

MINUTES OF THE STATED MEETING
Presbytery of Greater Atlanta
September 15, 2020
Held via Zoom
Focus: Eradicating Poverty

Preliminary Information for this meeting:

INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING ZOOM PRESBYTERY MEETING

Instructions for the Zoom Presbytery Meeting to be held on September 15, 2020 at 9:00 AM:

The material for the meeting is in the Handbook posted on the Presbytery's website. We are doing our best to keep this meeting to two hours at the most.

1. Download and install Zoom onto your device.
 - a. Computer - go to https://zoom.us/download#client_4meeting
 - b. Tablets and smartphones, install Zoom from your App Store. This version of Zoom will look different than the computer version.
2. Joining the Meeting:
 - a. You should have received a "Registration" link in order to register for the meeting (commissioners from churches should have received this from their pastor; minister members from the Stated Clerk. The website will also have this link for registration)
 - b. After you register, you will be emailed a link to join the meeting. This link is unique to you. We will send a reminder on Monday September 14, 2020.
 - c. To join the meeting, click the link and allow Zoom to open on your device.
 - d. Choose your audio input setting; choose computer audio if you are unsure.
 - e. You will be placed in the waiting room when you join the meeting. Please do not disconnect. The hosts will let you in when we are ready to begin. There will be pre-presbytery music 13 minutes before the start of the meeting.
3. Meeting Settings:
 - a. If there are multiple voting commissioners in a household, you will need to use one device per commissioner to vote. This is to allow each vote in the household to be counted.
 - b. Please be a few minutes early and adjust your settings during this time. Doublecheck that your video and audio are working. If you are using video, check that lighting is good and minimize background distractions if possible. We will be admitting attendees beginning at 8:45 if you want to join early to be sure you are able to connect.
 - c. Please note: **You must use the link from your computer or other smart device to participate in the meeting.** If you join using the dial-in numbers, you will be able to listen to the meeting but you will not be able to vote, speak, or otherwise participate, and the attendance information will not reflect your presence.
 - d. Please keep your audio on mute. If you have a question or comment, use the chat feature to message the meeting host, Chip Blankinship. The host will let the Moderator know and the Moderator will call on you to speak. The host will unmute you when called on and resume muting after you are finished speaking.
 - e. Turning on your video feed is optional but audio is required to participate in discussion.
4. There will be times when votes are necessary. At those times, you will be instructed as to how to cast your vote.

INTRODUCTORY BUSINESS

The meeting was opened in prayer by Moderator **Destiny Williams** at 9:04AM. A quorum was declared by Stated Clerk **Donna Wells**.

WORSHIP

The Presbytery was treated to music before the meeting by Oakhurst Presbyterian Church. First Afrikan Church's children's choir sang, This Little Light of Mine, and St. Andrews Presbyterian Church provided a special choral benediction that they have composed during this pandemic time. Our offering piece was "produced" by our Communications folks who were able to put some beautiful graphics to the denominations hymn on Matthew 25.

We collected an offering that was to be split between Buckhead Christian Ministries and our Presbytery's grant fund for hunger.

A WORD FROM THE EXECUTIVE PRESBYTER



Dismantling Structural Racism
Eradicating Systemic Poverty
Building Congregational Vitality

A Word from The Executive Presbyter:
Rev. Aisha Brooks-Lytle

In February 2016, I was invited to be one of the guest preachers for the NEXT CHURCH conference hosted at First Presbyterian Church of Atlanta. As the preacher, I was asked to imagine the crossroads at which the church finds itself. It only took me a few minutes to answer the question. I simply said that the church was at the intersection of racism and classism and in order to be faithful to the proclamation of the gospel, we must be ready to go to and through this intersection. The title of the sermon was called "You've Got to Go Through It." I based the title on the children's story we know and love that mimics a child's adventure of going on a bear hunt. You remember how it goes. **We're going on a bear hunt.** (*We're going on a bear hunt.*) **We're gonna' find a big one.** (*We're gonna' find a big one.*) **We're not scared.** (*We're not scared.*) **You can't go over it. You can't go under it. You can't go around it. You've got to go through it.**

Our invitation to the embrace Matthew 25 vision invites us to this intersection of finding freedom from the sins and trappings of racism, classism, and systemic poverty, and to embrace a new way of discipleship that brings good news to the poor, proclaims release to captives, recovers sight to the blind, lets the oppressed go free, and declares the year of the Lord's favor. (Luke 4:16-19) As we have looked closely this year at the impact of the roots of racism, we will also find that the roots of systemic poverty are woven together. Today's Stated Meeting is focusing on the invitation to live, love and serve in a way that eradicates legacy poverty. We are delighted to hear a message from one of our partnerships, Buckhead Christian Ministry, and their dedication to serving persons who long to experience the good news of the gospel in tangible ways.

We are also including in this packet resources from the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program Companion Guide. We are lifting up the resources for eradicating poverty. It offers resources for worship, spiritual formation,

education, community partnerships, and advocacy. In the same way that we have curated resources around dismantling racism on our atlpcusa.org website, we also hope gather resources in the work to eradicate poverty. You can find the link to the full peacemaking guide by clicking here: <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/Companion-Guide-to-the-Commitment-to-Peacemaking.pdf>

Even in the midst of a pandemic, may we continue to be disciples who welcome the stranger, clothe the poor, feed the hungry, and care for those who go unnoticed. May we have eyes to see, hearts that feel, and hands that are eager to be the instruments of hope and peace.

Much love and deep peace,
ABL

COMMUNICATIONS

For Information

1. If you need your Boundaries Training, please sign up for our first virtual session to be held on Wednesday, September 16 from 12:30-3:30. Registration: <https://www.atlpcusa.org/boundaries>
2. We are pleased to announce two grant opportunities to address emergency needs, and the ongoing need for technology, needs for which many of our congregations were unprepared six months ago. These grants are made possible by generous grants to the presbytery from Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA), as well as funds from the presbytery's reserve accounts. Please see the addendum in the handbook for the application.

Admit to Record

1. That the following people served on the commission to ordain **(Joffre) Tyler Brock** as a Contract Call Associate Pastor at Newnan Presbyterian Church on August 23, 2020.
Rev. David Jones, Newnan Presbyterian Church
Rev. Harry Barrow, Honorably Retired
Elder Jenni Parnell, Newnan Presbyterian Church
Elder Greg Masson, The Summit (membership held in the Presbytery)
Elder Karen Cooper, First Presbyterian Church, LaGrange
Rev. CG Gim, Midwest Korean-American Presbytery, Guest of the Commission
2. That the minutes of the commission to ordain **(Joffre) Tyler Brock** as a Contract Call Associate Pastor at Newnan Presbyterian Church on August 23, 2020 be admitted to the record.

For Recommendation

That the following be approved in the omnibus motion:

- Approval of the Docket for September 15, 2020
- Minutes of the Stated Meeting of August 15, 2020
- Admit to Record items in the Communications Report
- Admit to Record items in the Committee on Ministry Report

The Omnibus motion was *approved by a show of hands. (There were no extractions)*

COMMITTEE ON PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY

For Recommendation:

That the following people be approved to become candidates:

(Laura) Kate Culver, First Presbyterian Church, Atlanta (June 25, 2020)

Kyoungkun Keum, Korean Community Presbyterian Church (May 28, 2020)

Eun Ja (Kang) Kim, Korean Community Presbyterian Church (June 25, 2020)

Melva Lowry, Rice Memorial Presbyterian Church (May 28, 2020)

The above inquirers were *approved as candidates. Each person was voted on individually:*

Kate: received 215 yes, 5 no, 6 abstentions

Kyoungkun: received 232 yes, 1 no, 2 abstentions

Eun Ja: received 223 yes, 2 no, 6 abstentions

Melva: received 238 yes, 0 no, 2 abstentions

STATEMENTS FROM BRANDON DOUGLAS AND JANE HUBBARD, TO BE COMMISSIONED AS RULING ELDERS

Brandon Douglas Statement of Faith

I believe that God is the one creator of heaven and earth and of all living things. He is the father of all of us. God created us to be the good image of him. He gave us Jesus to be fully human and fully divine which shows us God's love for us.

I believe that Jesus' life has changed traditions by eating with sinners and offering life-giving healing for us to know and be known by others. Jesus' life should be the way we live with others in our life. I believe in the Triune God and the way it speaks to us in each a different way. I believe that the Holy Spirit is God's gift to us as humans, because when Jesus was raised to heaven we were not abandoned because the Holy Spirit was given for all of God's children.

I believe that he does this through his church as the community of Christ. We are called to spread the good news that our Lord God is still alive. I know that the church does not always do this as well as it could. But I also know that God continues to bless the church to do the work of God as the church works to bring the world together through the Word of Christ in the Bible.

I do believe that the bible is the Living Word of God. It is the story of Gods love relationship with us. I believe that the Bible is ever conforming to what the world is today and he does this through the scripture.

I believe that it calls us to not only love the good but also love our enemies just as Jesus did. We are called to love and serve God with all that we are and all that we have.

I believe in the sacraments of Baptism and The Lord's Supper. With our baptism we are claimed as God's children. Not because of what we have done but because God first loved us. Our baptism is the seal and confirmation of what God has already done for us. I believe that the meal that Jesus prepared is a celebration so that would remember the sacrifice he made for us and our sins. I believe that Christ is very present with us and us with him as we break bread and share the cup.

Jane Herron Hubbard Statement of Faith

My faith is bound in relationship with the Trinity; one of awe and reverence with our Lord God Almighty; a personal and intimate relationship with Jesus and of mystery, wonder and oneness with the Holy Spirit. A quiet time of meditation centers me for the day so that I remain mindful of my connected bond that keeps me grounded throughout the day.

For many years, my faith was fragmented and segmented. I grew up in the church with pictures and stories of Jesus but God was in charge. The God I knew through my family or origin and church was a God of fear and guilt. While, I was actually equipped for leadership as a child in the Baptist church, as an adult, early on, even as an active member and elder in PCUSA church, I was able to put God aside for the 167 other hours of the week that I was not sitting in church. Church has always been a significant place for me but not always a way of life.

One sunshiny day in 1991, an almost fatal car accident brought me to the realization that I would have been better off if I died. About eight years of therapy and spiritual direction put me onto the path of faith where my relationship with the Trinity is the oneness of my life. The Spiritual Formation program at Columbia, a pastoral counselor and my spiritual director were my guides.

One day sitting and praying in front of a statue of Jesus on CTS campus, I realized I had no relationship with Jesus, the person. My spiritual director guided me through written mediations to actualize a relationship with Jesus. Another time, my life verse jumped off the page of the Bible at the Calvin Center. "You will search me and find me when you look for me with all your heart." (Jer 29:13) The yearning never left me to give the Lord all my heart; reminding myself everyday that I am a baptized child of God who is called to walk hard places with others in love and not in judgment. His spirit in me connects to his Spirit in others. Through the spiritual disciplines learned and practiced through the years, the Holy Spirit, Jesus and God became mysteriously interwoven. Fragmentation became oneness. From this oneness, gifts have come. Spiritual gifts of leadership, administration and exhortation have defined the manifestation of my faith.

Part of the mystery is that I married a Catholic, and eventually joined a PCUSA church because of our collective need for good liturgy and good preaching. In the Presbyterian Church, I learned about and experienced grace, repentance and forgiveness. Jesus became more than a story and the Bible became my guide for life. I grew up memorizing scriptures as a Baptist; a great foundation. I grew into receiving the word as the divine inspiration of the Trinity; a great way of life. In preaching, leading and participating in Lectio Divina groups, the Bible provides the sacred space for the Holy Spirit to speak. Through CRE training, I am expanding my use of commentaries so that I can better place the scripture in historical and theological contexts. The church, first is the house of worship and second, the church is a place of life-long learning with the Bible as the primary textbook. Now in this time of pandemic, political division and racial inequity, the church is being called outside the walls of the building; much the same as the times of Jesus.

The sacraments of Lord's Supper and Baptism (Book of Order (W. 3. 0401)) are the "Word of God enacted and sealed in the life of the Church, the body of Christ They are also human acts of gratitude, by gifts...." It is food for my soul that at the Lord's Table and Baptismal font, the Trinity is experienced in common elements and we are one in a visual and communal way. It is also in these sacramental moments that we unite with all of Christ's global churches.

For both of these sacraments, I have struggled. First I struggled with the exclusivity of the Catholic Eucharist including many hours of debate with Father Francis at the Holy Spirit Monastery. Yet I came to realize that even if we do not take the Eucharist in the Catholic Church, Jesus is blessing and present. I drink in the power of Jesus presence at the table every time we celebrate. I thank God for the open table and Jesus presence of the Presbyterian church. I am intimidated and, yet filled with expectation, for the time of speaking the words of institution.

At the age of 12, my baptism was by emersion in the Baptist church. When my own children were born, as members of a Baptist church, they were dedicated instead of infant baptism. When they were confirmed, they also

were baptized. While on staff of the Douglasville Church, I worked with the Associate Pastor creating an infant baptism brochure for new parents. Through that experience, I spiritually and emotionally accepted the essence of infant baptism as sealing the identity of the infant with Jesus and the community of faith. What brings tears to my eyes is the congregation standing to commit to the spiritual upbringing of the child; an affirmation of life-long learning!

SERVICE OF COMMISSIONING

Moderator: Today, we are privileged to commission two people to service as Commissioned Ruling Elders. The first is **Brandon Douglas** for the Bethany Presbyterian Church in Covington.

Commissioned Ruling Elders are authorized by their presbyteries to serve in validated ministries of the presbytery. They are called to build up Christ's church, to proclaim God's Word, to declare forgiveness through Jesus Christ, to call publicly on the name of the Lord on behalf of God's people, and to celebrate Christ's holy sacraments, baptizing and presiding at the Lord's Supper. They are to build up and equip those with whom they work, show the gospel of God's grace in word and deed, share people's joys and sorrows, encourage the faithful, recall those who fall away, help the sick and the dying, and serve with the whole church in its ministry to the world.

In accepting this commission, Brandon will undertake this call to perform the many duties thought to be those of a pastor: moderate session and congregation meetings, plan, organize, and lead Sunday worship including, preaching and the administration of the Sacraments, provide pastoral care, and nurture the congregation in their spiritual growth and energy.

Second, we will also commission **Jane Hubbard** as the Coordinator of our Pastor to Pastor Team. In her care and nurture of pastors in the presbytery, she will be commissioned to administer the sacraments, preach, and offer pastoral care on our behalf.

Both Brandon and Jane have participated in a yearlong program of study in preparation for these ministries. They have had sessions in preaching, worship, Reformed theology, ministry basics, pastoral care, bible, boundaries training and polity. We are excited to welcome them to these calls.

Motion was presented to approve **Brandon Douglas'** commission as pastor of Bethany Presbyterian Church.

Approved: 222 yes, 4 no, 3 abstentions

Motion was presented to approve **Jane Hubbard's** commission as the Director of the Pastor to Pastor Program of the Presbytery.

Approved: 224 yes, 0 no, 1 abstention

Moderator: Brandon and Jane, so all may know you are both willing and able to accept this ministry of Christ's church, the Presbytery asks you to affirm these Constitutional Questions as you enter this ministry.

- a. Do you trust in Jesus Christ your Savior, acknowledge him Lord of all and Head of the Church, and through him believe in one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?
- b. Do you accept the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be, by the Holy Spirit, the unique and authoritative witness to Jesus Christ in the Church universal and God's Word to you?
- c. Do you sincerely receive and adopt the essential tenets of the Reformed faith as expressed in the confessions of our church as authentic and reliable expositions of what Scripture leads us to believe and do, and will you be instructed and led by those confessions as you lead the people of God?

- d. Will you fulfill your ministry in obedience to Jesus Christ, under the authority of Scripture, and be continually guided by our confessions?
- e. Will you be governed by our church's polity, and will you abide by its discipline? Will you be a friend among your colleagues in ministry, working with them, subject to the ordering of God's Word and Spirit?
- f. Will you in your own life seek to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, love your neighbors, and work for the reconciliation in the world?
- g. Do you promise to further the peace, unity, and purity of the church?
- h. Will you pray for and seek to serve the people with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love?
- i. Will you be a faithful ruling elder in this commission, serving the people by proclaiming the good news, teaching faith and caring for the people, and in your ministry, will you try to show the love and justice of Jesus Christ?

Joy Fisher staff member of the Presbytery and one of the facilitators of the Commissioned Ruling Elder Program offered a charge and prayer for their ministries.

BUCKHEAD CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES

Buckhead Christian Ministries is a partnership of the Presbytery. We continue our year of exploring the Matthew 25 initiative from the General Assembly with our focus on eradicating poverty. The Presbytery heard a presentation on the work being done in Atlanta, especially in light of the pandemic.

A major program in this ministry is called, Budget for Life. The goal of this program is to help individuals become self-sufficient, giving them tools to manage their finances in order to stay in their homes. A second major piece of their work is rental assistance in light of so many who have lost their jobs and then their homes.

The brochure on the next page discusses their work in more detail.



BCM's mission is to keep people from becoming homeless and work to elevate their possibilities for economic empowerment. By meeting basic needs through our Emergency Assistance Program and providing access to life skills education and support services through our financial coaching and housing programs, BCM helps people in need achieve stability and regain self-sufficiency. Community volunteers assist BCM Case Managers in the delivery of services, bringing hope and compassion to those in need.

Founded in 1987 by six area churches, BCM is a collaborative ministry of 30+ churches offering a continuum of services that helps people in various stages of crisis achieve self-sufficiency. Clients receive help ranging from short-term emergency assistance to longer-term housing assistance and money management education.

Client-centered program services include:

- **The Emergency Assistance Program** provides food, clothing, employment support services and one-time financial assistance with rent and utilities. This past fiscal year, BCM served over 6,309 individuals in need. Our Food Pantry is currently closed to the public and we are re-evaluating how to safely implement this program, including providing gift certificates for food for families currently enrolled in our housing programs.
- **Foundation 3** helps homeless or near-homeless families establish a foundation for family stability with three essential building blocks: safe housing, stable employment, and basic education. This past year, Foundation 3 served 15 families; all remained housed six months after program completion. The program is currently operating at capacity with 15 families.
- **The Budget for Life Program** is a 12-month program that serves low-income workers who need long-term support to become financially stable, providing graduated rent and utility assistance for six months, coupled with in-depth case management, and financial literacy and money management coaching. The final six months of the program include career counseling and a savings match. This past year, 42 families graduated from the Budget for Life Program and collectively retired over \$202,000 in debt.

BCM is rapidly responding to those most at-risk as a result of the COVID-19 virus crisis. BCM's financial assistance program forestalls evictions and utility shut offs by paying a portion of rent, mortgage or utility bills for those experiencing a crisis such as an illness, job loss or death in the family. COVID-19 has made emergency financial assistance the center of BCM's response with 99% of helpline calls identifying as COVID-19 related. Since the onset of the pandemic, all case management meetings and appointments for emergency financial assistance are online and effectively serving the needs of our clients.

As we continue to serve those most vulnerable in our community, we hope that you will step forward with BCM.

NEW CHURCH DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

For information:

The New Church Development Commission (NCDC) of the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta continues to enrich the lives of 6000+ people through 26 new worshipping communities where faith and real life intersect.

We are pleased to report:

- NCDC's development of an online start-up accelerator to be used nationally throughout the 1001 New Worshiping Communities initiative of the PC(USA) to train new worshiping community leaders.
- Ongoing COVID-19 Emergency Relief efforts with vulnerable members of our new worshiping communities
- Mount Vernon PC joins Columbia PC and Ormewood Church, along with 128 individuals, in financially supporting NCDC's COVID-19 Emergency Fund. Thank you to Mount Vernon PC's COVID-19 Task Force and to all!
- Ongoing support and training of new worshiping community leaders through bi-weekly Zoom calls, Lunch with Lindsay, and Tech Tuesday.
- Welcoming and onboarding new NCDC staff: Allison Arsenault, Associate Director; Jennifer Long, Communications Director; Molly Herman-Gallow, Communications Specialist in Videography
- Welcoming and onboarding 2 new resident apprentices: Fabiana Araujo (Casa Brasil/On the Way) and Wilson "Junior" Fernandez (Shalom)

WAYS (With all Your Strength) New Worshiping Community:

We continue to be inspired not only by this Presbytery's support for our work to empower leaders, but by the incredible leaders impacting their communities every day. At today's meeting of the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta, we have the opportunity to briefly introduce you to one of our new worshiping communities, WAYS (With All Your Strength). Led by Nick and Liz Johnson, this community combines weekly worship with daily CrossFit exercise.

Nick and Liz share the following:

WAYS began out of an experience of *communitas*. *Communitas* is a challenge-shaped community, where the depth and quality of community are different because of the shared challenge together. When we began our CrossFit journey we were surprised by the depth of community we experienced. Each day we were pushing ourselves to the limit with the same people. Quick community was formed. It felt like community that we sought in church, so we decided to build it into a church. Nick pursued certification as a coach and training through NCDC and New Worshiping Communities. On Good Friday of 2018, we had our first worship/workout gathering. As we continued to meet every week, relationships were formed during the week, pastoral care was offered daily, and our gathering grew to about 10-15 people, most of whom had either left church or had never been.

Quickly we began asking what next steps God was asking us to take. Being that we live near Clarkston, GA, we knew that many of our refugee and New American friends could not afford CrossFit so we raised money, acquired equipment and training, and converted our garage into a gym. We moved away from the gym we were a part of to build a new community here, but our worship gathering largely kept the same people. We knew our next step was to start a nonprofit CrossFit that is also a new worshiping community.

We have both been a part of college ministry for years (Nick still is) and though we saw and continue to see great transformation among students there, this feels different. Other discipleship opportunities sometimes felt like all of the initiative was on our part to gather people and ask for discipleship appointments, especially with college students. Yet as we began here in our garage, I found myself with three Syrian refugees, who were students at a community college, that were spending time with me three times a week at 7 in the morning. Other people were quick to open up their lives. And our worship gathering began to involve both people from our garage and

previous gyms we were a part of. We are asking how our community can impact the greater community and we hope to make a lasting impact on both the broader community of Clarkston and Tucker, as well as the CrossFit movement.

Another aspect of our new worshiping community is that we wanted to try to innovate new ways to meet two of the biggest challenges traditional churches face: budgets and buildings. With this model, as a gym owner and coach, I am paid via membership fees and personal training. Our building is also used all day every day of the week. So we are making great use of space and the need to take an offering from our community to pay the bills doesn't exist.

Currently Nick is bi-vocational and running the gym at low cost, but soon we will be growing to a physical gym space where we will increase gym membership by 10-fold and hope to increase our worship gathering attendance by double or triple. It is important that we see WAYS is more than our worship gathering on Sundays. Members are physically, emotionally and spiritually impacted throughout the week. There are many pastoral moments throughout the week where athletes open up their lives to coaches. There are many moments where fear is overcome, confidence is built, and community is deepened as we take risks together. It is a true and unique experience of *communitas* and church. We look forward to seeing where God continues to lead us.

EXAMINATIONS COMMISSION

For Recommendation:

Items in red reflect the needed changes to the by-laws.

Motion: That the Examinations Commission be granted to power to receive ordained PCUSA pastors. This would be reflected in the By-Laws being changed which is the motion

HISTORY:

This presbytery instituted an Examinations Commission approximately 20-22 years ago. The purpose of the Commission was to have the power to examine candidates for ministry (and hear them preach), candidates for reception, and candidates from other denominations. All were examined in the areas of Theology, Polity, Worship/Sacraments and Bible. Because of the size of the Presbytery and the number of folks coming to the Presbytery, it was not tenable to have a thorough examination on the floor of Presbytery along with hearing sermons for those coming for ordination.

The Commission meets once a month and is able to entertain up to 3 individuals. Each exam is approximately one hour long in the areas mentioned above. The Commission was expanded to 15 members in order to get a broader representation of the Presbytery. The Nominating Committee works hard to ensure theological diversity on the Commission.

After reaching out to other larger presbyteries to ask their procedures regarding reception of ordained PCUSA pastors, it was discovered that many of those Presbyteries have granted their Committee on Ministry/Examinations committees the power to receive ministers directly. (San Francisco, Detroit, Grace, Baltimore, Seattle, Middle Tennessee, Whitewater Valley, Mission, Tampa Bay, and The James to name a few). Those individuals coming for ordination or from other denominations are still received by the Presbytery.

We have allowed pastors to begin their service in their calls before officially being received by the Presbytery. This can be problematic, as our Committee on Ministry does not ordinarily allow ministers of other presbyteries to moderate sessions until they are members of the presbytery; and therefore, we need to find moderators for this lag time. In some cases, this can cause a delay of up to four months before pastors can moderate their sessions because our Presbytery only meets 4 times a year.

We feel that the time has come to ask the Presbytery to grant to the Examinations Commission, the power to receive ordained ministers of the PCUSA directly. These individuals would still be introduced at the next presbytery meeting. Individuals coming for ordination and from other denominations would still appear before the Presbytery for examination and a vote to receive.

Below, are re-written by-laws, that if approved, would govern this change.

Approved by Council: **July 20, 2020**

Approved by Presbytery on: ~~August 19, 2017~~ **September 15, 2020**

EXAMINATIONS COMMISSION

Purpose and Scope

The Examinations Commission shall conduct any and all parts of examinations for ordination and/or installation (including sermons) for all teaching elders and candidates seeking admission to the Presbytery. The Commission shall also be responsible to provide for examinations of Commissioned Ruling Elders.

The Examinations Commission shall uphold all standards of ordination and the current Book of Order.

Following the examination of a candidate **for the ministry** ~~or minister~~, the Commission may vote to:

- Approve the candidate ~~or minister~~ for ordination **and reception, installation and make that recommendation to the Presbytery**
- Recommend the form of any additional work in whatever area needed and to return to the Commission for further examination
- Disapprove a candidate ~~or minister~~; thereby moving the person's examination to the full Presbytery for consideration

Following the examination of a minister who is not PCUSA and wishes to transfer into the PCUSA, the Commission may vote to:

- **Approve the candidate for reception and make that recommendation to the Presbytery**
- **Disapprove a candidate thereby moving the person's examination to the full Presbytery for consideration**

Following the examination of an ordained PCUSA minister, the Commission may vote to:

Approve the minister for reception into the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta (such a vote would require a 2/3rds majority by those of the examinations commission present and voting)

- **and report that information to the Presbytery at its next stated meeting, and provide an opportunity for an introduction at the next Presbytery meeting**
- **Recommend a minister be examined by the full Presbytery of Greater Atlanta**

Membership

The Examinations Commission shall consist of 15 members serving terms of 3 years, in 3 classes. Members shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected by the Presbytery. Special attention shall be given to theological diversity ensuring all voices of the Reformed theological spectrum are represented.

Co-Chairs

Two co-chairs shall be appointed by the Executive Presbyter. Each co-chair shall have completed at least one year of service.

Reporting

The Examinations Commission reports to the Committee on Ministry regarding their work; however the Commission reports directly to the floor of Presbytery regarding their recommendations of candidates **for reception or reporting on those ministers received into the Presbytery** ~~or ministers for recommendation~~. The co-chairs of the Commission are ex-officio members of the Committee on Ministry with the right of voice and vote.

Meetings

The Commission shall meet on a monthly basis unless there are no candidates or ministers to examine. Candidates shall provide to the Commission a statement of faith and a statement of faith journey which will then be shared with the Presbytery during the meeting when the candidate ~~or minister~~ comes before the Presbytery for a vote on reception, **or the minister is introduced to the Presbytery**.

The Commission shall ask all candidates and ministers whether they will uphold the current standards in the Book of Order. If the candidate or minister declares a scruple at this time, the commission may recommend approval or disapproval. The scruple shall be stated to the Presbytery at the time the minister comes before the Presbytery for a vote on reception.

Quorum

The quorum for examination shall be 50% plus one.

An amendment was made to the above motion (seen in green above). The amendment was approved by a vote of 179 yes, 15 no, 16 abstentions.

The motion as amended was presented and approved by a vote of 193 yes, 8 no, and 6 abstentions. The vote meets the 2/3 needed to change by-laws.

Therefore, the new by-laws of the Examinations Commission are as follows:

Approved by Council: July 20, 2020

Approved by Presbytery on: September 15, 2020

EXAMINATIONS COMMISSION

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The Examinations Commission shall uphold all standards of ordination and the current Book of Order.

Following the examination of a candidate for the ministry the Commission may vote to:

- Approve the candidate for ordination and reception, and make that recommendation to the Presbytery
- Recommend the form of any additional work in whatever area needed and to return to the Commission for further examination
- Disapprove a candidate thereby moving the person's examination to the full Presbytery for consideration

Following the examination of a minister who is not PCUSA and wishes to transfer into the PCUSA, the Commission may vote to:

- Approve the candidate for reception and make that recommendation to the Presbytery
- Disapprove a candidate thereby moving the person's examination to the full Presbytery for consideration

Following the examination of an ordained PCUSA minister, the Commission may vote to:

Approve the minister for reception into the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta (**such a vote would require a 2/3rds majority by those of the examinations commission present and voting**)

- and report that information to the Presbytery at its next stated meeting, and provide an opportunity for an introduction at the next Presbytery meeting
- Recommend a minister be examined by the full Presbytery of Greater Atlanta

Membership

The Examinations Commission shall consist of 15 members serving terms of 3 years, in 3 classes. Members shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected by the Presbytery. Special attention shall be given to theological diversity ensuring all voices of the Reformed theological spectrum are represented.

Co-Chairs

Two co-chairs shall be appointed by the Executive Presbyter. Each co-chair shall have completed at least one year of service.

Reporting

The Examinations Commission reports to the Committee on Ministry regarding their work; however the Commission reports directly to the floor of Presbytery regarding their recommendations of candidates for reception or reporting on those ministers received into the Presbytery. The co-chairs of the Commission are ex-officio members of the Committee on Ministry with the right of voice and vote.

Meetings

The Commission shall meet on a monthly basis unless there are no candidates or ministers to examine. Candidates shall provide to the Commission a statement of faith and a statement of faith journey which will then be shared with the Presbytery during the meeting when the candidate comes before the Presbytery for a vote on reception, or the minister is introduced to the Presbytery.

The Commission shall ask all candidates and ministers whether they will uphold the current standards in the Book of Order. If the candidate or minister declares a scruple at this time, the commission may recommend approval or disapproval. The scruple shall be stated to the Presbytery at the time the minister comes before the Presbytery for a vote on reception.

Quorum

The quorum for examination shall be 50% plus one.

COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY

Admit to Record

1. Dismiss (**Margaret**) **Greta Reed** to Florida Presbytery per her request. Effective date: July 14, 2020.
2. Approve the Contract Call Associate contract renewal between **Carrie Weatherford** and Roswell Presbyterian Church. Effective date: April 1, 2020. This contract is full time for 6 months.
 - a. Salary 17,945
 - b. Housing 44,720

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------------------|----------|
| c. | Professional expenses | 1,000 |
| d. | SECA allowance | 4,793.87 |
| e. | Cell phone | 480 |
| f. | Mileage reimbursement at IRS rate | |
| g. | Four weeks vacation | |
| h. | Two weeks continuing education | |
3. Approve the Contract Call Associate contract renewal between **Randon Jackson** and Roswell Presbyterian Church. Effective date: April 1, 2020. This contract is for 25 hours per week for 6 months.
- | | | |
|----|--------------------------------|--------------|
| a. | Salary | 18,000 |
| b. | Housing | 20,000 |
| c. | Professional expenses | 1,000 |
| d. | SECA allowance | 2,964 |
| e. | Cell phone | 40 per month |
| f. | Mileage at the IRS rate | |
| g. | Six weeks vacation | |
| h. | Two weeks continuing education | |
4. Approve the validation of **Rachel Breyer** as the Chaplain for Calvin Court/Phillips Tower (Presbyterian Homes of Georgia). Effective date: July 13, 2020.
5. Approve the Contract Call contract renewal between **Cecelya Taylor** and Church of the Master. Effective date: October 1, 2019.
- | | | |
|----|-----------------------------------|--------|
| a. | Salary | 14,660 |
| b. | Cash for long term disability | 2,200 |
| c. | Cash retirement | 6,000 |
| d. | Cash healthcare | 2,640 |
| e. | Housing | 25,500 |
| f. | Continuing education | 1,000 |
| g. | Vacation at four weeks | |
| h. | Continuing education at two weeks | |
6. Approve the Contract Call Associate contract renewal between **Jeanne Simpson** and Eastminster Presbyterian Church. Effective date: January 1, 2020. This contract is for 20 hours per week.
- | | | |
|----|--|--------|
| a. | Salary | 5,070 |
| b. | Housing | 20,680 |
| c. | Board of Pensions Benefits | 2,832 |
| d. | Contribution to Fidelity Retirement Plan | 4,320 |
| e. | Vacation at 4 weeks | |
| f. | Continuing education at 2 weeks | |
7. Approve the Interim Associate Pastor contract between **Kate Colussy-Estes** and Covenant Presbyterian Church. Effective date: July 1, 2020.
- | | | |
|----|---------------------------------|--------|
| a. | Salary | 30,000 |
| b. | Housing | 27,060 |
| c. | Continuing education | 1,000 |
| d. | SECA allowance | 4,365 |
| e. | Medical | 7,855 |
| f. | Pension | 6,277 |
| g. | Death and Disability | 571 |
| h. | Cell phone | 600 |
| i. | Professional expenses | 2,000 |
| j. | Vacation at 4 weeks | |
| k. | Continuing education at 2 weeks | |

8. Place **Jay Thomas** on the inactive rolls of Presbytery. There has been no contact since 2017 and registered mail has been returned. Effective date: September 15, 2020.
9. Grant permission to **Susan Haynes** to labor in the bounds of Cherokee Presbytery. Effective date: August 7, 2020.
10. Dismiss **Mathew Frease** to the Presbytery of Florida per their request. Effective date: August 15, 2020.
11. Dissolve the pastoral relationship between **Owen Stepp** and Clairmont Presbyterian Church. Effective date: September 13, 2020.
12. Dismiss **Owen Stepp** to the Evangelical Covenant Order of Presbyterians per his request. Effective date: September 13, 2020.
13. Change **Kate McGregor Mosley** to a minister member at large. Effective date: August 15, 2020.
14. Grant the status of Honorably Retired to **Scott Weimer**. Effective date: August 31, 2020.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS:

Clark Simmons from the Board of Pensions presented changes in the plan for 2021 to the Presbytery. One new program is the Minster's Choice Program which will enable pastors not currently in the Board of Pensions to be able come into the retirement portion of the plan. See Addendum 2 of these minutes for more information.

Robert Hay from the Presbyterian Foundation, gave the Presbytery an overview of how the Foundation can help churches in this challenging time of the pandemic: stewardship help, investment help, churches utilizing on-line giving and more. See Addendum 3 for more information

CLOSING BUSINESS

The moderator closed the meeting with prayer at 11:04 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Donna E. Wells
Stated Clerk

ADDENDUMS TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Pandemic Grant Funds
2. Board of Pensions Report
3. Presbyterian Foundation Online Giving
4. Resources on Poverty from the PCUSA
5. Synod of the South Atlantic Highlights
6. Talking Politics During Turbulent Times Flyer
7. Opportunities for Presbytery Service

ADDENDUM #1



PANDEMIC GRANT FUNDS

The Presbytery of Greater Atlanta recognizes the significant impacts and stresses related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, we are pleased to announce two grant opportunities to address emergency needs, and the ongoing need for technology, needs for which many of our congregations were unprepared six months ago. These grants are made possible by generous grants to the presbytery from Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA), a generous gift from Korean Community Presbyterian Church in Duluth, and funds from the presbytery's reserve accounts. There are limited funds available, so we do not anticipate being able to approve all applications. Sessions with adequate funds available for pandemic-related needs are asked to refrain from applying for these grants.

COVID-19 Emergency Grants – up to \$1,000

These grants are available to congregations and/or clergy. They must be approved by the session. Funds may be used for:

- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Sanitation supplies
- Touch-free thermometers
- Emergency needs of ongoing congregational ministry
- Emergency needs of PGA clergy (utilities, food, mortgage/rent, etc.)
- Other pandemic-related emergency needs

Virtual and Vital Technology Grants – up to \$1,000

These grants are available for congregations only. They must be approved by the session. Funds may be used for:

- Equipment
- Training
- Subscriptions
- Tech support consultation
- Other technology needs

For both grants, a report of how the funds were used will be required within one year from the receipt of the funds. A report form will be provided to approved applicants.

Please submit applications to grants@atlpcusa.org. Application received by midnight on September 20, 2020, will be considered together. Applications received on or after September 21, 2020, will be considered on a first-come, first-served basis until available funds are exhausted.

PANDEMIC GRANT FUNDS
Application Form

Date:

Name of Congregation:

Name of Person Completing Application:

Your Position in the Congregation:

Email Address:

Phone Number(s):

Purpose of Grant: _____ Emergency Grant
 _____ Virtual and Vital Grant

(If applying for both grants, please submit separate applications.)

Amount Requested:

Please describe how this grant will be used:

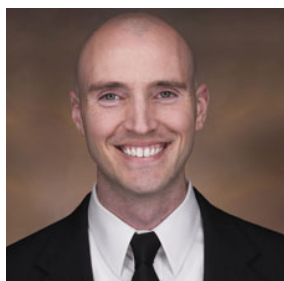
Date of Session Approval:

Please submit the completed application, along with budgets, receipts, or other documentation as available and appropriate, to grants@atlpcusa.org.

ADDENDUM #2



Clark Simmons
Church Consultant
M: 215-275-3079
csimmons@pensions.org



Keenan Rodgers
Church Consultant
M: 215-341-8143
kr Rodgers@pensions.org

I hope all are healthy and well. I wish we could be together in person, but as the coronavirus pandemic prevents that from happening, I write to share these key updates from the Board of Pensions. If you have questions, my colleagues in Philadelphia and I are happy to assist.

Blessings,

Member/Employer Services
800-773-7752
Mon-Fri 8:30-7:00pm EST

Statement on Racial Justice

The Board of Pensions stands in support of racial equality, and against deeply ingrained prejudices against Black Americans and other people of color simply because of the color of their skin. With full support of all at the Board, we share this statement with you. Follow the link to [read the full text of the statement](#). Translations in [Korean](#) and [Spanish](#) are available as well.

2021 Employer Agreements Available Now

Each year, Employer Agreements are updated and submitted online through Benefits Connect, the Board of Pensions' benefits portal. The season for selecting benefits to offer in 2021 begins July 20 and ends October 9. Highlights about the 2021 Benefits Plan are on the following page. The Employer Agreement provides key information about the cost of benefits and the opportunity to model different selections to help church leaders make informed decisions about what benefits to offer. The Board of Pensions website provides info to help the church's designated Employer Representative [follow the steps](#) to complete the Employer Agreement.

If help is needed, contact Employer Services at 800-773-7752, option 2.

Other Notable Headlines

- [A 2% Experience Apportionment for the Pension Plan took effect July 1](#)—These are increases in accrued pension benefits for both active and retired pension plan participants. Pensions have increased 26.4% over the past eight years due to experience apportionments.
- [Don Walker succeeds Judy Freyer as Chief Investment Officer for the Board of Pensions](#)—Don served as the Director of Investments for the Board for 14 years and worked closely with Judy. Our deepest thanks to Judy for over 30 years of service to the Board!
- [Call to Health Continues!](#) Pastors and church staff covered under the Medical Plan have until November 13 to get the 1,000 points needed to lower their deductibles in 2021. Required annual check-ups may be completed virtually. Encourage them to 'Answer the Call' today!
- [State-based pricing for the dental PPO plan begins in 2021](#)—Previously, there was a single price for the national plan. Pricing details will be available in your employer agreement.

Changes to benefit offerings for 2021

The Board of Pensions has announced changes to the Benefits Plan that extend support to more ministers and add benefits that promote financial protection for all church workers effective January 1, 2021. Employers can choose benefits for 2021 beginning July 20.

Minister's Choice benefits package added

To address the Board of Pensions' concern that too many ministers are not enrolled in the Benefits Plan, the 2021 plan offers two benefits packages for PC(USA) ministers: the existing Pastor's Participation and the new Minister's Choice.

Enrollment in Pastor's Participation, a comprehensive benefits package with medical coverage and pension participation, is required for installed pastors and may be offered to any minister with a minimum 20-hour workweek. Dues, paid in full by the employer, will remain at 37 percent of effective salary for 2021, with no reduction to existing benefits and the addition of the new Temporary Disability Plan.

 <h3 style="margin: 0;">Retirement Programs</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defined Benefit Pension Plan • Retirement Savings Plan
 <h3 style="margin: 0;">Financial Protection Programs</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Death and Disability Plan • Term Life Plan • Temporary Disability Plan • Long-Term Disability Plan
 <h3 style="margin: 0;">Health Programs</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical Plan, with PPO, EPO, and HDHP options • Employee Assistance Plan • Vision Eyewear Plan • Dental Plan
 <h3 style="margin: 0;">Tax-Advantaged Accounts</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dependent care flexible spending account • Healthcare flexible spending account • Health savings account

Benefits Packages		
	Pastor's Participation	Minister's Choice
Medical Plan	● PPO (includes EAP)	EAP only
Death and Disability Plan	●	●
Temporary Disability Plan	●	●
Defined Benefit Pension Plan	●	●

● Included in package

Minister's Choice, available for non-installed ministers working at least 20 hours a week, includes pension, death and disability, temporary disability, and the Employee Assistance Plan. The cost is 10 percent of effective salary, also fully employer paid.

Minister's Choice also opens the door for eligibility to assistance and education programs that have been available only through Pastor's Participation, such as CREDO and Minister Educational Debt Assistance.

New Financial Protection Programs

For 2021, the Board of Pensions has added financial protection options, including the Temporary Disability Plan, Long-Term Disability Plan, and an expanded term life benefit.

The Temporary Disability Plan provides a partial weekly income for up to 90 days of disability, with a 14-day waiting period before benefits payments begin. Employers pay the full cost for ministers enrolled in Pastor's Participation and Minister's Choice. Employers may offer it outside of those benefits packages, with the employer or the member paying the full cost.

The Long-Term Disability Plan offers financial protection for employees with a disability that surpasses 90 days, providing a partial monthly income throughout their disability. Employers may offer the plan to employees who are not enrolled in the Death and Disability Plan (which includes a long-term disability benefit) and are working at least 20 hours per week. Employers pay the full cost of coverage.

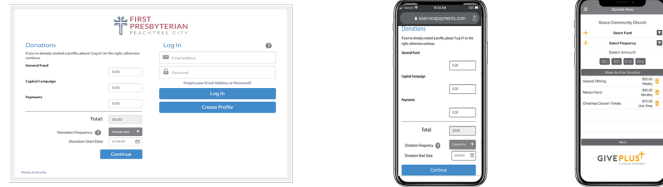
The Term Life Plan offers the same low-cost coverage available in the 2020 Benefits Plan. But in addition to a fixed amount of coverage (from \$5,000 to \$50,000), it includes a new feature — an income-based benefit amount, equal to one times a member's effective salary, capped at \$50,000. Under either option, employers pay the full cost of coverage.

The Board of Pensions' goal is for every minister and church worker to have access to quality benefits in support of well-being. The 2021 Benefits Plan advances on that goal while also enabling more ministers to access assistance and education programs designed to help them devote their best gifts to ministry.

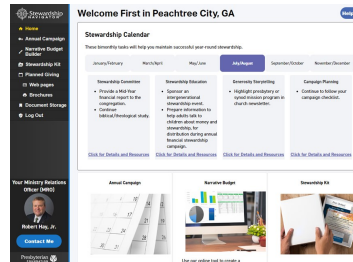
ADDENDUM #3

Online Giving

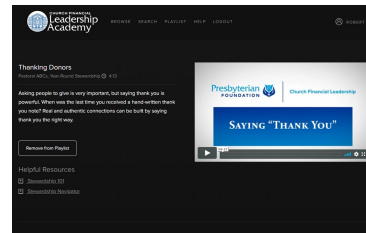
presbyterianfoundation.org/onlinegiving



stewardshipnavigator.org



churchfla.org
registration code: PCUSA



stewardshipkaleidoscope.org

Sept 22—Eric Barreto
Sept 29—Bonnie Ives Marden
Oct 6—Bruce Reyes-Chow
\$45 or contact Robert via email for
discounted registration fee of \$25

Investments

Endowment Funds
New Covenant Mutual Funds
New Covenant Trust Company



Robert Hay, Jr.
Senior Ministry Relations Officer
1-855-514-3152
robert.hay@presbyterianfoundation.org



Kyle Nolan
Associate Ministry Relations Officer
1-833-983-1079
kyle.nolan@presbyterianfoundation.org

ADDENDUM #4



Presbyterian Mission
**Presbyterian
Peacemaking Program**



COMPANION GUIDE

Introduction to the COMPANION GUIDE

by Carl Horton, *Coordinator for Mission, Presbyterian Peacemaking Program*



A LEGACY OF PEACEMAKING WITNESS

Since 1980, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), along with its predecessor denominations, has proclaimed peacemaking as a priority for the church. After a significant period of study, a statement, *Peacemaking: The Believers' Calling*, was adopted and has served to guide the church for decades, remaining as relevant today as it was then. It affirms that:

- the Church is faithful to Christ when it is engaged in peacemaking.
- the Church is obedient to Christ when it nurtures and equips God's people as peacemakers.
- the Church bears witness to Christ when it nourishes the moral life of the nation for the sake of peace in our world.

BACKGROUND OF THE COMMITMENT TO PEACEMAKING

Three years later, in 1983, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) reaffirmed its call to peacemaking and introduced the *Commitment to Peacemaking*. It was an opportunity for congregations, mid councils and theological institutions to pledge to use their resources to be peacemakers in the world. Since then approximately 5,000 congregations and other church bodies have affirmed the *Commitment* and used it to shape faithful and creative ministries of peace and justice.

The *Commitment* remains a simple but profound statement. It:

- declares that working for peace is an essential mission priority;
- establishes a framework for planning and implementing peacemaking ministries;
- invites Presbyterians to work for peace in their own lives, their households, their congregations, their communities and the international arena;
- challenges Presbyterians to grow as peacemakers and to pass on a legacy of peacemaking to future generations.

The *Commitment to Peacemaking* identifies a holistic vision of peace that includes eight areas of peacemaking engagement. These really haven't changed over the years. Read them slowly, and see if they seem as critical and as necessary today as they were in 1983:

Worship — provide worship that expresses the reality of God's peace giving.

Prayer and Bible Study — encourage prayer, Bible study and spiritual disciplines that nurture and deepen the spiritual life of the community and equip people to share the gospel message of peace to the world.

Peacemaking in Families and in Community Living — create opportunities for people of all ages to develop peacemaking skills such as conflict resolution, mediation or nonviolence training that will help them grow as peacemakers in their families, in the congregation and in the community.

Community Ministries — work with and support ecumenical and interfaith partners and other bodies in the pursuit of social, racial and economic justice to confront racism and all other forms of prejudice and to respond to people in communities, local, national and worldwide, who are caught in poverty, hurt by employment or burdened by other problems.

Study and Response to Global Issues — support human rights and economic justice efforts in at least one area of the world through presbytery partnerships and sister countries.

Global Security — study global security concerns, work for worldwide arms control and support alternatives to military solutions to international and civil conflicts.


Making Peace with the Earth — protect and restore the environment through study, advocacy and individual and corporate lifestyle commitments.

Receiving the Peace and Global Witness Offering — support financially the churchwide peacemaking effort by receiving the Peace and Global Witness Offering.

About the COMPANION GUIDE

This Companion Guide has been developed not to replace the Commitment to Peacemaking, but to accompany it as a resource and a tool, assisting congregations, mid councils and theological institutions as they make, reaffirm and deepen their commitment to peacemaking.

It is intended to help Presbyterians practice peacemaking in a focused and ongoing fashion. Instead of occurring only at certain times of the year associated with days of emphasis or seasons of the church or calendar year, the Companion Guide offers a model for year-round peacemaking engagement. Through a unique process of worship, spiritual grounding and reflection, community building and partnership, study and preparation, and direct action and advocacy, Presbyterians are invited to engage in an intentional “development” of their peacemaking work and witness:

	<p>WORSHIP — As the central act of the people of God, worship continually centers and directs our peacemaking work and witness over and over again. Resources include hymns, prayers, litanies and sermon suggestions.</p>
	<p>SPIRITUAL GROUNDING AND REFLECTION — Informed by scripture, theological reflection and spirit-led wonder, we lay a spiritual foundation that will support our peacemaking practice. Resources include scripture references, confessional material, discernment guides, prayers and communal questions.</p>
	<p>COMMUNITY-BUILDING AND PARTNERSHIPS — We don't do this work alone or in isolation. We learn about and gather the resources we'll need within and beyond the congregation, identifying partners and those already doing the work. We find allies and connect to impacted communities. Resources include suggested local, state and national organizations, ecumenical and interfaith partners and other congregations and mid councils engaged in the work.</p>
	<p>STUDY AND PREPARATION — We recognize the importance of study in our preparation as peacemakers. We seek to deepen our knowledge, broaden our understanding and heighten our awareness of the challenges we face as peacemakers. We delve deeply into the issue areas and identify root causes. Intentional preparation sharpens our skills and readies us to take action. Resources include recommended books, study guides, articles, videos and websites.</p>
	<p>DIRECT ACTION AND ADVOCACY — We are peacemakers in word and in deed. We speak out and speak up, speaking truth to power, advocating for just changes, knowing that silence is complicity. We also take action, not simply to alleviate immediate suffering and injustice but to expose and address their structural and systemic root causes. Resources include suggested actions and best practices and recommended forms of advocacy to address the issue area.</p>

FIVE AREAS OF INTEREST IN THE COMPANION GUIDE

This guide outlines how Presbyterians can apply each step in the unique process outlined above to one of five areas of emphasis. These areas, identified by the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program, also align with the current priorities, initiatives and policies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). These are not the only areas of peacemaking engagement, to be sure, but they are some of the most persistent, prevailing and pressing challenges for Presbyterian peacemakers today. They are:

- **Poverty**
- **Violence**
- **Racism**
- **Climate change**
- **Immigration/migration**

Several of the areas of emphasis share common cause with other PC(USA) initiatives. An [Earth Care Congregation](#) or a [Matthew 25 Church](#), for instance, will find those efforts consistent with the emphases suggested above.

IDENTIFYING THE EMPHASIS FOR PEACEMAKING

Decisions about the Commitment to Peacemaking have always been made at the local level as an expression of the commitments and concerns of a particular community of faith. PC(USA) congregations, mid councils and theological institutions have committed to peacemaking and directed their peacemaking efforts to the issues, concerns and needs that align most closely with their priorities and passions. Many congregations do the same thing year after year; others move on to new areas of emphasis for peacemaking from one year to the next. The Companion Guide helps worshiping communities expand and deepen their expressions of peacemaking. Congregations that want to deepen their existing peacemaking emphasis will find guidance to take their peacemaking efforts to the next level. Those that wish to try a new, yet-unventured expression of peacemaking will find what they need to get started on something new.

DISCERNMENT FOR PEACEMAKING

For those congregations that have yet to commit to peacemaking, a good place to start is the helpful study resource for church sessions, *Exploring the Commitment to Peacemaking*. For a congregation that committed to peacemaking in the distant past, *Renewing the Commitment to Peacemaking* will help as a resource to refresh, renew and reawaken that commitment. If a congregation is uncertain as to its status as a “peacemaking congregation,” please contact the [Presbyterian Peacemaking Program](#), and we can provide that information

QUESTIONS?

If you have questions about the *Commitment to Peacemaking* or the Companion Guide, please email the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program at peacemaking@presbyterianmission.org. You can also call our office directly at 502-569-5805.

Peacemaking congregations that would like guidance in determining the area of emphasis for their future peacemaking work and witness should refer to the resources for “Living Out the Commitment to Peacemaking” on the Peacemaking Program’s website.

A CURATED COLLECTION OF RESOURCES

As previously mentioned, the Companion Guide is not a program, curriculum or lesson plan. It is a curated collection of suggestions, best practices and resources for each step in the process to assist congregations, mid councils, and other Presbyterian entities as they explore new areas for their peacemaking witness or as they deepen their existing commitments. One of the key features of the Companion Guide is that it is an “evergreen” resource that can be updated and revised over time. We enlisted expert and experienced “curators” for each of the sections and are grateful for their willingness to help us create this resource.

- **Poverty** — Alonzo Johnson, Coordinator, Self-Development of People
- **Violence** — Roger Powers, Pastor, St. Andrews Presbyterian Church, Albuquerque, NM
- **Racism** — Denise Anderson, Coordinator, Racial & Intercultural Justice
- **Climate change** — Rebecca Barnes, Coordinator, Presbyterian Hunger Program; Jessica Maudlin, Associate for Sustainable Living and Earth Care
- **Immigration/migration** — Susan Krehbiel, Associate for Refugees and Asylum, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance; Amanda Craft, Manager for Advocacy, Office of Immigration Issues; Teresa Waggener, Immigration Attorney, Office of Immigration issues

Readers should note that the section on violence is unique because it consists of two parts: “Violence in Families and Communities” and “Collective Violence — The U.S. and Global Security.” The first part, “Violence in Families and Communities,” helps congregations discern how to address self-directed violence and interpersonal violence including suicide, bullying, domestic violence, sexual violence and gun violence. The second part, “Collective Violence — The U.S. and Global Security,” helps congregations discern how to address collective violence or violence on a much larger, systemic and cultural scale including armed conflict within or between nation-states, genocide, repression and terrorism.

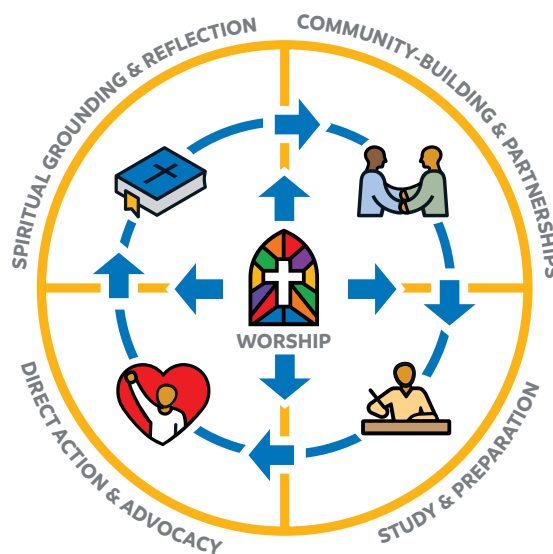
UTILIZING THE COMPANION GUIDE

The Companion Guide's approach is for a congregation to spend a year utilizing resources outlined for the chosen issue area, culminating in action and advocacy. For congregations participating in the Season of Peace and receiving the Peace and Global Witness Offering on World Communion Sunday, it is suggested that the yearlong cycle begin and end during the Season of Peace. During the Season, congregations can conclude and celebrate the previous year's accomplishments and begin their new year of peacemaking engagement. A possible yearlong schedule that follows the programmatic year of the congregation might look something like this:

Sep. – Oct.	Announce the area of peacemaking emphasis for the coming year. Participate in the Peace and Global Witness Offering.
Nov. – Dec.	Engage in spiritual grounding and reflection.
Jan. – Feb.	Explore community-building and partnerships.
Mar. – Apr.	Study and prepare.
May – June	Take part in direct action and advocacy.
July – Aug.	Evaluate, report and celebrate the accomplishments. Practice discernment, and identify the next area of peacemaking emphasis.

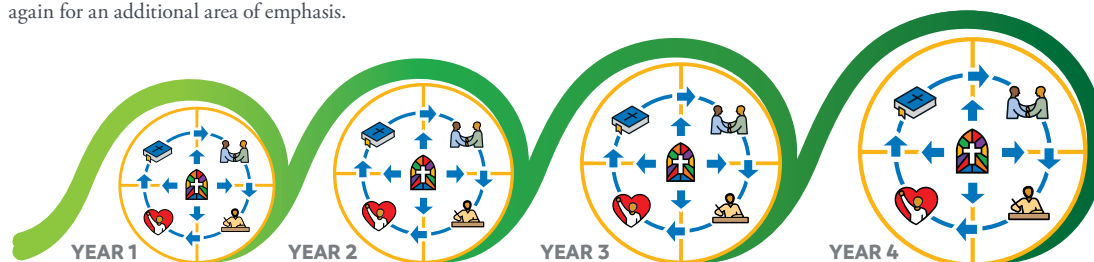
ONE-YEAR CYCLE:

A congregation chooses an area of emphasis and then engages in a one-year cycle of spiritual grounding and reflection, community building and partnership, study and preparation, and direct action and advocacy. Because worship continually centers and directs our peacemaking work as Christians, and is often incorporated into the other steps in the cycle, it lies at the center of this process.



MULTI-YEAR CYCLE:

As a congregation engages in the one-year cycle over a number of years on their chosen area of emphasis, they explore new resources, build new partnerships, and undergo further discernment about possible solutions. The congregation goes from viewing surface level issues related to the area of emphasis to recognizing and addressing root causes and the intersectionality across all the areas of emphasis. Over time, the focus, effectiveness, and reach of their efforts increases and their commitment deepens. Eventually, the congregation may decide to begin the cycle again for an additional area of emphasis.





POVERTY

Curated by Alonzo Johnson,
Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People

INTRODUCTION

Poverty can be understood as the lack of income sufficient to meet basic needs for nourishment, clothing, shelter, healthcare and sustainable family life. Also, in a developed, industrial, or post-industrial society, poverty is lack of access to social goods (such as education) that are essential for employment as well as to other measures of dignity, freedom and participation in communal life.

WE ACKNOWLEDGE THAT POVERTY IS COMPLEX AND INTERSECTIONAL:

- Racism, classism, ageism and sexism are well-documented and mutually reinforcing trends. For instance, disproportionate numbers of African-American and Hispanic families are headed by women and have little net worth (even as White Americans (especially women and children) constitute the largest number in poverty).
- Homelessness is one of the most egregious signs of poverty.
- Assemblies have spoken on guaranteed minimum wages, full employment, considering areas of high unemployment as disaster areas, welfare reform that does not require workfare or other policies that punish the poor and supporting programs geared towards meeting the needs of women, infants and children.
- Trends of acute inequality, declining lifespans, and higher infant mortality have resumed upward trajectories with a lowering of taxes for the wealthy and increases in the cost of medical care in the past two years.
- Debt loads and retirement insecurity are patterns of poverty that are characteristic of the United States, unique among developed nations.
- Disenfranchisement of people, including mass incarceration, leads to poverty.
- Conflict, violence and militarism are implicated in rising rates of poverty.
- Poverty, climate change and ecological injustice are interlocking issues in which environmental ills disproportionately fall on individuals and communities already experiencing poverty, hunger and other social oppressions. Likewise, those same communities are removed from access to and care of healthy, clean water, land and air.

25%

Twenty-five percent of very young children (under six) are now living in poverty, an alarming fact given that the greatest threat to the healthy development of children is poverty and its long-lasting, negative consequences: inadequate amounts and quality of food, exposure to violence, underfunded schools and lack of early childhood educational opportunities, frequent housing mobility, exposure to pollution and other health risks. (World of Hurt, Word of Life, 220th General Assembly (2012))

- Determining acceptable minimum standards of living and poverty rates is influenced by moral actors in a society, such as the Church. Because income is linked to employment, church policy uses phrases like “family-sustaining, living wage,” and supports public investment to compensate for market failures.
- Poverty often results from wealth and resource accumulation (and hoarding) by those in power. Reformed theology favors balancing economic as well as political power, as seen in support for workers’ rights to organize, the progressive income tax, and luxury taxes.

Acute poverty has many causes. It is in part a consequence of each country’s history, such as colonial exploitation, sometimes compounded by domestic ethnic rivalry and the failure of unifying national leadership. Even where adequate resources are potentially available to satisfy basic needs, such factors as corruption, political instability, tyrannical governments, economic mismanagement, control of economic resources by elite minorities, excessive military expenditures, ethnic conflicts, civil wars, high population growth, poor education, and cultural customs such as the subordination of women, have contributed significantly to impoverishment. (Hope For A Global Future [208th General Assembly 1996])



WORSHIP

Prayers

Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People (SDOP) — Created in 1970, SDOP carries out its commitment to poverty alleviation through partnerships both domestically and internationally with groups seeking to take charge of their own lives, change their conditions and produce long-term changes within their communities. This book of [Sermons and Liturgies](#) is a thematic collection designed to liturgically emphasize the work of justice and poverty alleviation. SDOP, along with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance and Presbyterian Hunger Program, is supported by the [One Great Hour of Sharing](#) special offering.

Here are two prayers from this resource by former SDOP National Committee member Dr. Curtis Kearns:

God of Love, your compassion extends to all people—the sinful and the devout, the poor and the wealthy, the humble and the powerful. As we gather in Christian love, let us care for one another and work for the empowerment of those within our faith community and in communities of need both near and far. We pray that all may know the justice that flows from your abiding love and the hope that comes from your healing grace. In the name of Christ we pray, Amen.

Mighty God, parent to a borderless creation, light unto a world too often consumed by dark intent, hope for a human spirit that struggles to appreciate the values of justice and righteousness, we come before you, asking your blessing on the work of this community. Strengthen our faith, energize our efforts, make special our joy. Grant that our actions and deliberations be to your glory and to the honor of your dear Son, Jesus. Amen.

SDOP also makes available a [Sunday resource](#) designed to interpret the work of the program. The website includes sermons, liturgies, prayers, stories and a couple of hymns. This resource can also be used throughout the year.

Hymns — [Glory to God](#) hymnal (761-766 are poverty-related or refer to poverty and discipleship)

- 761: **Called as Partners in Christ's Service**
- 762: **When the Poor Ones**
- 763: **The Lord Hears the Cry of the Poor**
- 765: **For the Troubles and the Sufferings**
- 765: **Canto de Esperanza/God of Hope**
- 766: **The Church of Christ Cannot Be Bound**

[Glory to God](#) also contains liturgical pieces that reference the poor (Purple Pew Edition, Ecumenical).

OTHER RESOURCES

Kairos Center for Religions, Rights and Social Justice — Kairos Center works to inform and strengthen social movements. With Rev. Dr. Liz Theoharris as one of its key leaders, Kairos Center is also dedicated to identifying, developing and communicating the liberating ways of thinking and being religious that are arising through the work of the *Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival*. Kairos is social-justice-based and has quite an exhaustive number of resources.

Book of Common Worship — 2018 Edition
Page 557, "Mission in the World"

Preaching God's Transforming Justice — A Lectionary Commentary Series, Years B and C, Edited by Ronald J. Allen, Dale Andrews and Dawn Ottoni Wilhelm—WJK Press, 2012



SPIRITUAL GROUNDING AND REFLECTION

PC(USA) Book of Confessions

The following references are places in our confessions where poverty and/or social justice are highlighted:

Confession of '67 (*The Mission of the Church* — 9.31-9.33) Emphasizes the work of the church in the world, reconciliation and seeking through our work as disciples the well-being of all persons. Also acknowledges the need for the believer to recognize one's own complicity in injustice.

9.31–33 God's message of reconciliation shares his labor of healing the enmities which separate men from God and from each other. Christ has called the church to this mission and given it the gift of the Holy Spirit. The church maintains continuity with the apostles and with Israel by faithful obedience to his call. 9.32 The life, death, resurrection, and promised coming of Jesus Christ has set the pattern for the church's mission. His life as man involves the church in the common life of men. His service to men commits the church to work for every form of human well-being. His suffering makes the church sensitive to all the sufferings of mankind so that it sees the face of Christ in the faces of men in every kind of need. His crucifixion discloses to the church God's judgment on man's inhumanity to man and the awful consequences of its own complicity in injustice. In the power of the risen Christ and the

continued next page

hope of his coming, the church sees the promise of God's renewal of man's life in society and of God's victory over all wrong. 9.33 The church follows this pattern in the form of its life and in the method of its action. So to live and serve is to confess Christ as Lord.

Belhar Confession (10.7-10.9)

Explicitly mentions the poor and emphasizes the need for living in the ways of justice.

Brief Statement of Faith (11.2)

We trust in Jesus Christ, fully human, fully God. Jesus proclaimed the reign of God: preaching good news to the poor and release to the captives, teaching by word and deed and blessing the children, healing the sick and binding up the brokenhearted, eating with outcasts, forgiving sinners, and calling all to repent and believe the gospel. Unjustly condemned for blasphemy and sedition, Jesus was crucified, suffering the depths of human pain and giving his life for the sins of the world. God raised this Jesus from the dead, vindicating his sinless life, breaking the power of sin and evil, delivering us from death to life eternal.

Poverty and Justice Bible

(Contemporary English Version) American Bible Society, 1995/2008. The Poverty and Justice Bible is a unique document where all Scripture passages related to poverty and justice are highlighted. There is a substantial resource in the middle of the book entitled "The Core" that provides opportunities for deeper study and faith engagement. This is a helpful resource for worship, preaching and teaching about poverty and its related intersectional issues.

30 Days with the Belhar Confession

This useful companion to the Belhar Confession was produced by the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program. It weaves together Scripture passages and the Confession's timely themes of unity, reconciliation and justice. Written by a diverse collection of scholars, theologians and church leaders, it is the perfect resource for individuals, study groups or entire congregations wanting to familiarize themselves with the Confession through prayer and reflection. The Belhar Confession in its entirety is included at the back of the resource.

Peacemaking: The Believers' Calling

This foundational document for the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program has numerous references to economic and social justice. It was born in part from concern for the hungry and oppressed of the world.

BEING Reformed, Faith Seeking Understanding Series

The Church and Social Issues Jennifer R. Ayres (2014): This study considers the church's role of advocating social issues in the public sphere and encourages readers to actively participate in God's work of transforming the world.

Study and Devotional Guide for the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

In 2015, the United Nations adopted 17 goals to end poverty, fight inequalities and mitigate climate change. This guide outlines all 17 Sustainable Development Goals and relevant efforts by the PC(USA) and our partners to achieve the goals and includes biblical reflections from PC(USA) staff to provide scriptural justification for these efforts.

Praying for Justice: A Lectionary of Christian Concern, by R. Anderson Campbell & Steve Sherwood with Paula Hampton (Barclay Press, 2017).

Written in response to the 2016 U.S. presidential election, this book is not free of agenda. It is an act of resistance. God is greater than any politician, political system, or nation. And now is the time for people of faith to act in tangible, costly and courageous ways. This book calls upon Christians to live into wisdom, prudence, compassion, humility and discernment, to pursue the heart of God's kingdom vision: a society in which all are valued as individuals bearing God's image.

For They Shall Be Fed: Scripture Readings and Prayers for a Just World, Ron Sider (ed.) (W Publishing Group, 2003).

This book brings together in one place passages from the Scriptures pertaining to hunger, justice and the poor, along with the concerns of prominent Christian leaders, to challenge us to become proactive in the battle against hunger.



COMMUNITY BUILDING AND PARTNERSHIPS

PC(USA) Programs and Initiatives

Becoming a Matthew 25 Church — Learn more about how to become a Matthew 25 congregation in the PC(USA). Executive Director of PMA, Rev. Dr. Diane Givens Moffett lays out a bold and engaging vision for the church through Matthew 25. Addressing issues of systemic poverty is one of its objectives.

The Presbyterian Office of Public Witness — Located in Washington, D.C., this office is the public policy information and advocacy office of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Its task is to advocate, and help the church to advocate, the social witness perspectives and policies of the Presbyterian General Assembly.

Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People provides listings of funded partners by year on their website. Individuals concerned about poverty and seeking to connect with organizations can look here or contact SDOP for more information:

Presbyterian Hunger Program — Learn more about congregations committed to battling hunger and poverty both domestically and globally through programs like Enough for Everyone and Joining Hands.

Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations — Addressing intersectional and global issues connected to poverty and development.

Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) — There are several PC(USA) policy statements that address the issues of poverty, economics and related intersectional issues that are available for download

Other Helpful Programs and Initiatives

Children’s Defense Fund — The Children’s Defense Fund grew out of the Civil Rights Movement under the leadership of Marian Wright Edelman. The Children’s Defense Fund (CDF) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit child advocacy organization that has worked relentlessly for more than 40 years to ensure a level playing field for all children. They champion [policies](#) and [programs](#) that lift children out of poverty, protect them from abuse and neglect and ensure their access to health care, quality education and a moral and spiritual foundation.

Ecumenical Poverty Initiative — The goal of the Ecumenical Poverty Initiative is to empower and mobilize the faith community to speak and act to end the scandal of poverty in the United States. Churches have been powerful voices for generations on a range of defining social justice issues, most importantly the need to address poverty.

The Poor People’s Campaign — A National Call for Moral Revival has reached out to communities in more than 30 states across this nation. They gather testimonies from hundreds of poor people and engage in social justice advocacy. PPC’s moral agenda is drawn from a deep engagement and commitment to social justice and advocacy for the poor and dispossessed. Most notable in this iteration of the movement are Rev. Dr. Liz Theoharris and Rev. Dr. William Barber.

Bryan Stevenson and the Equal Justice Initiative — The Equal Justice Initiative is committed to ending mass incarceration and excessive punishment in the United States, to challenging racial and economic injustice and to protecting basic human rights for the most vulnerable people in American society.

National Urban League — A historic civil rights organization dedicated to economic empowerment, equality, and social justice. The Urban League collaborates at the national and local levels with community leaders, policymakers and corporate partners to elevate standards of living for African Americans and other historically underserved groups. Check to see if there is one near you.

Interfaith Worker Justice — Interfaith Worker Justice (IWJ) is a national network that builds collective power by advancing the rights of workers through unions, worker

centers and other expressions of the labor movement and by engaging diverse faith communities and allies in joint action, from grassroots organizing to shaping policy at the local, state and national levels.

Sojourners — The mission of Sojourners is to articulate the biblical call to social justice, to inspire hope and build a movement to transform individuals, communities, the church and the world. Sojourners envisions a future in which Christians put their faith into action in the passionate pursuit of social justice, peace and environmental stewardship, working in partnership with people of other perspectives, for the common good of communities, families and individuals.

United Workers — United Workers (UW) was founded in 2002 by homeless day laborers meeting in an abandoned firehouse-turned-shelter. UW is inspired by past human rights struggles, such as the fight to end slavery, the struggle for civil rights, calls for immigration with dignity, the labor movement, the fight for international economic justice and other human rights and justice movements. For the first years of its founding, the organization focused on understanding the root causes of poverty and dedicated itself to organizing around universal human rights.

Facebook Groups Addressing Poverty

[Poverty USA](#)

[Poverty is Not a Crime Child](#)

[Poverty Action Group](#)

[Coalition to Combat Poverty](#)

Intersectional Issues

There are a number of issues that intersect with the problem of poverty: race, education, child advocacy, health care, fair wages, aging, homelessness and rural life, to name a few.

These are some of the helpful programs and organizations that work to address these intersectional issues:

Race and Poverty

Equal Justice Initiative (EJI) is committed to ending mass incarceration and excessive punishment in the United States, to challenging racial and economic injustice and to protecting basic human rights for the most vulnerable people in American society. EJI produces groundbreaking reports, an award-winning wall calendar and short films that explore our nation’s history of racial injustice. The organization also provides research and recommendations to assist advocates and policymakers in the critically important work of criminal justice reform.

New York University and Wagner University provide multiple courses on inequality, race and poverty.

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) works to secure the political, educational, social and economic equality of rights in order to eliminate race-based discrimination and ensure the health and wellbeing of all persons.

Federal Safety Net aggregates and summarizes pertinent information on U.S. poverty and the welfare programs of the federal government.

Education, Child Advocacy and Poverty

Children’s Defense Fund — CDF educates the nation about the needs of children and encourages preventive investments before they get sick, drop out of school, get into trouble or suffer family breakdown. CDF champions policies and programs that lift children out of poverty; protect them from abuse and neglect; and ensure their access to health care, quality education and a moral and spiritual foundation.

Educate a Child, Transform the World — This PC(USA) initiative addresses issues of poverty as connected to education and offers [examples of churches](#) that are engaged in the intersectional issues concerning poverty and education. The “Educate a Child” initiative also provides a [toolkit](#) to help individuals and congregations discern their way of engagement. Educate a Child also has connections to the PC(USA)’s [Pentecost Offering](#).

Health Care and Poverty

Presbyterian Health Education and Welfare Association (PHEWA) — PHEWA’s purpose is to provide resources, peer support and networking connections for Presbyterians involved in social welfare and justice ministries. Since its creation by General Assembly action in 1956, PHEWA has worked to make the church more responsive to the needs of those too often excluded or on the margins of the church and of society, providing opportunities for those much-needed voices and perspectives to be heard.

IMA World Health — IMA believes that as children of God, all people deserve to lead healthy and productive lives. Intentionally ecumenical, the organization provides health services and builds healthy communities around the world.

Fair Wages and Poverty

Fuerza Laboral — The mission of this workers’ rights center in Central Falls, Rhode Island is to shift the balance of power in our economy towards labor by educating, training and organizing workers to become community leaders. They work to take direct action to recover unpaid wages, improve workplace conditions and bring about institutional changes that will better prevent injustices. They are working to construct networks of worker-owned co-ops that will provide living-wage employment instead of the low-wage, exploitative jobs typically reserved for immigrants and people of color. Even though this organization operates in Rhode Island, it still serves as a national model for advocacy on the issue of labor rights and fair wages.

One Fair Wage — This effort among restaurant and food workers is advancing campaigns across the country to pass legislation in cities and states that will require the restaurant industry to pay all its employees at least the full minimum wage.

Fight for 15 — The Fight for \$15 began in 2012 when 200 fast-food workers walked off the job to demand \$15 per hour and union rights in New York City. Today, they are a global movement in over 300 cities on six continents. They are fast-food workers, home health aides, child care teachers, airport workers, adjunct professors, retail employees and underpaid workers everywhere.

Aging and Poverty

Paper: “Income Poverty in Old Age: An Emerging Development Priority” — Developed by the United Nations’ Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Program on Aging, this document identifies poverty as a major threat to the well-being of older persons.

Article: “An Aging Society Changes the Story on Poverty for Retirees”, New York Times, December 22, 2015 — This article explores the relationship between poverty and expanding life expectancy.

Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF)—KFF is a nonprofit organization focusing on national health issues, as well as the U.S. role in global health policy. Unlike grant-making foundations, Kaiser develops and runs its own policy analysis, journalism and communications programs, sometimes in partnership with major news organizations. Their [“Poverty Rate by Age”](#) report in 2017 reports poverty rates in each state using the U.S. Census Bureau’s poverty threshold.

Article: “Aging Conference Reveals Poverty’s Impact on Older Adults”, AARP — This article from the 2016 American Society on Aging conference identifies women, people of color and those in poor health as most susceptible to poverty as older adults.

Homelessness and Poverty

National Coalition for the Homeless is a national network of people who are currently experiencing or who have experienced homelessness, activists and advocates, community-based and faith-based service providers and others committed to a single mission: To end and prevent homelessness while ensuring that the immediate needs of those experiencing homelessness are met and their civil rights are respected and protected.

Presbyterian Network to End Homelessness is a network that exists to help churches embrace a comprehensive approach to ending homelessness. PNEH provides resources including webinars, toolkits and handbooks related to homelessness and advocacy.

Rural Life and Poverty

U.S. Department of Agriculture provides research on the economic, social, spatial, temporal and demographic factors that affect the poverty status of rural residents.

Poverty in Appalachia (from Good Works Inc.) is a good, detailed infographic about the poverty status of the Appalachian region that follows the spine of the Appalachian Mountains from southern New York to Northern Mississippi. It provides statistical information on how living in poverty affects residents' access to necessary resources.

Global Organizations and Initiatives

Bread for The World is a collective Christian voice urging our nation's decision makers to end hunger at home and abroad. Bread equips people to write personal letters and emails, meet with their members of Congress and work with others to end hunger. Working through churches, campuses and other organizations, we engage people in organized advocacy. Each year, Bread invites churches across the country to take up an Offering of Letters to Congress on legislation that impacts hungry and poor people. We organize advocacy campaigns to pass or block federal legislation that will help end hunger and poverty.

Act Alliance is the largest coalition of Protestant and Orthodox churches and church-related organizations engaged in humanitarian, development and advocacy work in the world, consisting of 155 members working together in over 140 countries to create positive and sustainable change in the lives of poor and marginalized people regardless of their religion, politics, gender, sexual orientation, race or nationality in keeping with the highest international codes and standards.

Church World Service (CWS) is a cooperative ministry of 37 Christian denominations and communions, providing sustainable self-help, development, disaster relief and refugee assistance around the world. The CWS mission is to eradicate hunger and poverty and to promote peace and justice at the national and international level through collaboration with partners abroad and in the U.S.

Oxfam is a global organization working to end the injustice of poverty. We help people build better futures for themselves, hold the powerful accountable and save lives in disasters.

Migrating Out of Poverty Blogspot — This resource focuses on the relationship between internal and regional migration and poverty internationally. The blogspot currently comprises five partners:

The African Centre for Migration and Society (ACMS) in South Africa

The Centre for Migration Studies (CMS) in Legon, Accra.

The Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA) based in Ethiopia

L'université Assane Seck Ziguinchor (UASZ) in Senegal

University of Sussex (US) in the U.K.

Ecumenical Partners

Many of the following partners have lists of vast resources that address poverty and related issues:

Evangelical Lutheran Church of America

United Methodist Church

Pan-Methodist Campaign for Children

United Church of Christ

Episcopal Church

Southern Baptist Convention

American Baptist Churches USA

Mennonite Church USA

Catholics Confront Global Poverty

Catholic Social Teaching

World Council of Churches



STUDY AND PREPARATION

Bible Studies

Presbyterian Women's Bible Studies — PW / Horizons Bible studies are profound, incredibly insightful, well prepared and powerful. These studies are always useful for creating generative conversation and promoting action. Bible study authors are pastors, professors and educators — faithful women. Two outstanding PW Bible studies that address poverty and social justice issues directly are Dale Lindsay Morgan's *Jubilee! Luke's Gospel for the Poor* (2008–09), and Margaret Aymer's *Confessing the Beatitudes, Matthew and Luke* (2011-12).

Books

Because poverty is an intersectional challenge, we have listed books that cover a whole range of issues connected to poverty.

The New Jim Crow; Mass Incarceration in an Age of Colorblindness by Michelle Alexander (The New Press, 2010).

The Third Reconstruction; How a Moral Movement is Overcoming the Politics of Division and Fear, by William J. Barber (Beacon Press, 2016).

Revolution and Renewal: How Churches Are Saving Our Cities, by Tony Campolo (Westminster/John Knox, 2000)

Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City, by Matthew Desmond (Crown Books, 2016).

Worlds Apart: Why Poverty Persists in Rural America, by Cynthia M. Duncan (Yale University Press, 1999).

Pathologies of Power: Health, Human Rights, and the New War On the Poor, by Paul Farmer (University of California Press, 2005).

From Poverty to Power: How Active Citizens and Effective States Can Change the World, by Duncan Green (Oxfam International, 2008).

The Problem with Wealth, A Christian Response to a Culture of Affluence, by Elizabeth Hinson Hasty (Orbis, 2017).

Hope for The Future: Answering God's Call to Justice for Our Children, by Shannon Daley-Harris (WJK Press, 2016).

Nobody: Casualties of America's War on the Vulnerable from Ferguson to Flint and Beyond, by Marc Lamont Hill (Atria Books, 2017).

Thus Far on the Way: Toward a Theology of Child Advocacy, by Eileen Lindner (Witherspoon Press, 2006).

Toxic Charity: How Churches and Charities Hurt Those They Help (And How to Reverse it), by Robert Lupton (Harper One, 2011).

Dead Aid: Why Aid is not Working and How There is a Better Way for Africa, by Dambisa Moyo (Penguin Books, 2009).

Walking with The Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development, by Bryant L. Myers (Orbis, 2011)

Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger: Moving from Affluence to Generosity, by Ron Sider (Thomas Nelson, 2015).

Rural Poverty in the United States, Edited by Ann R. Tickamyer, Jennifer Sherman and Jennifer Warlick (Columbia University Press, 2017)

Not Angels but Agencies: The Ecumenical Response to Poverty — A Primer, by Michael Taylor (SCM Press, 2011).

Always with Us? What Jesus Really Said About the Poor, by Liz Theoharris (Eerdman's 2017).

Jesus and the Disinherited, by Howard Thurman (Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1949, 2012).

Decolonizing Wealth: Indigenous Wisdom to Heal Divides and Restore Balance, by Edgar Villanueva (Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2018).

Children's Books

The Barefoot Mommy — 18 Children's Books about Poverty and Hunger. This handy resource for children is from a mother/theologian who is not afraid to take difficult topics like poverty and turn them into insightful, compassionate and informative children's books.

Films and Documentaries

PBS/Frontline — Poverty, Politics and Profit (2017).

Frontline has served as American public television's flagship public affairs series since 1983. Described by The Atlantic as "the best news program on television," the series has built a reputation for powerful investigative storytelling that tackles the tough, controversial and complex stories that shape our times. In this documentary, Frontline and NPR investigate the billions spent on affordable housing, and why so few get the help they need.

Country Boys (2006). For everyone who remembers what it was like to be young — when the whole world seemed to stretch out before you while you were stuck in your own backyard — this special Frontline series tells the story of Chris and Cody, two boys coming of age in the Appalachian hills of Floyd County in eastern Kentucky. The film bears witness to the two boys' struggles to overcome the poverty and family dysfunction of their childhoods in a quest for a brighter future. It also offers unexpected insights into a forgotten corner of rural America that is at once isolated and connected, a landscape dotted with roughshod trailer homes and wired with DSL.

13th (2019). In this film, Ava DuVernay addresses the issue of poverty and policy through the lens of mass incarceration. The title of Ava DuVernay's extraordinary and galvanizing documentary refers to the 13th Amendment to the Constitution, which reads, "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States." The progression from that second, qualifying clause to the horrors of mass criminalization and the sprawling American prison industry is laid out by DuVernay with bracing lucidity. With a potent mixture of archival footage and testimony from a dazzling array of activists, politicians, historians and formerly incarcerated women and men, DuVernay creates a work of grand historical synthesis.

The Line: Poverty in America (2012). Emmy Award-winning producer, Linda Midgett, shows us in this groundbreaking documentary a new face of poverty in America. About 50 million people in the United States live below the poverty line (In 2014, \$23,850 for a family of four), and one in four American children lives in poverty. But what is poverty in America? What defines "the line," and how can the church and community make a difference?

Flint: The Poisoning of an American City (coming soon 2019). 100,000 people have been poisoned by lead, a lifelong affliction, yet somehow this shocking event has been normalized in the U.S. *Flint: The Poisoning of an American City* gives voice to the current struggle of city residents and follows the environmental history of the river and how the continued abuse and neglect of city

infrastructure and environmental regulations have led to the poisoning of a city. Flint explores the critical question of how this could happen in America, and how this event should serve as a warning for the rest of the country. This documentary educates but also enrages and seeks to radically change how we view and value water.

The End Of Poverty (2008). The aphorism “The poor are always with us” dates back to the New Testament, but while the phrase is still sadly apt in the 21st century, few seem to be able to explain why poverty is so widespread. Activist filmmaker Philippe Diaz examines the history and impact of economic inequality in the third world in *The End of Poverty* and makes the compelling argument that it’s not an accident or simple bad luck that has created a growing underclass around the world. Diaz traces the growth of global poverty back to colonization in the 15th century, and features interviews with a number of economists, sociologists and historians who explain how poverty is the clear consequence of free-market economic policies that allow powerful nations to exploit poorer countries for their assets and keep money in the hands of the wealthy rather than distributing it more equitably to the people who have helped them gain their fortunes. Diaz also explores how wealthy nations (especially the United States) seize a disproportionate share of the world’s natural resources and how this imbalance is having a dire impact on the environment as well as the economy.

Articles and Journal Collections

States across the Nation are Criminalizing Poverty

(Editorial Board, *Washington Post*, 2018)

***What We Think Poverty Looks Like*, Tracie McMillan**

(*NY Times*, 2017)

Escaping Poverty Requires Almost 20 Years With

***Nearly Nothing Going Wrong*, Gillian B. White**

(*The Atlantic*, 2017).

***Rural Poverty in America is an Emergency*,**

Brakketon Booker (NPR, 2018)

***Extreme Poverty Returns to America*, Premilla**

Nadasen (*Washington Post*, 2017)

The Christian Century

Systemic Poverty: Presbyterian Mission Agency

***Board discusses how the church is called to respond*,**

Leslie Scanlon, (*The Presbyterian Outlook*, 2019)

The Thoughtful Christian

Unbound: An Interactive Journal of Christian

Social Justice

Lists of Anti-Poverty Organizations

Out of Poverty Caucus

45 Organizations That Battle Poverty

Statistics

The U.S. Census Bureau provides poverty data from several household surveys and programs. Here you can find poverty estimates, learn about these surveys and programs, and get guidance on demographics,

geographics and what constitutes poverty.

While children remain the poorest group in America, these statistics from ***The Children’s Defense Fund*** provide a state-by-state analysis of child poverty in 2017.

The Pew Research Center provides data and articles on poverty and economic well-being.

U.S. Federal Poverty Guidelines — The following links help provide an understanding of what constitutes poverty in the U.S. and what the **current federal poverty level** is. This is information that is always helpful to know and have.

Institute for Women’s Policy Research produces the most widely cited research on the gender wage gap in the United States.

These organizations provide some of the most expansive and varied poverty statistics:

Barna Group has conducted more than one million interviews over the course of hundreds of studies, and has become a go-to source for insights about faith and culture, leadership and vocation and generations.

Oxfam is a global organization working to end the injustice of poverty. We help people build better futures for themselves, hold the powerful accountable and save lives in disasters.

The Brookings Institution is a nonprofit public policy organization based in Washington, D.C. Our mission is to conduct in-depth research that leads to new ideas for solving problems facing society at the local, national and global level.



**DIRECT ACTION
AND ADVOCACY**

Ten Effective Strategies to Fight Poverty

These ideas are inspired by Meagan Hurley and the Borgen Project.

1. *Become aware.*

The first step in conquering any problem is acknowledging that there is one. Awareness can start with simple things like watching and reading the news, or even taking five minutes out of your day just to call your local nonprofits and shelters and find out what is going on right now, and what efforts are being put forth to assist the world’s poor. You can use “Educational Resources & Avenues for Action” provided by the Presbyterian Mission Agency for personal devotion, as sermon starters or in small-group study. They can also be adapted for youth group or intergenerational activities.

2. *Generate awareness.*

It’s not enough just to become aware yourself of the current happenings in global poverty. In order to make an impact, you have to make others aware as well. Educate and inform people of the cause—and then tell them what they can do to help.

3. Form a plan of action.

Now that you know that people are suffering, figure out what you can do to help them. Set your own goals and form a plan of action as to how you can go about executing these goals. Let this plan incorporate the assistance of other people and think in forms of both long- and short-term results.

Support efforts to address poverty through the ministries of the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

- Join webinars, trips and campaigns offered through Compassion, Peace and Justice.
- Learn with partners' overseas with World Mission.
- Find worship resources and learning tools with Theology, Formation & Education.
- Put church funds in socially responsible investments.
- Be in community and stand in solidarity with communities with Racial Equity & Women's Intercultural Ministries.

4. Advocate! Make the calls and write the emails.

Begin executing your plan of action by calling and emailing individuals and officials who can help make a difference. Good starting places for this might include church, nonprofit and community and governmental administrators. Here, you can advocate for better public policies, including those that support job creation and greater empowerment of workers, protect family-life balance, strengthen families through life-cycle needs, support families in retirement and times of serious illness, improve the accuracy of official measurements of household economic well-being, create a stronger social safety net, increase social involvement in poorer communities (such as expanded and enriched public schooling) and increase social inclusion and community empowerment (220th General Assembly 2012)

5. Donate.

Find specific organizations that work to fight poverty and donate. Whether it's a small amount or a giant lump sum—anything helps. Government money given to global poverty aid is next to none, and these nonprofits need all the funding they can get.

6. Fundraise.

Maybe you want to help the cause but just don't have anything to spare? In that case, make a fundraising plan. Host activities, write letters, or even raise donations specifically for global poverty resolution.

7. Make use of already available aid products. Check your credit card companies to see if any options are available where a portion of money is donated to a helpful organization. Also make yourself aware of any website or stores that donate portions of their revenue to nonprofits. (eBay and Amazon are great places to start.)

8. Contact the media.

Write letters to the editor of a news publication, call a local radio station, email news broadcasters. Utilize social media to help get important information circulating in the media. The better we publicize the issue, the more likely people will make an effort to right the wrongs.

9. Divert your spending.

Catch yourself when you're about to make an unnecessary or wasteful purchase. Instead of spending that money, donate it to the cause.

10. Volunteer.

Finally, [get involved](#) in the most efficient way possible—volunteer your time and energy to something that matters, something that helps. Whether it's serving food at a shelter or traveling overseas with a travel study seminar, this is the best way to help those in need most directly. Become a Matthew 25 congregation. Work to incorporate multiple elements of poverty alleviation into the life of your congregation in order to have a holistic focus on poverty.

ADDENDUM #5

SYNOD OF SOUTH ATLANTIC 34th ZOOM STATED MEETING THURSDAY, AUGUST 6, 2020

HIGHLIGHTS

- The Rev. Kathi Parchem, Synod Moderator, welcomed first-time and returning Commissioners, Presbytery Leaders, Stated Clerks, Racial Ethnic Leaders, the Synod Presbyterian Women Leader, and guests gathered to conduct the business of the Synod. Due to the pandemic the May Stated Meeting was cancelled so the Synod held its first electronic meeting using ZOOM video conferencing.
- The Rev. Rick Douylliez of the St. Marys Presbyterian Church, Savannah Presbytery, led the Synod in worship using Matthew 14:22-33 as the scripture.
- During worship, the Synod Moderator, the Rev. Kathi Parchem, Savannah Presbytery, and the Synod Moderator-Elect, the Rev. Dr. David Shelor, Tampa Bay Presbytery, were installed with former moderator, Gloria Graham Boyd, asking the installation questions of the Moderator, Moderator-Elect, and the Synod.
- Joyce Lieberman, Synod Executive and Stated Clerk, reported on the status of the Synod, including the membership, the Presbytery and Synod minutes approvals, and Permanent Judicial Commission decisions. She welcomed the new Presbytery leaders and Clerks to the Synod. She reflected upon the “new normal” of what it means to be the church in this time and place, with widespread COVID and widespread racism.
- The Executive Administrative Commission (EAC) presented a number of proposed Synod Manual of Operations changes and updates as a first reading.
- The Synod voted in favor of the 2021 Stated Meeting dates of April 22-23, 2021 at Epworth-By-The-Sea, St. Simons Island, Georgia, as well as an electronic meeting on November 5, 2021.
- Jodi Dodge, Synod Treasurer, was elected to serve another four-year term. Her gifts, expertise and innovations have supported the Synod’s staff and the Budget and Finance Committee.
- William “Bill” Byars, Cherokee Presbytery, was elected as the Chair of the Administration and Relationships Committee (ARC). Ken Whitehurst, Greater Atlanta Presbytery was elected as the Chair of the Ministry Support Committee (MSC).
- The Synod audit for 2019 was completed and in order. The 2021 proposed budget was approved with per capita remaining at \$1.50 and suggested mission giving remaining at \$1.00.
- The Rev. Dr. Alan Barody read the Ahmaud Arbery Statement from Savannah and Greater Atlanta Presbyteries, which was responded to by the other Georgia Presbyteries.



TALKING POLITICS

DURING TURBULENT TIMES

SEPTEMBER 25 – OCTOBER 9, 2020

AN **ONLINE** PROGRAM FOR PEOPLE OF FAITH SEEKING
TO ADDRESS CIVIC AND POLITICAL ISSUES DURING THE 2020
NATIONAL ELECTION SEASON

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ADDENDUM #7

Opportunities for Presbytery Service

*Committees and Commissions of the Presbytery need you! If interested and able, please complete and return requested forms (Volunteer Interest Form and General Assembly Interest Form) found with full descriptions of the committees/commissions at <http://atlpcusa.org/committees>. Terms for committees & commissions are ordinarily 3 years with eligibility for re-election to a maximum of 6 years. The * indicates that committee members must be Ruling Elders or Teaching Elders in the PC (USA).*

***Bills and Overtures Committee/General Assembly (GA) Commissioner** – prepares for, attends and participates in the General Assembly and reports to the Presbytery. Serves as the Presbytery Bills and Overtures Committee for two years following the General Assembly.

***Committee on Ministry (COM)** - provides care of congregations, pastors and educators. Ordinarily meets on the 3rd Thursday of each month from 5 – 6:30 PM at the Presbytery office. Subcommittees also meet monthly.

***Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM)** - works with inquirers and candidates as they discern calls to ministry and move through the requirements for ordination. Ordinarily meets on the 4th Thursday of the month from 4:30 – 7:30 PM at First Presbyterian Church of Atlanta.

***Presbytery Council** - guides, plans and envisions staffing needs and directions to be taken by the Presbytery. Meets 6 Monday evenings from 5:00-7:00 pm at the Presbytery office.

Committee on Representation (COR) - offers ways to live out the church's commitment to inclusiveness and representation. Meets 4 times each year during the day at the Presbytery office.

***Examinations Commission** - examines all ministers who wish to be received into the Presbytery for membership during monthly meetings on the third Thursday afternoon from 1 - 4 PM at the Presbytery office.

Grants Committee - awards three primary grants each year to churches or other organizations. Also considers awards for seminarians. Ordinarily meets at the Presbytery office in May and October.

***New Church Development Commission (NCDC)** - catalyzes and supports the development of new worshipping communities throughout our presbytery. Meets for an annual half day strategic planning meeting and quarterly on Wednesdays, 10:30 am – 12:30 pm at the offices of the Presbytery. The Operations, Development and Advisory teams meet as needed, some face to face and some online.

***Nominating Committee** –Identifies and recruits volunteers for all Presbytery committees. Meets 3-4 mornings a year at the Presbytery office.

Operations Committee - manages financial and business processes of the Presbytery. Meets quarterly on Mondays at 2 PM at the Presbytery office. Subcommittees meet additionally.

***Permanent Judicial Commission (PJC)** - exercises church discipline through judicial process. Meets as necessary during one term of 6 years.

Personnel Committee – provides guidance, expertise and assistance to the Presbytery staff re: matters of personnel. Quarterly meetings on weekdays, usually on Mondays, noon – 1:30 pm, at the Presbytery office.

***Synod Commissioners** - represent the Presbytery at 1-2 Synod meetings each year of a 4 year term.

Presbytery Worship and Planning Committee - assists in planning worship and order of business for stated Presbytery meetings. Meets approximately 6 weeks prior to each Stated Presbytery Meeting, usually at upcoming host churches and once annually with Council to discuss themes.