, NC
Nell Townsend Presbyterian Church	Ellerbe, NC
Park Avenue Presbyterian Church	Rockingham, NC (Admin. Commission)
St Matthews Presbyterian Church	St. Matthews, SC (Admin. Commission)
Troy Presbyterian Church	Troy, NC (Admin. Commission)
Warrenton Presbyterian Church	Abbeville, SC

OBSERVERS

Kurt Barnhart	NC - Bensalem EPC
Peggy Braswell	
Jessica Bull	SC - Rocky River Presbyterian Church
Paula Crook	NC - Benton Heights Presbyterian Church
Rosy Farrell	NC - Siler Presbyterian
Chris Godley	NC – Grace Brevard
Tommy Greene	
Renee Hasty	NC - Banks Presbyterian
Anita Hill	CDC Chair NC - Siler Presbyterian
Butch Hill	MC Chair NC - Siler Presbyterian
Cyndie Howard	NC - Centre Presbyterian Church
Mark Ingles	EPC Chaplain Endorser

Kathey Kennington	NC - Benton Heights Presbyterian Church
Don Kirkey	NC - Centre Presbyterian Church
Brent Lutz	NC - Siler Presbyterian
Jane Lutz	NC - Siler Presbyterian
Beth McDonald	SC - Kershaw EPC
Cindy McFarland	NC - St. Giles Presbyterian
Laura Morris	NC - Hendersonville Presbyterian
Percy Muleba	Livingston, Zambia Global Training Network
Robert Pearson	Church Planting Chair NC - St. Giles Presbyterian
Elizabeth Pearson	NC - St. Giles Presbyterian
David Phelan	
Dawn Phelan	
Bonnie Price	NC - St. Giles Presbyterian Church
Marlene Reed	NC - Banks Presbyterian
Caitlin Richardson	NC - Walkersville EPC
Larry Schmidt	NC - Benton Heights Presbyterian Church
JoAnn Schmidt	NC - Benton Heights Presbyterian Church
Audrey Schott	NC - Walkersville EPC
Dianne Short	NC - Benton Heights Presbyterian Church
Magda Thomas	Other Ministry
Abby Vinez	NC - Lake Forest / Huntersville
Greg Walmsley	NC - Benton Heights Presbyterian Church
Jessica Wallace	NC - Hendersonville Presbyterian

05-02. The Presbytery meeting was called to order at 12:30 PM by the Moderator TE James Braswell. The Moderator invited the host church Pastor, TE Paul Saleeby, on behalf of the Session of Benton Heights PC to welcome the Presbytery and give introductions to the use of the facility and those who can provide directions and answer questions.

05-03. 12:35 PM the Moderator the Presbytery Chaplin, TE Nate Wolcott, to open the meeting with a time of Prayer & Worship.

05-04. The Moderator, TE Jim Braswell, addressed the Preliminary Matters of the meeting asking the Stated Clerk, TE Robert Howard, if there is a quorum present? The Stated Clerk declared there is a quorum. with 41-TE, 46-RE, 26 Obs., 2-Candidates. The Moderator entertained from the floor a motion to adoption of the docket. The Motion to adopt the docket was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously by voice vote.

- There was communication from Parkview PC, Rockingham, NC, requesting that the PCC dissolve the congregation and take possession of the property. Information will be given in the Stated Clerk's Report.
- Annual Church Reports (ACR) were dispatched to all churches on **Friday, January 5, 2024**. To facilitate the process, I have attached a blank worksheet for

your convenience. The submission deadline is set for **February 29, 2024**. Your prompt cooperation in encouraging churches to complete and submit the reports at their earliest convenience would be highly appreciated. The Moderator welcomed and invited first-time commissioners and corresponding members to be introduced.

- 05-05. The Moderator introduced himself and his wife Peggy who is attending a presbytery for the first time. The Moderator also gave a report on the formation of the PCC Committees and took the time to introduce Committee Chairs. The Moderator also recognized those who are on the Executive Council in addition to the Chairs of each committee.
- 05-06. The Moderator invited Missional Director, TE Brian Land – Grace Brevard, to bring a report on the health of the PCC. TE Brian Land spoke of the healthy church metrics that congregations are encouraged to use to self-diagnose their ministry.
- 05-07. RE Bob Pearson and TE Mike Moses were invited to report on the work of the church planting of UCity – The Church in Charlotte, NC., and the challenge of planting churches in “poor” areas that may not have finances. A new ministry model called “Divine Tortilla” is being developed to start a process of marrying business and ministry to provide jobs and resources. The hope is that this ministry project will be self-sustaining and eventually fund the planting new churches.
- 05-08. The Moderator recognized the PCC Stated Clerk for a report. TE Robert Howard encouraged Ruling Elder Commissioners to ask the moderator to give guidance and ask any questions they may have on the day’s proceedings. The court was reminded of the motions from the Executive Committee that would be voted on during the meeting and could be found in the packet on page. 70. The Presbytery was reminded of the need to approve attendance and achieve the needed parity required in the Book of Order. A summary report of the attendance expectation of the Book of Order will be mailed to all Session Clerks and the Sessions will be asked to set up a rotation of their Active Ruling Elders and Inactive Ruling Elders to attend future meetings. There will be some churches that will be asked to send more Ruling Elders than normal on a rotational basis.

05-08A. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE EPC GENERAL ASSEMBLY

*Annual Church Reports (ACR) were **dispatched to all churches on Friday, January 5, 2024**. To facilitate the process, I have attached a blank worksheet for your convenience. The submission deadline is set for **February 29, 2024**. Your prompt cooperation in encouraging churches to complete and submit the reports at their earliest convenience would be highly appreciated.

05-08B. COMMUNICATIONS FROM PCC CHURCHES

The Stated Clerk received communication from Parkview Presbyterian Church, Rockingham, NC, requesting the Presbytery of Central Carolinas dissolve the congregation on or about March 31, 2024. (*See minutes of that meeting in Addendum #1*). The matter falls to the Church Development Committee on recommendations of the stewardship of all property to the PCC. (G. 5-9)

***Motion:** That the Executive Council work with Parkview Presbyterian Church to determine the exact day of dissolution and the transfer of all property, both real and personal, that may remain shall be delivered, transferred, and conveyed to the Presbytery by those holding title. The disposition of the remaining property shall be at the discretion of the Presbytery. The Executive Council will bring a report and recommendations to the Spring Meeting 2024 of the PCC. The Presbytery shall hold the membership of any remaining members until such time as the individual members request transfer to another Christian church, following the stipulations of G.8-4.

Minutes Received from the following Sessions:

- Bethlehem Presbyterian Church
- Greenville Presbyterian Church
- Rice Valley Community Church
- Rourk Presbyterian Church
- St. Giles Presbyterian Church
- Siler EPC
- Valley Hope Church EPC

05-08C. ACTIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

- The Executive Council (EC) clarified that the women's ministry is not a part of our Presbytery's vision, therefore any women's ministry during Presbytery meetings will not be funded or organized from the Presbytery's budget as of January 1, 2024.
- The Executive Council (EC) invited Dr. David Phelam to address the Stated Meeting in January 2024 as the "Speaker of the Day" President of the Institute for Biblical Leadership, Fairview, NC. David and his organization have served numerous churches and organizations around the world. (see www.iblministry.org) He could speak to the topic "A Theology of Leadership."
- The Executive Council (EC) would seek to invite Mrs. Kim Hock to address the Presbytery as "Speaker of the Day" at a future meeting. Mrs. Kim Hock trained psychotherapist, and EPC minister's wife who could address issues related to self-care, family care, church care following a crisis as well as other topics. Here's a

link to her addressing the 1st topic at Mid-West Pres:

<https://southportpres.org/media/jnmy279/caring-for-ministry-spouses-andfamilies>

- The Executive Council (EC) approved the measure that “Ministry Tables” at the presbytery meeting will be limited to EPC Missionaries, World Outreach approved missions, endorsed universities and seminaries, Church Planters, EPC ministries and the speaker of the day.
- That the Executive Council (EC) ask the following permanent committees to participate in a rotating plan to make recommendations to EC for approval of the Speaker of Day. Approval of the schedule below for the next 18 months.

Sept. 2024	Church Planting Committee (Planting Education)
Jan. 2025	Church Development Committee (Renewal Issues)
Apr. 2025	Missions Committee (WO/Mission Education)
Sept. 2025	Ministerial Committee (Leadership Issues)
- The Executive Council (EC) approved that the worship service offering received at the January meeting would be designated for the Engage 2025 Pakistan Clarkabad project supporting our missionaries, Asaph and Lynn Din.
- The Executive Council (EC) approved that the Small Church Network report to and fall under the purview of the Church Development Committee.

05-08D. ACTIONS NEEDING PRESBYTERY APPROVAL

***MOTION:** The Executive Committee recommends the approval of the Barnabas Fund Administrative and Process Guidelines (*See below at Stewardship Report & on Page 16 in the Presbytery Packet.*) The Moderator directed the court to note that this motion would be voted on Saturday January 27th during the Stewardship Committee Report and for the court to review the material in the packet.

***MOTION:** That the use of ChurchTrac software along with the Word Press website enhancement be approved by the Presbytery and funded from the budget. Motion did not need a second. The Moderator opened the floor to discussion or questions. Hearing none the Moderator moved the question. The motion was approved unanimously by voice vote.

***MOTION:** That the Presbytery approve the members of the Ministerial Committee and thankfully recognize those willing to serve on the Permanent Committees of the PCC. Motion did not need a second. The Moderator opened the floor to discussion or questions. RE Butch Hill, Ministerial Committee Chair questioned if this motion would limit the number of members on the Ministerial Committee to six since he was looking to recruit another

Teaching Elder to serve and felt that limiting the number was not beneficial to the committee's work. The Stated Clerk read from the Presbytery of Central Carolinas' Bylaws in Section 3. A. 1.

A. Ministerial Committee.

1. Membership: There shall be a limit of members as determined by the committee and approved by Presbytery. Members shall be Teaching Elders, Commissioned Pastors, and Ruling Elders of the Presbytery.

An amendment was offered from the floor that the Ministerial Committee be made up of eleven (11) members. The amendment was seconded and approved unanimously by voice vote. Hearing no other discussion the Moderator lead the court in voting on the motion as amended. The motion to approve those TEs and REs listed and that there would be a limit of eleven members on the Ministerial Committee as well as recognize those willing to serve on the other permanent committees was approved unanimously by voice vote.

The following are lists of the permanent committees and those recognized to be serving.

PCC Committees and Members 01/22/24

Executive Council Membership: Moderator, the Moderator-elect, Stated Clerk, the Chair of each Permanent Committee, and the Missional Director.

TE Jim Braswell (Mod.)	moderator@carolinasepc.org	Retired
RE Dan Barry (Mod. El.)	stewardship@carolinasepc.org	Siler EPC
RE Butch Hill	bhill2313@gmail.com	Siler EPC
RE Anita Hill	ahh704@gmail.com	Siler EPC
RE Bob Pearson	Robert.pearson@efiglobal.com	St. Giles PC
CP Corrina Gambrel	corde1981@gmail.com	Rocky River EPC
RE Amy Russo	amydrusso@gmail.com	Threshold
TE Brian Land (M.D.)	BrianLand@Gmail.com	Grace Brevard
TE Nate Wolcott	pastornate@christchurchepc.org	Christ Church (And.)
RE Tim Burns	timburnscpa@gmail.com	St. GilesPC
TE Robert M. Howard (C)	statedclerk@carolinasepc.org	Without a Call
RE Don Kirkey	don.kirkey@gmail.com	Lighthouse

Ministerial Committee Membership: Teaching Elders/Ruling Elders. There shall be a limit of eleven (11) members as determined by the committee and approved by Presbytery. Members shall be Teaching Elders, Commissioned Pastors, and Ruling Elders of the Presbytery. Moderator, Moderator-elect and Stated Clerk shall serve as an ex-officio member, without vote.

RE Butch Hill (Chair)	bhill2313@gmail.com	Siler EPC
RE Don Kirkey	don.kirkey@gmail.com	Lighthouse EPC
TE Eric Bartel	z6bears@yahoo.com	Banks PC
RE Genie McDill	geniemcdill@gmail.com	Greenville PC
TE George Schwab	schwab@erskine.edu	Greenwood PC
RE Jane Lutz	jane.lutz@lutzsolutions.com	Siler EPC

Church Development Committee Membership: Teaching Elders/Ruling Elders/ Active Congregational Members. There must be at least two Ruling Elders and one Teaching Elder. Membership shall be composed of Teaching Elders and Ruling Elders with at least one more Ruling Elder than Teaching Elders on a committee and includes active members of our congregations. Moderator, Moderator-elect and Stated Clerk shall serve as an ex-officio member, without vote.

RE Anita Hill (Chair)	ahh704@gmail.com	Siler EPC
TE Brian Land	BrianLand@Gmail.com	Grace Brevard
CP Corrina Gambrel	corde1981@gmail.com	Rocky River EPC
TE Bill Wade	bill@overbrookpres.com	Overbrook PC
RE Laura Morris	familiamorris@gmail.com	Hendersonville PC
TE Nate Wolcott	pastornate@christchurchepc.org	Christ Church (And.)
TE Rob McClelland	rmcclelland@hendersonvillepc.org	Hendersonville PC

Church Planting Committee Membership: Teaching Elders/Ruling Elders/Active Congregational Members. There must be at least two Ruling Elders and one Teaching Elder. Membership shall be composed of Teaching Elders and Ruling Elders with at least one more Ruling Elder than Teaching Elders on a committee and includes active members of our congregations.

RE Bob Pearson (Chair)	Robert.pearson@efiglobal.com	St. Giles PC
TE Logan Keck	Logan@thecenterchurch.org	Centre PC
TE Mike Moses	Mmoses@lakeforest.org	Lake Forest (H)
TE Anthony Rodriguez	anthony@valleyhope.church	Valley Hope Church
TE Nicole Unice	nicoleunice@gmail.com	(Without a Call)
CP Jesse MacDonald	jcmbychristolone@gmail.com	CP/TP (unassigned)
RE Jill Ammons	jammons001@yahoo.com	Siler EPC

Stewardship Committee Membership: Teaching Elders/Ruling Elders/ Active Congregational Members. There must be at least two Ruling Elders and one Teaching Elder. Membership shall be composed of Teaching Elders and Ruling Elders with at least one more

Ruling Elder than Teaching Elders on a committee and includes active members of our congregations.

RE Dan Barry (Chair)	stewardship@carolinasepc.org	Siler EPC
Donovan Campbell	pastordonovanepc@gmail.com	Greenville PC
John Brown	jbrown@theobedproject.org	St. Giles PC
Tim Burns	timburnscpa@gmail.com	St. Giles PC

Missions Committee Membership: Teaching Elders/Ruling Elders/ Active Congregational Members. There must be at least two Ruling Elders and one Teaching Elder. Membership shall be composed of Teaching Elders and Ruling Elders with at least one more Ruling Elder than Teaching Elders on a committee and includes active members of our congregations.

RE Amy Russo (Chair)	amydrusso@gmail.com	Threshold
TE Gabe Swing	gabeswing@gmail.com	Threshold
TE Brian Martin	bmartin061@gmail.com	Without a Call
TE Doug Vinez	dkvinez@gmail.com	Lake Forest
Abby Vinez	aavinez@gmail.com	Lake Forest
Candidate Thomas Davis	Thomas.D@epcwo.org	St Giles
Cynthia Howard	cyndiehoward@bellsouth.net	Centre
Dan Newcomer	Johnnewcomer48@gmail.com	Christ Community Montreat
TE Kevin Hartley	Kevin.hartley@gcu.edu	KershawPC
Shawn Stewart		Black Mountain NC

05-09. The Moderator recognized Rev. Mark Ingles, EPC Chaplain Endorser, who gave a report on the value and importance of the ministry of Chaplains. The ministry is effective in places where the church has not had any influence. The PCC was encouraged to support and partner with organizations looking to utilize the ministry of chaplaincy.

05-10. 2:05 PM Report of the Missions Committee (Part One) – RE Amy Russo introduced the Global Emphasis portion of the report and asked Thomas Davis, World Outreach. Mr. Davis spoke on Engage 2020 and encouraged the PCC to join in supporting this movement as it takes hold and develops establishing churches in places where there are no existing churches. Punjabi people are one of the groups the PCC can reach through the Dinns in their ministry in Pakistan. Cyndie Howard (Centre PC Active Member & Mission Committee member) followed up with three ways in which the local churches of the PCC can support the Pakistan work:

1. Join the home team that meets on zoom and uses WhatsApp.
2. Every summer the Dinns come home around the end of May. There are plans for the Home Team to gather with them on June 5th through 6th, 2024 in Montreat, NC.

3. Join the June 22nd -30th London Trip with Phil Thrash and the Dinns as they minister to Muslims in that area of the world.

RE Amy Russo informed the Moderator that this concluded Part 1 of the report from the Missions Committee and asked that it be approved.

***Motion:** A motion was made from the floor to receive the Missions Committee Report Part 1. It was seconded and approved unanimously by voice vote.

- 05-10. The Moderator pointed out to the court that the meeting was exceeding the time on the docket and entertained the following motion to accommodate scheduled reports yet to be made.

***Motion:** To move the Order of the Day from 3:00PM to 3:15PM and the supper from 5:00PM to 5:30PM.

Motion was moved from the floor, seconded, and approved unanimously by voice vote.

- 05-11. The Moderator recognized RE Anita Hill, Chair of the Church Development Committee who gave a report on the resources the CDC offers to the local churches of the PCC and the desire for our churches to use them. To emphasize this point, RE Anita Hill invited TE Rob McClelland, PCC's Church Health Coordinator, to explain how the church health survey would illuminate where and how the church can change the direction of reaching their community in which they are planted. The survey was passed by the newly trained Church Health Counselors and gathered once they were filled out by those in attendance. A motion to approve the report was entertained by the Moderator from the floor, seconded and approved unanimously by voice vote. RE Anita Hill informed the Moderator that this concluded the report from the Church Development Committee and asked that it be approved.

***Motion:** A motion was made from the floor to receive the Church Development Committee Report. It was seconded and approved unanimously by voice vote.

- 05-12. At 3:15 PM the Moderator called for suspension of business for the Order of the Day. Dr. and Mrs. David (Dawn) Phelam of The Institute for Biblical Leadership, Fairview NC. Lead the court in a teaching on "God's Perspective on Our Diversity and Unity"! After the presentation the Moderator invited the court to observe a recess of business to enjoy the meal offered by the host church and to attend the evening worship service at 7:00 PM. Worship would include the Celebration of the Lord's Supper as well as:

- Music led by praise team and choir.

- The Intercession Focus will be over The Ministerial Committee's work
- Preaching & Communion provided by TE Paul Saleeby
- The Evening Mission Offering will be for The Clarkabad Center
- Prayer ministry and fellowship available after the close of the service

Saturday, January 27, 2024

05-13. Moderator TE Jim Braswell called the meeting back to order at 8:30 AM and opened with prayer. The Moderator introduced Candidate Drew McCarty and invited him to lead the court in worship with a morning message from the Gospel of Mark, Chapter 1. After the message was delivered the Moderator entertained a motion to sustain this portion of the examination of Candidate Drew McCarty. There was a motion from the floor, followed by a second and approved unanimously by voice vote.

05-14. The Moderator recognized RE Bob Pearson who brought a report of the Church Planting Committee. After a brief prayer, RE Bob Pearson brought news of the four church plants that are already established in the PCC. He also updated the PCC on the conversations with the North Hampton Church Network and the melding of the PCC's aspirations for new church plants and the purpose of the Network in helping move forward in plans involving Church Plants. RE Bob Pearson informed the Moderator that this concluded the report from the Church Planting Committee and asked that it be approved.

***Motion:** That the Church Planting Report be received and approved.

A motion was made from the floor to receive the Church Planting Committee Report. It was seconded and approved unanimously by voice vote.

05-15. Report of the Missions Committee (Part Two) by RE Amy Russo. Mr. Keith Adams gave a report on the Local Emphasis Mission called Common Heart and the work of outreach in helping feed those in need in the community. Common Heart focuses on three areas:

- Getting by involves food pantries (friendship through delivering groceries to the needy),
- Getting ahead (60-hour workshop over 10 weeks for those in poverty on how to expand their skill in overcoming poverty),
- Getting engaged fosters community action in helping those in poverty. Ways to get involved: they are looking for a new pantry locally in Western Union County, let your local church get involved by providing volunteers to drop off food in their own community.

RE Amy Russo informed the Moderator that this concluded the report from the Missions Committee and asked that it be approved. The Moderator opened the floor to discussion. Hearing none the Moderator entertained the following motion from the floor.

***Motion:** That the Missions Report Part 2 be received and approved.

A motion was made from the floor. It was seconded and approved unanimously by voice vote.

05-16. The Moderator recognized RE Dan Barry who brought a report of the Stewardship Committee. RE Dan Barry began his report by asking the churches of the PCC to propose from the respective congregations those who would be willing to server on the Stewardship Committee. Meetings are by Zoom and made easy for those who are not accountants or financial wizards. The second item was a presentation of the creation of the Barnabas Fund to help those in need as a last result.

[Beginning of Barnabas Fund Guidelines]

Barnabas Fund Administrative and Process Guidelines

The Fund's Purpose is to support Teaching Elders, Commissioned Pastors, and their dependent family members with unexpected financial needs due to unanticipated hardship. The Fund is financed through the annual budget process of the Presbytery with additional contributions to the fund through offerings collected during the Presbytery Friday Night Worship Service. All funds are held as general assets of the Presbytery. The Presbytery will establish a bookkeeping account designated for this purpose.

An ad-hock distribution committee will manage the Barnabas Fund disbursements. The Members of the Distribution Committee shall be the Presbytery Chaplain, Chair of Ministerial Committee, and Chair of the Stewardship Committee. TE and CP are encouraged to engage their church Sessions for support, using The Barnabas Fund as a final Option.

Process for Receiving Support

- 1) Individuals desiring support must contact the Presbytery Chaplain or Chair of the Ministerial Committee to review the situation.
- 2) A formal request in writing is to be made to the committee which should include details on the financial need along with supporting narrative on the situation. (The Barnabas Committee will create a formal form for this request)
- 3) For healthcare or counseling support services, due to HIPPA guidelines, specifics are not required.
- 4) Confidentiality is required.

Payment

- 1) The fund will reimburse non-reimbursed expenses.
- 2) A covered individual can access the fund multiple times per year as long as they don't exceed the individual maximum established by the Barnabas Committee in conjunction with the Stewardship Committee.
- 3) The maximum amount distributed for any single individual shall be the lesser or
 - a. 50% of the un-reimbursed expense
 - b. \$1,000 Annual Maximum

Administration and Reporting

The Stewardship Committee manages the fund and reports activity to the Presbytery. Distribution reports should be in the aggregate without breaking the recipient's confidentiality.

[End of Barnabas Fund Guidelines]

RE Dan Barry made the following motion.

***Motion:** That the Presbytery of Central Carolinas approve the administrative and process guidelines recommended by the Executive Council that will govern how the fund will be administered.

The motion did not require a second coming from a committee. There was no discussion or questions from the floor, so the Moderator called the question. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

RE Dan Barry presented as report on the finances of the PCC and thanked everyone for their support and giving to the work of the Presbytery. The response from the churches have been encouraging and appreciated as we are now one year into forming this new presbytery. The following report includes a balance sheet on the budget, an income and expenditures statement and a report on percentage giving by the local churches.

RE Dan Barry informed the Moderator that this concluded the report from the Stewardship Committee and asked that it be approved. The Moderator opened the floor to discussion. Hearing none the Moderator entertained the following motion from the floor.

***Motion:** That the Stewardship Report be received and approved.

The motion was made from the floor to receive the Stewardship Committee Report. It was seconded and approved unanimously by voice vote.

Presbytery of the Central Carolinas
Balance Sheet
 As of December 31, 2023

	Dec 31, 23
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	76,179.08
Operating Account	100,052.75
Savings Account	176,231.83
Total Checking/Savings	176,231.83
Total Current Assets	176,231.83
TOTAL ASSETS	176,231.83
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Equity	
Unrestricted Net Assets	45,793.49
Temp. Restricted Net Assets	
Donor Designated	5,076.62
Missionary Emergency Fund	4,352.56
Women's Ministry	9,429.18
Total Donor Designated	19,458.36
Board Designated Funds	3,119.67
Benevolence	81,733.75
Church Development	84,853.42
Total Board Designated Funds	171,706.84
Total Temp. Restricted Net Assets	94,282.60
Net Income	36,155.74
Total Equity	176,231.83
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	176,231.83

Presbytery of the Central Carolinas
Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual
January through December 2023

	Jan - Dec 23	Budget	\$ Over Budget
Ordinary Income/Expense			
Income			
Per Member Asking	158,301.89	169,100.00	(10,798.11)
Individual Giving	1,625.00	590.00	1,075.00
Church Health Coordinator- GA	12,000.00	12,000.00	0.00
Presbytery Offering	2,336.00	1,500.00	836.00
Interest Income	40.03		
Total Income	174,302.92	183,150.00	(8,847.08)
Expense			
Missional Director Salary	40,000.08	40,000.00	0.08
Total Missional Director Stated Clerk Salary	40,000.08	40,000.00	0.08
Total Stated Clerk	30,000.00	30,000.00	0.00
Church Health Coordinator	30,000.00	30,000.00	0.00
Personel Expenses	11,000.00	12,000.00	(1,000.00)
Travel-Missional Director	7,174.97	6,000.00	1,174.97
Travel-Stated Clerk	625.54	1,500.00	(874.46)
Travel-Other	0.00	1,800.00	(1,800.00)
Office	0.00	1,800.00	(1,800.00)
Zoom and IT Expenses	160.39	600.00	(439.61)
Total Personnel Expenses	7,960.90	11,700.00	(3,739.10)
Professional Fees			
Information Technology-Stipend	3,600.00	3,600.00	0.00
Web & Database Expenses	0.00	1,200.00	(1,200.00)
Treasurer- Stipend	9,000.00	9,000.00	0.00
Treasurer Expenses	960.55	800.00	160.55
Payroll Expenses	0.00	1,000.00	(1,000.00)
Liability Insurance	570.85	350.00	220.85
Total Professional Fees	14,131.40	15,950.00	(1,818.60)
Committee Expenses			
Executive Council	274.90	500.00	(225.10)
Presbytery Meetings	3,740.74	2,400.00	1,340.74
Ministerial	1,798.94	8,000.00	(6,201.06)
World Missions	0.00	1,500.00	(1,500.00)
Stewardship	0.00	150.00	(150.00)
Total Committee Expenses	5,814.58	12,550.00	(6,735.42)

1:34 AM
 01/15/24
 Accrual Basis

Presbytery of the Central Carolinas
Percentage of Income Giving
 January through December 2023

	Jan - Dec 23
Altan Presbyterian Church	863.50
Banks Presbyterian	1,875.00
Bensalem EPC	1,425.00
Benton Heights	6,830.00
Bethlehem Presbyterian Church	2,341.50
Cameronian	0.00
Centre Presbyterian	3,475.00
Christ Church	2,000.00
Christ Fellowship Church	18,096.25
Faith Liberation Christian Church	1,000.00
Garden Memorial EPC	0.00
Grace Brevard	1,638.00
Grace Haven	2,500.00
Greenville Presbyterian	0.00
Hendersonville	2,500.00
House of Mercy	10,442.00
Indian Hill	0.00
Kershaw	633.89
Lake Forest	2,000.00
Lighthouse	46,350.00
McBee Presbyterian	777.00
McLean Presbyterian	2,500.00
Nail Townsend Presbyterian	1,500.00
New Cut Presbyterian	0.00
New Vision Church	923.10
Overbrook	0.00
Park Avenue Presbyterian	1,875.00
Riceville Valley Community	0.00
Ridgecrest Presbyterian	1,500.00
Rocky River Presbyterian	200.00
Rourk Presbyterian Church	0.00
Siler Presbyterian Church	1,350.00
St. Giles	7,500.00
St. Matthews Presbyterian	6,596.35
Storvhill Church	0.00
The Village Church	12,181.86
Threshold	750.00
Troy Presbyterian	4,248.00
Valley Hope Church	550.00
Walkersville	5,570.00
Warehouse	2,191.67
Warrenton Presbyterian	4,118.77
No name	0.00
TOTAL	158,301.89

05-17. The Moderator recognized TE Nate Atwell who presented a proposal from the Session of St. Giles Presbyterian Church to address a concern raised in the news of Memorial Presbyterian Church, St. Louis, Missouri, and the Pastor Greg Johnson applying for entrance into the EPC and leaving the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA). The motion from the Session of St. Giles Presbyterian Church was made by TE Nate Atwood and seconded from the floor.

***Motion:** The Central Carolinas Presbytery of the EPC officially communicate with Mid-America Presbytery of the EPC to either decline the application of Pastor Greg Johnson and Memorial Church to join the Mid-America presbytery or to refer the matter to the General Assembly for study, prayer, discussion, and debate.

The Moderator carefully explained the format of the discussion of the motion by having those in favor of the motion speak from a designated microphone in one part of the room while those who are not in favor of the motion would speak from another designated microphone in the room. Those speaking were asked to limit their views to one minute with 30 Minutes allocated for consideration of the motion. There was considerable discussion of the benefits and deficits of drafting a letter to another Presbytery concerning a middle governing body's responsibility to examine and determine the fitness of a church or a pastor to be received or ordained in the EPC. Some felt this application by Memorial would introduce unnecessary conflict and possible compromise with the EPC's doctrine. Others felt it important to trust the polity of the EPC. The Moderator drew the court's attention to the time left for discussion and entertained a motion from the floor to extend debate for 15 minutes. A motion was made, seconded from the floor.

***Motion:** That discussion be extend for 15 minutes.

The motion was approved by voice vote to continue discussion for 15 minutes with one voice opposed.

In seeking to improve the motion an amendment was offered by TE Michael Krauter. The motion would read as amended:

The Presbytery of Central Carolinas officially communicate with Mid-America Presbytery of the EPC to refer the matter of the application of Memorial Church and pastor Greg Johnson to the General Assembly.

The amendment was seconded. During discussion the Stated Clerk ruled the amendment was out of order since the General Assembly is not an ordaining court for Pastors nor is the General Assembly able to act on the application of Memorial Presbyterian Church to be received into the EPC.

Discussion continued with various individuals presenting powerfully stirring concerns for and against the motion. At the end of the 30 minutes dedicated to the discussion, the Moderator called the question declaring that time allowed for discussion had ended. The motion was read one last time and put to the court for a vote. The Moderator asked the court to register their vote by standing for and against the motion. Those standing in favor of the motion was 48. Those standing against the motion was 29, The Moderator declared that the motion was approved.

NOTE: The Moderator recognized TE Gabe Swing rose to address the question as to who would be responsible to write the letter. The Moderator explained that it would fall to the Executive Council to compose the letter at their next meeting on February 28, 2024, and send the communication to the Presbytery of Mid-America before their next Stated Meeting.

- 05-18. The Moderator invited Bart Francecone, Executive Director of Benefit Resources, Inc., to give an overview of the Benefits Resources that the General Assembly office offers to the EPC members and update of EPC Health Plan Benefits. The mechanism to access health care includes a Large Medical Reserve Fund, involvement in the Church Benefits Association of 40+ organizations that negotiates contracts as well as other resources that are available to assist in mental health care. Mr. Francecone informed the court he would be available in the display area of the meeting to answer any further questions.
- 05-19. The Moderator recognized RE Butch Hill to bring a report from the Ministerial Committee. RE Butch Hill introduced Candidate Drew McCarty and ask him to preach a sermon to the Presbytery to demonstrate the ability to expound the Word of God effectively. After the conclusion of Candidate McCarty's sermon, the Moderator recognized TE Butch Hill's motion to approve this portion of the examination. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously by voice vote. TE Butch Hill reported that Candidate McCarty who had presented evidence to the Ministerial Committee of his competency in the original languages of the Scriptures, transcripts of coursework taken and the required exegesis (G. 12-2. A.). At this point in the examination Candidate McCarty was invited to give a testimony of his experience of the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ and progress in spiritual growth (G. 12-2. B.). TE Butch Hill moved that this portion of the examination on personal experience by sustained. The motion was seconded and approved by voice vote without objection. TE George Schwab was

recognized by the Moderator to lead the rest of the examination. Candidate McCarty was asked numerous questions on the areas Theology and Sacraments, English Bible, the Book of Order, the history of the Church and the Reformed tradition, and the nature of the office of Teaching Elder (G. 12-2. C.). After each of the areas was covered the floor was open to further questions from those in the court. Once the court was satisfied with the answers TE George Schwab would move that the area of the examination be sustained. Each motion to sustain was seconded from the floor and approved by voice vote. Once the examination of Candidate McCarty was complete, he was excused from the room while ballots were passed out for the court to vote. The Moderator opened the floor to discussion and hearing none the ballots were gathered and counted. The vote to approve the ordination and installation of Candidate Drew McCarty as a Teaching Elders of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church was approved.

05-20. RE Butch Hill noted that with the successful examination Candidate Drew McCarty by Presbytery, the Ministerial Committee moved the following motions:

***Motion:** That Presbytery of Central Carolinas approve the call of Candidate Drew McCarty as Evangelist serving as a Church Planter for Asheville Hope Community Mission, Asheville, NC, with authority to preach the Word, evangelize, administer the sacraments, perform marriages, preside at funerals, and provide pastoral care (G. 9-5. C. Once installed and ordained by an Administrative Commission Evangelist Drew McCarty will be accountable to an Oversight Commission including PCC Church Planting Committee representatives, TE Anthony Rodriguez and TE Brian Land, for a period of 3 years from his date of ordination and installation on February 11, 2024. The motion did not require a second coming from a committee. The Moderator called the question. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

***Motion:** That the Presbytery of Central Carolinas approve the Terms of Call:

Annual Salary	\$ 50,000
Housing Allowance	\$ 50,000
Social Security	\$ 12,400
Medicare	\$ 2,900
Life Insurance	\$ 1,500
Retirement	\$ 14,400
Moving Expenses	\$ 12,000
Continuing Education	\$ 2,000
Self-Care	\$ 1,000
Vacation (4 weeks)	

Study Leave (2 weeks)

The motion did not require a second coming from a committee. The Moderator called the question. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

***Motion:** That the Presbytery of Central Carolinas approve an Administrative Commission comprised of Teaching Elder Anthony Rodriguez (Valley Hope and Chair), RE Ben Lillard (Valley Hope), TE Howard Quach (Riceville) RE Adam Boyd (Christ Community) TE Josh Schatzle (Christ Community) to conduct a service of ordination and installation at 2:00 pm on Sunday, February 11, 2024, at an Asheville Hope Community Mission location, Asheville, NC. The motion did not require a second coming from a committee. The Moderator called the question. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

05-21. Omnibus Motion. RE Butch Hill presented a report from the Ministerial Committee on matters determined to be non-controversial and requested that the Omnibus Motion be approved.

Motion: That the Presbytery of Central Carolinas approve the Omnibus Motion handed out at the beginning of the morning meeting.

[Begin Omnibus Motion]

1. Approve request to be excused from TE's and CP's TE Michael Kruger, TE Joe Carvajal, TE Mark Hunter, TE Rachel Toone, TE Nicole Unice, RE Mike Rashid, RE Warren Dumford, RE Mazella McDowell, RE Remy Honeycutt.
2. Approve request from Churches to be excused: Christ Fellowship Church, Southern Pines, NC
3. TE Changes: Eric Bartel as Stated Supply at Banks Presbyterian Church with authority to moderate the Session effective November 12, 2023.

[End Omnibus Motion]

The motion did not require a second coming from a committee. The Moderator called the question. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

05-21. RE Butch Hill drew the courts attention to the reported submitted by the Administrative Commission to Rocky River and that it be received by the Presbytery of Central Carolinas as part of the Ministerial Committee's report. The Ministerial Committee and the Administrative Commission for Rocky River have not received any communication from Rocky River Session in response currently.

05-22. RE Butch Hill reminded the court that the 2023 Annual Report for Teaching Elders was due January 1, 2024. If you are a Teaching Elder or Commissioned Pastor, you should have turned an Annual Report in along with your Terms of Call for 2023. If you have not turned in your Annual Report, copies are available in the Lobby. Terms of call can be submitted as a PDF. Teaching Elders can also fill it out online using the PCC website on the Ministerial Page.

05-23. RE Butch Hill informed the Moderator that this concluded the report from the Ministerial Committee and asked that it be approved. The Moderator entertained a motion from the floor.

***Motion:** That the Presbytery receive and approve the Ministerial Committee Report.

The motion was seconded and approved unanimously by voice vote.

05-24. TE James Braswell, Moderator wished to express appreciation to the Session of the host church – Benton Heights Presbyterian Church and asked TE Paul Saleeby help the court to recognize those present who volunteered to make the 5th Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of Central Carolinas a smooth and profitable time for those in attendance. The court stood and expressed their gratitude with applause.

05-25. TE James Braswell entertained a motion from the floor to close the meeting with the singing of the Doxology and a prayer and charge lead by TE Nate Wolcott, Chaplain. The motion to adjourn was seconded and approved unanimously by voice vote. After singing praise to God, TE Nate Wolcott led the court in prayer and charge to faithfully live out the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Adjournment was at 12:45 PM

Humbly Submitted,

James Braswell, Moderator

Robert M. Howard, Stated Clerk

CLERK'S INFO PAK

“A Little of What You Need to Know About Being a Clerk of Session”

CLERK OF SESSION: MANDATE & MISSION

Our Mandate:

G. 18-2 Officers of the Session

B. Clerk of Session

Each Session shall elect a Clerk.

1. Eligibility
The Clerk of Session must be a Ruling Elder but does not need to be currently serving on the Session.
2. Minutes
The Clerk of Session shall ensure that a careful record of the proceedings of the court (the Session) is kept.
3. Church Registry
The Clerk of Session shall ensure that a careful record is kept in the minutes and in a separate registry of all deaths, births, adoptions, baptisms, marriages, reception of members, transfers to the inactive roll, dismissals, and other records required regarding membership. (See G. 8-5 Review of rolls)
4. Property transactions
The Clerk of Session shall ensure that all transactions regarding real and personal property have been properly recorded with civil authorities as required unless this responsibility has been committed to the church Trustees, Deacons, or Treasurer.¹³⁴

Our Mission:

G. 18-4. Meeting of the Session

C. Minutes

A careful record of the proceedings of the court shall be kept by the Clerk of Session, who bears responsibility for providing certified extracts when required. When the Church Session has approved the Minutes, they shall be signed by the Clerk and the Moderator. The Clerk shall submit the minutes to the Presbytery annually.

Our Methodology: WHAT is the most effective way of fulfilling our mandate AND our mission?

THE CLERK

1. As **Scribe** (see G.18. C.)—*To faithfully, carefully record the actions of Session and, along with other required documents, preserve them for posterity.*
2. As **Parliamentarian**—*To be familiar with Session’s established procedures, policies, practices and with Robert’s Rules of Order in order to provide guidance and counsel in questions of required order.*
3. As **Correspondent**—*To act as the official correspondent re: all local church matters with other judicatories and with non-EPC bodies.*
4. As “**Town Crier**”—*To publish all announcements authorized and directed by Session to the local church, the community, and Church at large.*
5. As **Source of information**—*To respond to all inquiries and offer accurate, clear information as instructed and required by the Session, church bylaws and/or constitution of the EPC.*
6. As “**Armor Bearer**” (I Samuel 14:1-14)—*To serve in a support role to the Moderator, providing whatever Scriptural assistance as required and necessary.*

DO’S & DON’Ts OF CLERK’S WORK

- DO keep an accurate record of ALL meetings – Remember, in five weeks or five months or five years from now, “if it wasn’t written down, it didn’t happen.”
- DO keep minutes of EXECUTIVE SESSIONS/MEETINGS. These minutes require special treatment:
 - Record in regular minutes any action taken; additional detail is at discretion & instruction of the Session
 - DO NOT record individual members’ comments UNLESS the executive session involves a FORMAL TRIAL according to the Book of Discipline
 - Approve minutes at end of executive session or at the next regular Session meeting
 - Keep minutes of executive sessions in separate sealed file from regular minutes
- DO NOT reveal contents of minutes of executive session UNLESS instructed/ordered to do so by the Session or a higher church court. EXCEPTION: In the case of pending/threatened litigation, it is permissible to share relevant information from sealed files to your insurance carrier provided they give you a written assurance of confidentiality.
- DON’T meet in the absence of the Moderator UNLESS he has approved the meeting beforehand (G. 18-2. A. 1 through 4.). An “emergency” had better be just that! Otherwise, whatever is decided or done is subject to be declared out of order by Presbytery.
- DO help the Moderator to begin meetings ON TIME – and to end at the agreed upon time.
- DO file your church’s ANNUAL STATISTICAL REPORT by the DEADLINE given each year.
- DO file your Pastor(s)’ ANNUAL CHANGES IN TERMS OF CALL & ANNUAL REVIEW by the DEADLINE – which is now JANUARY 1st. If your church doesn’t approve changes until after January 1st BE SURE TO NOTIFY THE STATED CLERK

of your situation AND WHEN you will send it.

- DO keep Minutes in a secure, safe place. The official Minutes SHOULD be kept in a hard-backed, bound book for permanency. Back-up copies on computers, floppies, CDs are additional safeguards for preservation.
- DON'T FORGET: Session minutes are LEGAL DOCUMENTS, and in many courts, considered to be THE OFFICIAL RECORD of the church/Session.
- DO become familiar with THE BOOK OF ORDER—especially the Book of Government!

ESSENTIALS OF SESSION MINUTES *“The Bare Minimum Requirements”*

For purposes of creating and maintaining an accurate and consistent permanent record of Session meetings and actions taken, certain things need to be included in the minutes taken by the Clerk. Those items are (at least):

- The date, time & place of each meeting
- The names of those in attendance: Moderator, REs, others
- That prayer was an integral part of all meetings, either beginning, during or at end
- Approval by Session of previous minutes & signed by Moderator, Clerk
- A record of births, baptisms, marriages, adoptions, deaths of members & members' family members who are part of the church
- A record of members received (with names of minor children living with them)
- A record of those transferred to inactive status or dismissed to other churches
- Names & dates of those ordained and/or installed as Ruling Elders, Deacons
- Action taken by Session on all matters requiring its consideration by motion, recommendation, request, and The Book of Order

Additionally, for future reference and for guidance to future leaders, minutes should include

- A copy of the annual budget approved by the Session and/or congregation
- A copy of the GA Annual Statistical Report
- Any communications by higher courts (presbytery, General Assembly) requesting action by the Session (received as information, referred, approved, rejected)

TAKING MINUTES

1. PREPARATION FOR THE MEETING:
 - a. Have a written agenda with as much detail as possible; include copies of items which Session members need to read ahead of time
 - b. Review the agenda with Moderator PRIOR to the meeting; try to avoid surprises
 - c. Have a consistent methodology: pen & paper, laptop, recording, transcribing
2. CONTENT
 - a. Refer to “Session Minutes Guidelines” to cover all the bases
 - b. Make CLEAR, COMPLETE sentences!
 - c. PERSPECTIVE: Keep in mind that in 10 weeks, years, or decades your record

may be the ONLY record of a Session decision, action, consideration! Don't be TOO DETAILED, but don't leave out IMPORTANT DETAILS!

3. CORRECTIONS TO MINUTES

- a. THE IDEAL: Mail, distribute copies of minutes at least one week BEFORE the next meeting so Session members can have time read, review
- b. Very few (if any) Sessions read minutes in meetings (as in the old days); yet a good Clerk NEEDS the clear eyes, minds of other Elders to catch typo's, mistakes. Encourage Session members to read, look for needed corrections OR you may have someone else proof-read (volunteer or paid—AS LONG AS they can keep what they read in CONFIDENTIALITY!)
- c. Enter corrections, additions in NEXT set of minutes in section entitled, "ERRATA"

4. SECURITY

- a. Once minutes are approved, set a permanent copy with signatures of MODERATOR & YOURSELF aside in a HARD-BOUND MINUTES BOOK.
- b. Keep a BACKUP set of minutes on CD/diskette/zip in case something happens to your/church files
- c. Keep permanent minutes book in a SECURE PLACE! Safe from fire, flood, sun damage, heat, theft as much as practical (The car trunk is NOT a good idea!)
- d. Once a year, send a copy of the previous year's minutes to GA ARCHIVES for their record. Who knows? Someday one of your great-grandchildren may write a history of your church using YOUR minutes!

5. "WHOSE MINUTES?"

- a. Session minutes are SESSION minutes—and remain the property of the Session unless required by Presbytery, GA (usually whenever the church is dissolved)
- b. Access to minutes: Determined by the Session! A VARIETY of ways address this: post/publish full text copies (on website or bulletin board or newsletter), OR a publish a condensed version of meetings, OR a brief synopsis/description of actions taken OR any combination or ALL of the above! It's up to Session to decide what's best for your church.
- c. Minutes of EXECUTIVE SESSION are not available to anyone UNLESS the Session gives permission; Presbytery, GA may require them in certain cases.

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SUGGESTED AGENDA

MEETING OF THE SESSION 1ST EPC

ANYWHERE, USA

JANUARY 1, 2005

7:00 p.m.

- 1. Call to order & prayer
- 2. Declaration of quorum

PRESENT: (OR) LIST NAMES OF TEs & REs

ABSENT: (Check Present or Absent)

3. MINUTES READ & APPROVED (Minutes may be distributed prior to meeting)

4. COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED (OR) CLERK’S REPORT

- “Communications” = Any correspondence from GA, Presbytery, members, committees, other churches, organizations--ANYTHING which Session needs to know about from outside, inside the church
- May be received as information or may be docketed for Session’s consideration at this or a future meeting (Clerk & Moderator decide which is best & Session ok’s)

5. REPORTS: May be from Treasurer, standing committees, teams, huddles, action teams, task force(s), Diaconate, Pastor(s)

6. OLD/UNFINISHED BUSINESS: Carry-over items from previous meeting(s)

7. NEW BUSINESS: Clerk AND Moderator notified BEFORE the meeting in order to docket for consideration

8. ANNOUNCE NEXT MEETING

9. PRAYER & ADJOURNMENT –Be sure to note TIME of adjournment (*Didn’t you note the time the meeting started?*)

(Revised 1/25/05)

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SAMPLE IDEAS FROM OTHER CLERKS

1. OMNIBUS MOTIONS – Used to group together routine items which are not considered controversial. Should any member desire to talk about a particular item, you may isolate that item and discuss/vote on it separately.

2. CLERK’S REPORT (At each stated meeting, usually) – Here’s how one Clerk does this:

CLERK’S REPORT
Session Meeting of January 1, 2008

BIRTHS

- Jacob David Jones, son of John and Sue Jones, December 10, 2007, Hometown General Hospital
- Julia Rachel Smith, daughter of Sam and Barbara Smith, November 30, 2007, St. Joseph’s Hospital
- George Washington Bush, son of Ralph and Jean Bush, December 2, 2007, Hometown General Hospital

INFANT BAPTISM

- Samuel Eugene Brown, Jr., son of Sam and Sara Brown

ADULT BAPTISM

WEDDINGS

- Alice Sue Mitchell, daughter of Robert and Myrtle Mitchell, wed to Capt. James Longstreet, US Army

DEATHS

- Harriet T. Bates, November 28, 2007

3. WRITTEN POLICY STATEMENTS ON WEDDINGS, FUNERAL SERVICES, OTHER USAGE OF CHURCH BUILDING -- Samples can be secured by contacting Administrative Director’s Office

4. YOUR IDEAS, SUGGESTIONS ???

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REPORT FOR SESSION MINUTES

REPORT ON SESSION MINUTES of the _____ Church

CLERK OF SESSION: Please use the blanks to indicate the requested information is/is not provided. Include this sheet with your Minutes when it is submitted for examination.

PLEASE NOTE: If your church does NOT have a Board of Deacons, check here _____

BLANKS after each question are to be answered YES or NO

1. Is the time & place of each meeting given? _____
2. Did Session meet at least once each quarter? _____
3. Are names of Elders present noted? _____
4. Was prayer a part of all meetings? _____
5. Did Session always approve its own minutes & are they
signed by the Moderator and Clerk? _____
6. Were Commissioners elected to each meeting of Presbytery? _____
7. Did these Commissioners report to Session on their attendance
at Presbytery? _____
8. Were minutes of the Board of Deacons examined at least
annually by the Session? _____
9. Do minutes record ordination & installation of new Ruling Elders &
Deacons, with dates? _____
10. Did Session approve annual budget of church? _____
11. Was GA's Annual Statistical Report approved & included in minutes
& forwarded to GA? _____
12. Do minutes record reception of new members, giving full names, and
noting how received? _____

13. Were all dismissals & other deletions from the church roll acted on _____
by Session, with reasons given in the minutes?

14. Did Session make an annual review of the church roll for accuracy: _____

- (a) active members
- (b) non-communing members (baptized, under 18)
- (c) inactive members
- (d) affiliate members?

15. Were communications from higher courts read & acted upon by _____
the Session as requested by the sending court?

(received as information, referred, approved, rejected)

16. Were there any known irregularities or inconsistencies with _____
The Book of Order in actions taken by Session?

If YES, explain: _____

Attest: _____ Clerk of Session _____ Date

_____ Church

PLEASE PRINT:

Name of Clerk of Session: _____

Street Address: _____

City/Town: _____

State : _____ Zip _____

Email address: _____

Preferred Phone #: _____

Reviewed by: _____ Date _____

CHURCH LIFE & MINISTRY

1. Describe 3 to 5 significant events in the life of your church over the past year (Please use & attach additional pages if needed):
2. How would you describe the life of your congregation this past year—is it in Incline, Recline or Decline?
3. How may Presbytery be of help to your congregation in terms of guidance, training, resourcing, or in other ways?