

Exhibit A-1

Jessica Means
Faith Journey

I am fortunate to have known God my entire life – I cannot delineate a before and after or pick the moment my faith journey began. I grew up attending church and Sunday school, learning the stories of the Bible on a flannelgraph during children’s worship and then finding them in my children’s Bible to read them again and again.

As I entered middle and high school, my parents granted me freedom to choose how I wanted to participate in church life. Instead of withdrawing, the community I experienced in church continued to draw me in. I made friends who, like me, asked big, earnest questions. Adults at the church, both clergy and laypeople, treated my questions seriously and included me in their own faith journeys. For three years, I sat in the associate pastor’s office every Friday. She and I had far-ranging conversations on faith, politics, books, friendships, dating – in a word, life. In her office, the stories I learned as a child became the foundation for deep-seated faith in God, a faith that could ask questions, could adapt and change, but that was rooted in God’s love manifested in Scripture and community.

I attended Wheaton College, where I continued to learn to ask questions about the Bible and about faith. I learned that God is big enough for all those questions. I learned to integrate faith and vocation, even if my vocation was not (yet) in the church. The good people of that institution helped me take the love of God that I walked in with and form it into something with legs that could be enacted in the world as a response to God’s great love for me.

As I have journeyed through life as an adult, I have been grateful over and over for the foundation of faith cultivated in my youth. I have continued to push, to pick, to question. I have encountered real life, which is to say I have seen hard things in the world. I spent a year working for a health and human rights non-profit in West Africa, where I came face to face with darkness – abuse, mutilation, hunger, poverty – but also profound beauty and hope. I have watched friends and loved ones navigate sickness, death, unexpected circumstances. The lessons I learned as a child and at Wheaton hold true: God is, indeed, big enough for it all. The Good News remains such very good news.

Throughout my twenties, I experienced (and tried hard to ignore) a growing sense of call to theological education and to ministry. I was enfolded into the life of the local church and loved serving as a lay leader, teaching confirmation, leading small groups, serving on outreach committees, assisting in worship and guiding the church as a ruling elder. I did not recognize then the ways in which my congregation was forming my own sense of vocation by calling me lead in ministry in so many varied ways. I loved my job, I loved my church, and I couldn’t fathom leaving either, and yet God’s call was gentle and persistent. When I lost my job in 2019, one month after getting married, it became clear that it was time to say “Yes” to the call had I resisted for so long.

Though my time in seminary has been challenging, it has confirmed both my call and my deeply held belief that God is big enough for all that life may throw at us and all I may throw back at God, and that the Good News is indeed such very good news. I have fallen more deeply in love with Scripture. As a student chaplain in CPE, Jesus was present time and again as I met people in their hardest moments. In some of my own hardest moments, as a brand new mom during Covid struggling through Greek exegesis, I was nurtured and sustained by God our Mother and by God's beautiful community in the church. I am humbled by the possibility of shepherding a small portion of God's church, and I am awed at the opportunity to share the Love that has held me and will not let me go.

Exhibit A-1

Jessica Means
Statement of Faith

I believe in God the creator of all and author of life. I believe God is so much more than my frail mind comprehends. I declare my faith with humility, knowing that I will miss the mark.

I believe God is eternally existent in the three-in-one Godhead: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. I believe that God's being is a community of love in which we are created, redeemed and sustained. In all things God is at work ordering the world until God's reign of love is fully realized.

I believe the Son of God lived among us as the historical person Jesus. He lived, died, resurrected and ascended for us and our salvation. In his physical death and bodily resurrection we are freed from sin and redeemed to new life.

I believe humans are created in God's image, but things have gone awry with sin, a pervasive reality in our world personally and systemically. God calls us out of sin by grace, God reaching to us and pulling us out. Any good we do is a response to that grace. Grace compelled Christ to the cross and includes us in the resurrected life of creation. In grace God moves and calls us, and in grace we respond with a joyful "Yes!" As we grow in grace, we are sustained by the work of the sanctifying Spirit as we learn to grow closer to the heart of God.

I believe the church is God's people, called and set apart as a foretaste of God's coming reign. We are counted as members of the church by God's grace, not our merit or action. The church is held in unity through God's Word and administration of grace in the sacraments. Christ is the Word, the head of the church, and Scripture is the revelation of such to us. That revelation is revealed through the inspiration and interpretation of the Spirit, and we best discern that inspiration in concert with the full church.

I believe the sacraments of baptism and communion are instruments of God's grace, physical acts reflecting spiritual realities. In baptism, God claims us in the covenant of grace. Particularly when we baptize infants and children, we witness God's call before we have the means to respond, acknowledging that we cannot outrun God's love. In communion, we commemorate and participate in Christ's death and resurrection. Through mysterious means, the Spirit infuses the elements of bread and cup with sustaining grace. In the sacraments, with the church universal we proclaim and commemorate God's gracious action in our lives.

I believe these are not abstract claims but realities that shape us in the world. Created in love and saved by grace, we strive, albeit imperfectly, to share that love and grace with all. We work for mercy, truth, and justice. We bear hope in dark and despairing places. We lay down our privilege to love our neighbor well. We pray fervently that God's will be done on earth as in heaven and listen attentively to God's call to join that

work. God has chosen to work through us, transforming our paltry offerings into beautiful gifts for the world. Thanks be to God.

Exhibit A-2

Journey of Faith John David Bryant

At my core, I believe that I am called to be “a friend for the journey.” As Charles Spurgeon, tells us, “We are all mere beggars showing other beggars where to find bread.” As we journey together, we beggars are constantly showing one another where to see Jesus, the Bread of Life.

I was born in 1970 to a family in which the women on the paternal side of the family prioritized faith. The women were church establishing, church supporting Missionary Baptists. The men on the paternal side practiced a faith that might best be described as, “Do as I say, not as I do.” The men and women on the maternal side of the family were rigid, ultra-conservative Pentecostals.

Within this environment, I came to faith gradually, increasingly, and this culminated in a faith crisis during my senior year in high school. My great grandmother died 10.21.87, and within 6 weeks her daughter, Grandmother, was diagnosed with stage 3B breast cancer. It was a “dark night of the soul” that stretched for many nights. Ultimately, on the lowest day of days, I found myself at the Lutheran Student Center on the campus of the University of Georgia. I walked through big red doors that had accidentally been left unlocked by a pastor who found me hours later in the chapel.

On that afternoon, Pr. Ed Ralph prayed with me, was present to me, shared a view of grace that was far different than any I had ever heard. Before long, I immersed myself in the works of the 16th and 17th century Reformers: Martin Luther, John Calvin, Martin Chemnitz, etc. I read anything I could find: Luther’s Small Catechism, Luther’s Large Catechism, the Heidelberg Disputation, the Great Scots Confession, the Institutes of Religion, the Thirty-nine Articles, the Book of Concord, etc. I embraced the Five Solas of the Reformation: Scripture alone, Christ alone, faith alone, grace alone, and glory to God alone. In time, I came to see myself as a “Lutheropalian,” one as at home in the Anglican Tradition as in the Lutheran tradition.

By the end of my senior year of college in '93, I was engaged to a Lutheran girl. And within two years of meeting, we were married. Over the years, we have found that we shared a common mission of being “friends for the journey” with whosoever God brings our way. A big change in that business of journeying with others came our way when I was ordained in 2011. The discernment to holy orders/rostered ministry/ordained ministry brought a new aspect to living out the call to be a friend for the journey. Jesus has stretched me, pruned me, empowered me, challenged me, and tenderized me though those with whom I have journeyed. Jesus has changed me through those who Jesus has called to journey with me.

I see the potential call to serve with the good people at First Presbyterian-Perry, FL as another adventure in journeying with others as they journey with me. I will love them with the love of Jesus and let them love me with the love of Jesus, too. And, in so

doing, together we will love those in North Florida as a team of “beggars showing other beggars where to find bread.”

Exhibit A-2

Pr. J. David Bryant
July 8, 2024
Statement of Faith

Everything, absolutely everything, begins and comes to its fullness in the Triune God. All are connected and related to the Triune One. Life is a gift from that One, and death is a path that carries us to that One. This reality is visible in our God's love for the cosmos revealed in the life, death, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are brought to faith in our Lord Jesus Christ by the activity of the Holy Spirit. Grace is the Triune God's means to claim, sanctify, and preserve us unto life-everlasting. Grace is the means by which we belong to God. And grace is a gift given, not a reward earned.

For so great a gift, the measureless, boundless, matchless grace given to us by the Triune One's activity in our Lord Jesus Christ, we worship, love, serve, adore, and honor the Triune One and no other. This God, revealed to us in our Lord Jesus Christ, who is 100% human and 100% God, is Ancient Israel's God---walking, talking love: up-close-and personal. Jesus announced and inaugurated the in-breaking of the kingdom of God. Jesus revealed God's activity in the unremarkably common. Jesus meets people where they were (and are) in everyday life, in their own everyday circumstances — beggars, politicians, prostitutes, net-menders, business owners, tax agents, and the bereaved. Jesus is deeply involved with ordinary people of his day and our day as well. Jesus personifies relevance by preaching good news to the poor and marginalized, release to the captives, by healing the sick, by fulfilling the Triune God's promises to Ancient Israel, perhaps most clearly by taking on human flesh and suffering a criminal's death on a cross.

Jesus proclaimed the forgiveness of sin, and by his resurrection shattered the power of death and made evil's claim on God's cosmos null and void, thus liberating the cosmos and bringing the cosmos from death to life, even eternal life. The goodness of God revealed in Jesus assures us that God is good, God has created us good, and that we are a good facsimile of the Triune God, made to be one member of the good family of God, meant for good things, and purposed to reveal the love of God in thought, word, and deed.

When we fail in thought, word, and deed to live into the divine intent of God, we mar the image of God revealed through ourselves, and we create disharmony and damage in God's cosmos. Yet, in and of God's goodness, love, and grace, God does not condemn us on account of our failure, rather, God remains faithful to love, forgive, restore, renew, and sanctify.

Perennially, God's Holy Spirit moves among the cosmos, renewing, overturning, restoring, and continuing the ministry of Jesus through the Church. It is this Holy Spirit who creates faith, gives life, renews life, and justifies us by grace. It is this Holy Spirit who sets us free to love self, love God, and love others. It is this Holy Spirit who join us to all those in God's good family. It is this Holy Spirit who convicts us of sin

and righteousness. And it is this Holy Spirit who gathers, connects, maintains, sanctifies, and keeps God's Church on task.

God's Church is the fruit of the Holy Spirit's activity. That activity began before time, took shape when "the Spirit moved over the face of the deep," was heard through Ancient Israel's prophets, overshadowed the virgin Mary that Christ might enter human reality, rested upon Christ Jesus at the inauguration of Jesus' public ministry at the Baptism of our Lord, gave birth to God's Church that followers of Jesus might be empowered to continue and extend the work of Jesus after Jesus' Ascension.

Empowered by that same Holy Spirit, God's Church imbued with God's grace through the Sacraments, Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper, perseveres and persists with the saints in all times and in all places, until the Last Day when the inaugurated reign of God is brought to its fullness. And as we persevere, we look to see Jesus throughout the cosmos, for as John Calvin tells us, "The whole world is a theatre for the display of the divine goodness, wisdom, justice, and power."¹ And until everything, absolutely everything, that begins in the Triune God comes to its fullness in the Triune God, we look to Jesus, having the humility to bear in mind, as Martin Luther tells us, "We are beggars. This is true."²

¹ John Calvin, Commentary on Psalms, Volume 5.

² Martin Luther, Final Words, Luther's Works.

Faith Journey and Statement of Faith

By Ruth Ragovin

Born in the United States to Presbyterian parents, my faith was first nurtured at Memorial Church on the Harvard University campus where my father (a Presbyterian minister) was a professor in the Divinity School. While it was an inter-denominational church, the atmosphere in which I was raised was very Presbyterian (my ancestors were Scotch-Irish Presbyterians, French Huguenots, and German Reformed). Indeed, my older brother is named John Calvin. People experience God in many ways. From my earliest childhood, God's presence has been mediated to me most closely within the loving embrace of caring people in a number of communities of faith. Through them I caught the Christian faith as something of the mind of Christ was passed on to me. I was only six years old when I first felt called to ministry, drawing a picture of myself in a black ministerial robe, holding an open Bible, preaching. When I was ten my father was appointed in the aftermath of Vatican II as the first Protestant theologian anywhere to serve on an all-Catholic theological faculty at St. Michael's College at the University of Toronto. Our family immigrated to Toronto, Canada, and most of my family still is there. I began attending the United Church of Canada (a merger of Methodists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists). When I was twelve, I began spending one semester a year in Tübingen, Germany, where I attended the Evangelische Gemeinde, an English-speaking congregation affiliated with the Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement (Disciples of Christ, Independent Christians, and Church of Christ all worshipped together). A number of the people there became important mentors as they encouraged me along as a difficult adolescent who was full of questions. This is a story that is too long to tell here (although you can read a little about it in an article written about me¹), but it was shortly before my 16th birthday in conjunction with a near-death experience at a hospital in Kathmandu, Nepal, that I had a sudden, dramatic spiritual awakening following which I publicly confessed my faith in Jesus Christ. That experience, the most important moment in my life, significantly informs my faith as a follower of Jesus and calling. A few years later, back in Canada, I resided at Conrad Grebel College, a Mennonite USA college on the campus of the University of Waterloo, where I double majored in public health and religious studies. Upon graduation I wasn't sure whether I wanted to go and work in global health or congregational ministry. To discern this, I first spent time on the mission field (maternal and child nutrition specialist) in rural Jamaica through Mennonite Central Committee. Next, I spent a gap year primarily in West Germany. It was while I was auditing a course at the University of Munich on

¹ <https://uwaterloo.ca/grebel/news/ruth>

[ragovin?fbclid=IwY2xjawEjUclleHRuA2FibQIxMQABHcamnsMXSBDACNjiCqzeZDPNtaFUjBFZI2nlAxYph8raSSLJo-f1_8uQw_aem_BplsTUOEb-UGh7zuXzVQBQ](https://uwaterloo.ca/grebel/news/ruth-ragovin?fbclid=IwY2xjawEjUclleHRuA2FibQIxMQABHcamnsMXSBDACNjiCqzeZDPNtaFUjBFZI2nlAxYph8raSSLJo-f1_8uQw_aem_BplsTUOEb-UGh7zuXzVQBQ)

the 19th-century Reformed theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher that it became clear that I really wanted to continue on in the study of religion, with an eventual path toward ordination. I received a full tuition scholarship to do both a Masters and Ph.D. at Drew University, where I focused my studies upon Schleiermacher. While I still felt called to ordained ministry, I was unsure what denomination I wanted to affiliate with. After all there was no United Church of Canada in the United States, which was the denomination I felt most closely connected to. I honestly would have felt comfortable in any of the mainline denominations. The most obvious was to seek ordination with the United Methodists since I was at a Methodist affiliated university, and I already was serving as a youth director at a Methodist church in a nearby town. However, in the late 1970s I was witnessing the few Methodist women in my classes go on after ordination to be placed by their district superintendents in the absolute worst clergy-killer ministry settings. I did not want to put my fate in the hands of denominational judicatories. At the advice and encouragement of the theologian Dr. Thomas Oden, for whom I worked as a graduate assistant for a number of years, I began exploring the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), a denomination I was somewhat familiar with because of my time with the Stone Campbell church in Tübingen, Germany. The Reformed theology of this denomination, which had stemmed from the Presbyterians in Kentucky and Pennsylvania in the early 1800s, felt very familiar to me. The decision to seek ordination with them was solidified because the wonderful man I met at Drew and later married, Russ Ragovin, who had converted from Judaism, felt very comfortable himself becoming ordained with the Disciples of Christ. Starting in the early 1980s, Russ and I began serving in various capacities in ministry, with each of us later being ordained. My ministries have included educational ministry (teaching world religions at Lethbridge University in Alberta; teaching New Testament at Pan American University in TX; program director overseeing an ecumenical educational program at Disciples Center in San Diego; director of the Schleiermacher: Studies and Translation Series); regional ministry (Associate Regional Minister for Women's Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in TN); spiritual retreat leading; interfaith spiritual direction; and, above all, congregational ministry (3 years in California in urban ministry; 7 years in Tennessee in rural ministry; 13 years in western KY, in a university town, all with churches affiliated with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)). I have always felt that my secondary denomination is the Presbyterian Church (USA) as I share their progressive theological beliefs. I have felt a strong kinship with the Presbyterian ministers and congregations in the places I have served and participated in cooperative ministry with them. I retired three years before planned when, in the summer of 2022, my late husband Russ was diagnosed with a rare neuromuscular disorder. We moved to Gainesville, FL, in October of 2022, to be close to our daughter and grandchildren. Russ died on July 12, 2023, nine months to the hour of our arrival here. Now that I have taken the year following his death to learn to walk on my new widow's legs, I very much want to return to congregational ministry, although this time in a part-time capacity. I do feel a strong sense of calling to serve at Faith Presbyterian Church in Melrose, FL, a wonderful congregation, where I have been in a rotation of

ministers bringing the message one Sunday a month. I feel a sense of excitement about the opportunity to become re-rooted in and acquainted with the denomination of my origin (knowing I have so much to learn especially about Presbyterian polity), while maintaining my ordination standing with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). These are not mutually exclusive as I bring with me the following (greatly abbreviated).

Statement of Faith:

I believe in one sovereign God, who is revealed to us as God the Father/Mother (Creator), God the Son (Revealer), and God the Holy Spirit (Sustainer).

God is revealed to us through the special revelation of scripture that includes both the Hebrew scriptures and New Testament as it recounts God's self-disclosure in the lives of people over time and place. Our faith also is informed by the many confessions of the global church that have come down to us through history and which still will be written.

God also is revealed to us through general revelation as manifest in many ways including creation, our conscience, dreams, synchronicities, music, scientific discoveries, prayer and other spiritual practices, and when we gather together as community.

God the Father/Mother (Creator), created the universe, which God declared *Tov*, or full of goodness.

Human beings were given the task of tending to this universe but early on we lost our way.

What we call original sin might be described as the generational mistakes made by our ancestors that are passed down to us through the family systems and world we live in, which make it impossible for us to freely choose the good that God intends for us.

The Hebrew scriptures tell the stories of God's ongoing covenant with God's people as God waited patiently for them time and time again and as they waited with hope for someone to save them.

God became incarnated in a particular human being named Jesus, who embodied perfect God consciousness all through his life, death, resurrection, and ascension.

During Jesus' life, he challenged, encouraged, strengthened, healed, and taught about the Kingdom of God that is both within and without. Jesus, as a kind of wisdom teacher, taught in parables that jolted people out of their usual ways of understanding things. He gathered around himself a core group of disciples, both male and female, whom he commissioned to carry out his work. The disciples' mission (and ours) might best be summarized by the Great Commission (Mt 28:19-20) and the Great Commandment (Mt 22:36-40). The Lord's Prayer shows us how to pray and relate to God. The heart of Jesus' teachings are found in the Beatitudes, which depict how the mind of Christ manifests itself as people mature as Christians.

Jesus' unjust death, following which he visited hell to save those who already had died, led to his resurrection, ascension, and the bestowal of the Holy Spirit (which proceeds both from the Father and the Son), enabling us to stay in relation to our Trinitarian God as we are empowered to build God's Kingdom starting in the particular neighborhood in which we live.

Because of Jesus' death and resurrection, we can confidently proclaim that love is stronger than death, after this life there is more life, and that *"neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."* (Romans 8:38-39) We are justified by grace through faith (Eph 2:8-9) and called to grow in Christian maturity (sanctification) as we increasingly display the mind of Christ.

As Christians we are part of a universal family composed of the communion of the saints, which includes not only those who are alive today but Christians of all times and places, including those not yet born.

The church as God's new community is given to us as a gift to carry out Christ's work in the world as we each are part of the body of Christ, the priesthood of all believers. Here we are embraced even before we are born and reminded of God's unconditional love and forgiveness as we live into our identities as God's beloved children, proclaiming the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit. In God's new community we continue to grow in our faith and are strengthened for the journey through the sacraments of baptism and communion as we look with hope to the day of Christ's return at the dawning of God's new creation.

Journey of Faith

Suzanne Brooks-Cope

I am a cradle Presbyterian. I was raised, confirmed, married, and ordained in the church where my Great Grandfather laid the cornerstone back in the late 1800's. My family was very active in our home church until I was 8 years old when my younger sister died in a fire accident. After her death, my parents struggled making sense of a God that could allow such a tragedy to occur. However, my childhood faith was comforted in the knowledge that my sister was in God's care and was not suffering. My parents would try to return to the church from time to time. They made sure that all their children were confirmed but never truly became active in the life of the church again.

In high school most of my friends were involved in their home churches. I became committed to a youth group of a local Presbyterian Church close to my high school. I even dragged my parents back to my home church on several Sunday mornings. In college I became active in the Religious Life Association (RLA). I was the Worship Committee chair my junior year and then became the President of the RLA my senior year. I preached my first sermon in college. I remember the topic—"we worry too much." It was during my college semester aboard in Paris that I first felt God urging me into ministry.

I was a science major in college and was pre-med. By the time my senior year rolled around, I was conflicted about where to go next in my life. I decided to do a gap year and volunteer full time. I joined the Jesuit Volunteer Corp—the JVC offered me a placement in an inner-city health clinic and life in an intentional Christian community. My year commitment turned into three years. I loved living in community. My last two years in the JVC, I worked in a drop-in homeless shelter. There were times that I looked into the eyes of one of our clients and I saw Jesus staring back at me. During my JVC years, I felt my call more clearly but gently—it was as if God kept knocking on the back door until I finally opened the door.

In the fall of 1983, I began my first year at Princeton Theological Seminary. Princeton was not always an easy place for me. I was expecting a close-knit Christian community like my community experience in the JVC. It was not. The focus at PTS was academics and not formation. I had to work hard to form prayer groups and find an intentional community. I concentrated in the sciences in high school and college—the switch to theology and the ancient languages was not always an easy one. The highlight of seminary for me were my field ed placements. I worked as a chaplain Intern at Trenton Psychiatric hospital in my junior and senior years. (I met my husband Scott who was also working there). I served a federated Presbyterian and Episcopal Church for a year in Philadelphia. My husband and I shared a full-time internship position in a UCC church in Long Island before our senior year. My field ed experience helped

provide the Christian community that I had come to expect and need in my Christian journey.

My last year at Princeton was a bit of a challenge. Both my parents died the summer before my senior year three months apart from cancer. Scott and I learned we were also expecting our first child who was due three weeks before final exams my senior year. With God's help, I managed to pass my ordination exams on the first try, finish all my class work at PTS and my final assessment was approved by my CPM committee. I graduated from PTS with a six-week-old daughter sitting in the back pew of Princeton University's Chapel. God's grace was abundant through an exceedingly difficult and stressful year.

I have been blessed to serve four different churches in my thirty-six years of ordained ministry. Although each church had its challenges and growing edges, I have fond and wonderful memories of my experience in each community. I have friends that I cherish from all four congregations. My faith was stretched, strengthened, and challenged in each community. Zion, my first call allowed me to make mistakes, become more comfortable with preaching and moderate a few committee meetings. In my second call at Orange Park, the head of staff left just eighteen months after I arrived pushing me into more leadership rolls and expanding my job description. My third call, St. Andrews, was my first solo pastor position. Preaching weekly became a bit of a chore but also a blessing. My last call, St. Matthew's, was a larger congregation in a small rural village in Pennsylvania where the next closest congregation was six miles away. In some ways, serving the Kunkletown church was like walking back into history. Many men were still active in the congregation. The Strawberry Festival draws over a thousand visitors each summer. Although the congregation was rather traditional, I felt at home there (most of the time) as a progressive pastor. They enjoyed creative forms of worship such as Messy Church parables, Holy Humor Sunday, and a creative Vigil Service on Holy Saturday one year. My faith over the last few decades has become more comfortable; my prayer life more consistent and my desires and needs simpler.

This past year, we took a couple of months off from worship on Sunday mornings when we first returned to Jacksonville, but we began to miss having a church community. Scott and I both wanted to hear a wonderful choir and organ, so we headed downtown to Riverside and accidentally walked into the "wrong" church. (I did not remember there was a Methodist Church on the same block as Riverside Presbyterian). We walked into the back door on a rainy Sunday and fell in love with the pastor, the amazing choir and the churches passion for outreach and mission. We help serve a community meal each Wednesday night and attend a Sunday School Class led by a retired pastor. Scott has filled in as the accompanist once or twice (with much trepidation). It has been a joy to worship together on Sunday mornings and to appreciate the demanding work of others who help a community of people deepen their relationship with God and with each other. Our granddaughter attends with us and has joined the choir, the acolyte team and has helped with our Wednesday meals by handing out drinks to the homeless. It

turns out it was not the “wrong” church after all but where God has planted us these past few months.

I am enjoying being available to help my son and his family as they go through a tough time struggling with Huntingdon’s Disease. The next two or three years are going to be exceedingly difficult as Kim’s disease progresses. But I am also listening for God’s direction for the future and pondering how God may be calling me to serve in my retirement.

Exhibit A-4

Statement of Faith

Suzanne Brooks-Cope

I believe in the Triune God. God created our world and called it good. God created the beauty of the universe. We see the wonder of God in the minute details of a living cell and in the large expanses of the universe. God our creator has a sense of humor—God created the giraffe, the mosquito, the humpback whale, and the paramecium and called them all good. Our Creating God made human beings—male and female in God's own image. God calls us to live in covenant relationship with each other and with God. We were given the gift of the earth and called to be faithful stewards of all the earth contains.

But we rebelled against God, disobeyed his will, and broke the covenants made with us. God sent prophets to tell of God's will and desire, but we still did not listen and return to our LORD. So, the LORD sent the only Son to live among us. The Son, Jesus of Nazareth is fully divine and fully human. He knows the struggles of humanity; he understands our temptations; he shares our joy and our hurt. But humanity turned against Jesus as well. His closest companions deserted him, and he was beaten, tortured, and murdered on a Roman cross. We deserve God's wrath, yet God raised Jesus from the dead and offers all who repent resurrection through him. We are offered a place at his table, a place in his eternal kingdom.

Jesus returned to God the creator but did not leave us alone. The Holy Spirit came and lives among us giving us comfort in times of hurt, courage in the face of difficult challenges and strength to carry on God's will. As one of my confirmands once said, the "Holy Spirit is like sunscreen, there to protect you from the burning rays of life." We can feel the Holy Spirit with us during personal prayer, vibrant worship or simply as we walk in the woods or listen to God's voice in the waves breaking at the ocean shore. The Spirit rejoices with us as an infant is baptized and mourns with us as we stand by the bedside of a dying loved one. The Spirit sustains our life.

The Triune God has given the church two sacraments—Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The sacraments are visible signs of invisible gifts of grace. In Baptism, we are brought into the church, the body of Christ. We are claimed as God's own; we participate in the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus, and we are sealed by the Holy Spirit. All those baptized are welcome at the Lord's Table. In the sacrament of Holy Communion, we are nourished and fed with saints of all times and places. Jesus is present in the sacrament. Jesus' life, death, resurrection, and ascension are remembered and honored. When we celebrate the Lord's Supper, we remember that Christ quenches our deepest thirsts and satisfies our deepest hungers.

The Triune God has a mission—the mission of God is the Church. The Church of Jesus Christ includes faithful followers of Christ of every race, nation, and culture. Men and women, young and old are all called to the work of ministry. We are called to share the good news of the gospel to all who long and need to hear it. We are called to a life of

service, where the needs of God's littlest ones—the poor, the orphaned, the hungry, the oppressed—are met. We are called to love the unlovable, pray for our enemies, and care for those who reject us. We are called to be good stewards of all the gifts of our Triune God.

Praise and honor be given to our Triune God, now and forever.

Exhibit A-5

2024 ORDINATION ANNIVERSARIES

40 years and above

Diane Wilson-	40 years
Bob Shettler-	45 years
Daisy Holt-	45 years
Chuck Harmon	45 years
Bill Weimer	50 years
Larry Seymour	50 years
Dick Menzel	55 years
Michael Williams	55 years
John Kirkham	55 years
Les Comee	55 years
Donald Custis	60 years
Bill Russell	60 years
Jim Black	60 years
Frederick Bonkovsky	60 years

*2024 Ordination Anniversaries from 5 to 35 years were presented at the May 14 meeting of Presbytery.

Lead Presbyter's Report

October 2, 2024

Psalm 1:1-3

“Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked or take the path that sinners tread or sit in the seat of scoffers, but their delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law, they meditate day and night. They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither. In all that they do, they prosper.”

I have had the opportunity to be with you in ministry for exactly one year. As I reflect on the last 12 months, I have a better understanding of where we are as well as the possibilities that are in front of us. As I have driven across the beautiful part of Florida that is home to the 53 churches in the Presbytery of St. Augustine, I have spent a fair amount of time praying, reflecting and dreaming.

So far, I have visited 49 of our congregations and will worship with the other four as soon as possible. My spirit has been nurtured by uplifting worship and inspired preaching. While each church is an individual mission outpost that responds to God's call, in their community, in unique ways, we are woven together as a presbytery, sowing seeds of God's love in a wide variety of mission endeavors. Together we are yielding fruit like trees planted by streams of water. Many of our congregations offer space for 12 step groups so people can find wholeness and healing. We have congregations that collect and distribute clothes for those housing insecure, others offer backpacks filled with school supplies for children in need and food pantries can be found in several of our locations. It is impressive and that list is just a sampling.

I know we will continue to serve God in ways that are familiar to us and yet I also know that God calls us to move beyond the familiar. I believe if our trees are going to continue to bear good fruit, we must look for fresh springs and new streams where we can plant. The future is ripe with possibilities. What will those new forms of ministry look like? Where will those new expressions of mission take shape? I don't know. It could look like two or three churches working in a new partnership that strengthens each of their ministries. It might be seen in the form of commissioned pastors guiding congregations that have been or are searching for leadership. It could be seen in shared use agreements that bring in additional funds to underwrite the ministry for years to come. It will happen in places where communities recognize the need for change and are willing to step out into the unknown trusting that God will guide them. God continually calls us into partnership to advance the cause of Christ. I do not know what the future holds, but I know who holds the future. I look forward to serving alongside you in both ways that are comfortable and familiar to us and to faithfully venturing into the unknown and seeing where God leads us.

ACTIONS TAKEN BY COMMISSIONS

Coordinating Council:

April 11, 2024

It was moved, seconded and carried to approve Palatka First as the host of the October 1, 2024, Meeting of Presbytery and the Montgomery Center as the host of the February 1, 2025, Meeting of Presbytery, both pending confirmation from the host sites.

May 9, 2024

It was moved, seconded and carried by the Personnel Team to recommend to presbytery the approval of modified Terms of Call for the Stated Clerk as long as the terms do not exceed the budgeted amount for the position.

It was moved, seconded and carried to establish February 1, 2025, as the winter Meeting of Presbytery to be held at Montgomery Center.

June 13, 2024

The following Consent Agenda, which was approved by motion, seconded and carried: Authorization for the Montgomery Board to arrange ministers and ruling elders currently commissioned to serve communion to preside over the sacrament during summer camp activities.

Request from Weirsdale for Elder rotation exemption.

It was moved, seconded and carried to approve the formation of the Stewardship of Resources Task Force.

July 11, 2024

It was moved, seconded and carried that John Booth (RE Westminster) and Joe Albright (TE Geneva) be provisionally approved to serve on the Presbytery Disaster Commission.

The following recommendations for the awarding of Designated Grants were moved, seconded and carried:

From Acct #2515 Charles J Williams Fund (available funds \$15,000)

Dunnellon	\$5,000	Create two ADA compliant restrooms
High Springs	\$5,000	Repair/replace aging worship space for safety
Fairfield	\$5,000	Re-roof three buildings

From Acct #2629 Peacemaking (available funds \$23,611)

Community	\$2,500	Nights of Compassion Homeless ministry
Lake City	\$2,500	Feed the homeless, adding additional meals each month

Memorial \$ 475 PCUSA International Peacemaker Visitor local travel support
Interfaith Center of Northeast FL \$2,500

From Acct #2621 Pentecost (available funds \$10,781)
Montgomery Conference Center \$1,400 Summer Camp Pastor honoraria

July 18, 2024

It was moved, seconded and carried to approve the recommendation of the Review Team to award a grant from the Sale of Church Property funds to Woodlawn Presbyterian Church in the amount of \$45,325.00.

August 21, 2024

Beth Touchton reported for the Nominating Team. The following slate was presented and approved to be forwarded to Presbytery by motion, seconded and carried:

Coordinating Council

Ben Hawkins RE M B Woodlawn Class_of 2027

Board of Trustees – Presbytery

Rev. Larry Graham-Johnson TE M W St. Andrews Class_of 2027

Call Commission

Jessi Higginbotham TE F W St. Giles Class_of 2027

Montgomery Board

Cynthia Montgomery TE F W Class_of 2026
(fill unexpired term)

Ordination Readers

Greg McMillan (returning) RE M W South Jax Class_of 2025
Rev Adam Anderson TE M W South Jax TBD

Moderator-Elect of Presbytery

Barbara Darby RE F B Woodlawn

It was moved, seconded and carried to combine the Communications Team and the Training Team into the Communications and Training Team with 8 total members.

Call Commission:

April 16, 2024

The following Consent Agenda was approved by motion, seconded and carried:

Renewal of temporary contract between Starke FPC and Diane Wilson
Request from San Mateo Clerk of Session Sabrina Crosby to moderate congregational meeting to elect a Deacon to fill a vacancy.

It was moved, seconded and carried to approve the Final Assessment of Jessica Means, Candidate under care of the presbytery.

It was moved, seconded and carried to appoint Diane Wilson as the moderator of the Perry Session and to provide travel reimbursements and overnight accommodations as needed.

It was moved, seconded and carried to enroll Hanna Richards as a Candidate under the care of presbytery.

May 21, 2024

It was moved, seconded and carried to approve the temporary contract between Rev. Robert Allen “Bob” Scott and Fort King.

It was moved, seconded and carried to enroll Jan Maloney as an Inquirer under the care of Presbytery.

June 18, 2024

The following Consent Agenda was approved by motion, seconded and carried:

Renewal of contract between Orange Park and Sandra Hedrick.

It was moved, seconded, and carried to approve Jessica Means for ordination, alongside her contract and position as a parish associate at South Jacksonville Presbyterian Church.

It was moved, seconded and carried to approve Presbytery minimum salary as follows: The 2025 presbytery minimum effective salary for full-time installed pastors is \$52,370. The policy also recommends that churches consider a 4% increase in the salaries of existing pastoral relationships to cover the rising costs of living.

July 16, 2024

The following Consent Agenda was approved by motion, seconded and carried:

Request from the Presbytery of the Pines for St. Augustine to hold a service of ordination for Kevin Wright.

It was moved, seconded and carried to enroll Mary Scine as a Candidate under the care of presbytery.

It was moved, seconded and carried to approve the temporary contract (pending Session approval), between Rev. John David Bryant (ELCA) and Perry FPC and to enroll Rev. Bryant as a Temporary Member of Presbytery, and to assign Jeff Welch as the Call Commission mentor to Rev. Bryant.

It was moved, seconded and carried to set pulpit supply minimum to \$175 plus mileage for 1 service / \$250 plus mileage for two services; and \$75 plus mileage to moderate a session meeting.

August 20, 2024

The following Consent Agenda was approved by motion, seconded and carried:

Approval of ordination commission minutes of Rev. Kevin Wright from July 24, 2024
Approval of Rev. Alan Cummings as liaison to the Ocala FPC PNC
Approval of the covenant of Inquirer Brennan Gagnon

It was moved, seconded and carried to endorse the addition of Ruth Elsworth and Scott Brooks-Cope to the presbytery staff as ARCs.

It was moved, seconded and carried to approve the Temporary Contract between Grace PC and Rev. Cheryl Duke and to enroll Cheryl Duke as a member of the Presbytery.

It was moved, seconded and carried to approve the Temporary Contract between Faith PC and Rev. Ruth Ragovin (Disciples of Christ), to appoint Rev. Ragovin as Moderator of Session and to enroll Rev. Ragovin as a Temporary Member of the Presbytery.

It was moved, seconded and carried to approve the transfer of Rev. Suzanne Brooks-Cope to the Presbytery of St. Augustine.

The following 2025 Presbytery budget requests were approved by motion, seconded and carried:

Call Commission 2025 budget requested amounts
5410 Candidate Financial Support 25,000
5412 Board of Pensions Shared Grants 2,000
5415 Ministry Assessments 3,000
5420 Consultations and Final Assessments 0.00
5422 Inquirer/Candidate Counseling 1,000

Presbytery of St. Augustine

September 18, 2024

		Actual 7/31/24	2024 Budget	2025 Asking
REVENUE				
4110	Unified Giving	178,733	350,000	350,000
4311	Investment Earnings	83,274	120,000	120,000
4315	Other Income	2,744	10,000	5,000
4318	Management Fees	16,000	48,000	65,000
4420	Comm. Ministry Fund Income	2,000	2,000	2,000
5026	Armistead Fund Income	5,833	10,000	10,000
TOTAL REVENUES		288,584	540,000	552,000
EXPENSE				
Current Ministries				
5015	Regional Gatherings	716	1,500	1,600
5017	Mission Insite	2,535	2,535	2,535
5022	Crisis Response Training/Expenses		500	500
5024	Administrative Commission Expense		250	250
Total		3,251	4,785	4,885
Disaster Preparation & Assistance				
5044	Disaster Assistance	1,000	1,000	1,000
5048	Florida PDA Network	11,500	11,500	11,500
Total		12,500	12,500	12,500
Call Commission				
5410	Candidate Financial Support	9,188	15,000	25,000
5412	Board of Pensions Shared Grants		2,000	2,000
5415	Ministry Assessments	400	1,500	3,000
5422	Inquirer/Candidate Counseling	400	1,000	1,000
Total Call Commission		9,988	19,500	31,000
Mission & Leadership Development				
5037	Youth Triennium	1,000	1,000	4,000
5525	Leadership Development	3,150	5,400	3,600
5535	Counseling Assistance	300	1,000	500
5610	Training	-	1,000	1,000
Total		4,450	8,400	9,100
Highlands Regional Ministry Center				
5701	Contributions	-		
5705	Usage Income	(4,382)	(4,800)	
5710	Building Repair	-	2,000	
5712	Fire Protection	191	200	
5715	Utilities	5,740	7,500	
5720	Insurance	10,112	5,500	
5730	Property Management			
5740	Building Major Repair Fund	-	-	
5745	Legal	-		
Total Highlands Regional Ministry		11,661	10,400	-
Personnel				
<i>Office Manager 1 FTE</i>				
6010	Salary	26,730	44,000	44,000
6015	Benefits Package	7,497	11,540	11,919

6020	FICA	2,043	3,366	3,366
	Total Office Manager	36,270	58,906	59,285
	<u>Communication Coordinator .75 FTE</u>			
6110	Salary	17,620	31,200	31,200
6115	Benefits Package	4,083	7,665	7,598
6120	FICA	1,243	2,387	2,387
	Total Communication Coordinator	22,946	41,252	41,185
	<u>Summer Staff at MPCC</u>			
6210	Salaries	33,360	44,000	60,000
6215	FICA	2,548	3,366	4,590
	Total Presbytery SS at MPCC	35,908	47,366	64,590
	<u>Stated Clerk .5 FTE</u>			
6310	Salary	19,832	32,000	32,000
6320	SECA	-	2,448	2,448
6325	Professional Expenses	107	1,500	1,500
6330	Continuing Education		1,000	1,000
6335	Auto Expenses	3,500	6,000	1,000
	Total Stated Clerk	23,439	42,948	37,948
	<u>5 Area Relationship Coordinators .25 FTE</u>			
6410	Salaries	8,225	20,424	20,424
6415	Housing	7,681	13,616	13,616
6417	SECA	-		
6425	Expenses – Mileage, Travel, Meals	-	1,000	1,000
	Total Area Relationship Coordinators	15,906	35,040	35,040
6550	Personnel Adjustments		5,500	5,750
	<u>Lead Presbyter 1 FTE</u>			
6555	Salary	29,167	50,000	50,000
6560	Housing	24,500	42,000	42,000
6565	Benefits Package	23,650	35,880	39,560
6570	SECA	4,106	7,038	7,038
6575	Professional Expenses	2,503	2,500	4,000
6580	Continuing Education	1,380	1,000	1,000
6585	Auto Expenses	3,302	4,500	6,000
	Total Lead Presbyter	88,608	142,918	149,598
	Total Personnel	223,077	373,930	393,396
Administration & Finance				
6610	Dues, Subscriptions, Minutes	162	200	400
6620	Meeting Expenses	1,440	3,000	3,000
6625	Speakers' Honoraria & Expenses		1,000	1,000
6810	OGA and Mid-Council Meeting Expense	3,738	7,000	5,000
6815	General Assembly Unified	8,750	15,000	15,000
6830	Synod of South Atlantic Mission	5,831	10,000	10,500
6835	Synod of South Atlantic Per Capita	8,589	15,800	15,800
6915	Committee/Commission Meals	-	400	300
6935	General Operating Expenses	251	1,200	1,500
6940	Legal Expenses	2,966	2,000	5,000
6945	Permanent Judicial Commission	-	1,000	1,000
6955	Mileage Reimbursement	325	500	500
6960	Moderator's Expenses	617	2,200	2,200
7010	Audit	10,500	10,500	5,500
7012	Bank and Credit Card Fees	496	1,000	1,000
7015	Building-Major Repair Fund	875	1,500	1,500
7020	Building Maintenance	651	2,000	2,000
	<u>Communications</u>			
7035	Information Technology	6,452	11,000	11,000

7040	Copier	1,640	3,000	3,000
7045	Utilities	1,489	3,500	4,000
7050	Grounds	1,015	2,000	1,500
7055	Insurance	9,472	19,000	19,000
7070	Janitorial	819	1,500	1,500
7090	Office Supplies	567	2,000	2,000
7095	Payroll Processing	599	1,300	1,300
7110	Postage	331	800	700
7120	Telephone & Internet	2,478	4,200	5,000
Total Administration & Finance		70,053	122,600	120,200
Total Expenses		334,980	552,115	571,081
Surplus (Deficit)		(46,396)	(12,115)	(19,081)

Exhibit E-1

Alachua First
2023 approved without exception

Arlington
2023 approved without exception

Bethlehem
Not reviewed

Branford
Extension to 12/31/24

Calvin
Extension to 12/31/24

Community
2023 approved without exception

Countryside
2023 approved without exception

Covenant
2023 approved without exception

Crescent City First
2023 approved without exception

Dunnellon
2023 approved without exception

Fairfield
Not reviewed

Faith
2022 approved without exception
2023 approved without exception

Fernandina Beach
2023 approved without exception

Fort Caroline
2023 approved without exception

Fort King
2023 approved without exception

Gainesville First
2023 approved without exception

Geneva
2023 approved without exception

Grace
Not reviewed

Green Cove Springs
2023 approved without exception

High Springs
2023 approved without exception

Highlands United
2023 approved without exception

Hodges Boulevard
2023 approved without exception

Jasper
Not reviewed

Kanapaha
2023 approved without exception

Kirkwood
Not reviewed

Korean
Not reviewed

Lake City
Extension to 12/31/24

Lakewood
2023 approved without exception

Marion Oaks
Extension to 12/31/24

Mayport
2023 approved with exception

McIntosh
2023 approved without exception

Memorial
2023 approved without exception

Mikesville
Not reviewed

Murray Hill
2022 approved without exception
2023 approved without exception

Ocala First
2023 approved without exception

Orange Park
2023 approved without exception

Palatka
2023 approved without exception

Palms
2023 approved without exception

Peace
2023 approved without exception

Perry
2023 approved without exception

Riverside
2023 approved without exception

San Mateo
2023 approved without exception

Silver Springs Shores
2023 approved without exception

South Jacksonville
Extension to 12/31/24

St. Andrews
Not reviewed

St. Giles
2023 approved without exception

Starke
Not reviewed

Trinity
Not reviewed

Weirsdale
Extension to 12/31/24

Westminster
2023 approved without exception

White Springs
Not reviewed

Williston
Not reviewed

Woodlawn
2023 approved without exception



Valerie Young,
Synod Executive and Stated Clerk

November 15, 2023

Rev. Charlie Evans, Stated Clerk
Presbytery of St. Augustine
1937 University Blvd. West
Jacksonville, FL 32217

Dear Charlie,

At the November 14th meeting of the Synod of South Atlantic, a change to the synod's plan for election and participation was made that requires approval of a majority of presbyteries in the synod, in accordance with G-3.0401. The following was approved by the Assembly:

(excerpt from Manual of Operations)

Commissioners

When the Synod of South Atlantic meets, it shall consist of ~~the~~ thirty-eight (38) commissioners, thirty-two (32) elected from its constituent presbyteries and six (6) elected by the synod. Each presbytery shall elect two commissioners to staggered classes (one even year, one odd year): one Minister of the Word and Sacrament and one Ruling Elder, giving consideration to the issue of representation and inclusiveness as required by the *Book of Order*. The other six (6) commissioners shall be "At-Large" Commissioners intended to represent communities too long marginalized by the systems of the Church (BIPOC, LGBTQ). Of the six (6), three (3) shall be ruling elders, and three (3) Ministers of the Word and Sacrament, all of whom must come from different presbyteries and at least one from each state (South Carolina, Georgia, Florida).

Rationale: Currently, Commissioners are only elected by the presbyteries, which means the synod has limited ways of fulfilling our own mission priority to "Ensure full integration of diversity in all of its life and work". Recent changes to G-3.04 of the Book of Order allow for the enrollment of additional commissioners for the purposes of representation. The hope is to include more of those involved in synod-wide racial ethnic ministries and build a more inclusive body.

The synod would be grateful for your presbytery's consideration at its next meeting. I am available to answer any questions or speak about the plan if needed. I look forward to hearing the outcome from you as expeditiously as possible.

Sincerely,

Valerie Young,
Synod Executive & Stated Clerk

Exhibit F-1

Zoughbi Zoughbi is the founder and director of the Palestinian Conflict Transformation Centre in Palestine.

Zoughbi Zoughbi is a world renowned speaker, trainer, counselor, activist and writer. He has written and edited extensive articles, booklets and books on the interdisciplinary topics of justice, peace and reconciliation and also on oral history and didactic stories.

Zoughbi, has been involved with KAIROS since its inception where he has been always feeling uplifted by their spirited action and prophetic voice for Justice. Known by the name "Wi'am," the Arabic word meaning "cordial relationships," the center offers mediation, training, and psycho-social counseling to help resolve community disputes and alleviate the suffering of the people. It includes a trauma-coping program for children, leadership training for women, ending community violence, trying to eliminate violence against women and children, and nonviolence education programs.

"The Israeli occupation has created an alarming deterioration of political, economic, environmental, psychological status and social structures," said Zoughbi, who founded the center in 1994. "But even in the midst of this deterioration, I experience great joy in responding to people's needs and enhancing their hopes."

Wi'am was honored with the 2010 Peacebuilding Award in the World Vision International Peace Prize competition for "successfully integrating traditional Palestinian mediation customs with innovative academic models of conflict analysis to address the very difficult circumstances of Palestinians living in the occupied West Bank. Zoughbi was also granted international Peacemaker Award 1993 from Washington physicians for Social Responsibility.

Zoughbi at Wiam, the Palestinian Conflict Transformation Center, had the privilege of receiving the Carnall Peace Award for 2023 for "Working within the Palestinian community to spread the values of peace and justice through conflict mediation and transformation and restorative justice since 1994".

Exhibit G-1

Presbiterio de Matanzas
Matanzas, 28 de mayo de 2024

Presbítera Pastora Susan Rose
Presbítera Pastora Julie Higbee

Dear sisters in Christ,

"Grace and peace be multiplied in the knowledge of God and of our Lord Jesus" (2 Peter 1:2).

Our Presbytery appreciates and is infinitely grateful for the visit of Brother Presbytery of St. Augustine. Through their presence and exchange in the congregations they visited, they shared much of the hope and love of Christ, as expressed by the leaders and pastors of these communities.

We are also grateful for the shared help, which has been destined to support pastoral families, which in the midst of the difficult and deep crisis that the country is experiencing, continue faithful to the vocation and commitment to work in the work that God has entrusted to them together with the people of Cuba.

Without further ado, I am grateful to you, in our common Lord Jesus Christ,

PP. Anays Noda Linares
Moderadora del Presbiterio de Matanzas.

Exhibit G-2

Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada de Cuba
Presbiterio de Matanzas
Matanzas, 28 de mayo de 2024

Presbítera Pastora Susan Rose
Presbítera Pastora Julie Higbee

Querida hermana en Cristo. “Gracia y paz sean multiplicadas, en el conocimiento de Dios y de nuestro Señor Jesús” (2 Pedro 1,2).

Nuestro Presbiterio aprecia y agradece infinitamente la visita del hermano Presbiterio de San Agustín. Mediante su presencia y el intercambio en las congregaciones que visitaron compartieron mucho de la esperanza y el amor de Cristo, así lo expresaron los líderes y pastores de estas comunidades

También agradecemos la ayuda compartida, la cual ha sido destinada para apoyar a las familias pastorales, las cuales en medio de la difícil y profunda crisis que vive el país, continúan fieles a la vocación y compromiso de trabajar en la obra que Dios les ha encomendado junto al pueblo de Cuba.

Sin más, queda de ustedes agradecida, en nuestro común Señor Jesucristo,

PP. Anays Noda Linares
Moderadora del Presbiterio de Matanzas.

Exhibit H

OMNIBUS MOTION

(From the Coordinating Council)

1) That the attached Anti-Racism Policy be approved as a new policy of Presbytery.

Rationale: The Book of Order requires all councils to adopt and implement an anti-racism policy pursuant to G-3.0106.

2) That the attached Child Protection Policy be approved as a new policy of Presbytery.

Rationale: The Book of Order requires all councils to adopt and implement child protection policy pursuant to G-3.0106.

3) That the attached Boundary Training and Background Check Policy be approved.

Rationale: It moved and seconded at the Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of St. Augustine on February 3, 2024, that the Presbytery include in the appropriate policy the requirement that Presbytery conduct a mandatory national criminal background check for all ministers, CREs and CCEs serving in ministry in the Presbytery of St. Augustine at the beginning of their service and every three years thereafter; and that policy require all ministers, CREs and CCEs serving in ministry in the Presbytery of St. Augustine shall complete every three years training in the prevention of sexual misconduct and in protection of children and youth. Upon deliberation, it was then moved, seconded and carried to refer this motion to the Coordinating Council for further study and recommendation. Boundary Training is required every three years by the Book of Order G-3.0106.

4) That Presbytery Policy #28 (Resolution Clarifying and Reaffirming the Presbytery's Commitment to the Pastoral Counseling Center) be rescinded.

Rationale: The counseling centers referred to in this policy no longer exist.

5) That Presbytery Policy #30 (Scholarship Support For Pastoral Counseling Through the Gainesville Counseling Support Fund) be rescinded.

Rationale: The fund referenced has been replaced by the Community Ministry Fund as of the Presbytery meeting October 2023.

(From the Call Commission)

6) That Presbytery Policy #4 (Certified Christian Educators) be updated by the Stated Clerk to reflect current Book of Order citations and updated Presbytery Committee structures.

Rationale- No changes of substance are recommended. Our current committee structure and current Book of Order citations will replace the outdated ones.

7) That Presbytery Policy #6 (Authority Granted to Transfer Candidates between Meetings of Presbytery) be rescinded.

Rationale- Initially created in 1989, the policy is now unnecessary as the Call Commission is empowered by the Presbytery Manual of Operations to transfer Candidates.

8) That Presbytery Policy #13 (Guidelines for Collegial Relations Among Minister) be rescinded.

Rationale- Initially created during the time of reunion in 1983, this policy may have had a historical place in our Presbytery. The portions of this policy that are still appropriate currently exist in the Book of Order and in other policies. The portions of this policy that relate to “good behavior” are deemed unnecessary. Therefore, the entirety is recommended to be rescinded.

9) That Presbytery Policy #17 (Mentoring Policy for Incoming Clergy) be moved to an internal policy of the Call Commission and rescinded as a general policy of the Presbytery.

Rationale- The Mentoring Policy is a good policy for internal use by the Call Commission and should be used by the Call Commission for incoming clergy.

10) That Presbytery Policy #31 (Policy on Seminary Indebtedness) be rescinded.

Rationale- First created in 2005, this policy brought awareness to the issue of Seminary indebtedness. Since that time, many structures have been put in place by internal Call Commission efforts and by the Board of Pensions to help minimize Seminary indebtedness making this policy redundant to efforts both locally and nationally.

11) That Presbytery Policy #32 (Services of Installation and Ordination) remain in place, but to authorize the Stated Clerk to update the Book of Order citations to the current Book of Order and to define *coordinating the service with the “Presbytery office”* as coordinating with the Moderator of the Call Commission and the Moderator of Presbytery.

12) That Presbytery Policy #35 (Validating the Ministry of Continuing Members) be moved to an internal policy of the Call Commission and rescinded as a general policy of the Presbytery.

Rationale- This policy was first instituted in 2005. Subsequently, the Manual of Operations places the responsibility of validating a ministry within the Call Commission. The Call Commission will be presented with a revised internal Validated Ministry Policy, making this Presbytery policy no longer necessary.

Presbytery of St. Augustine Antiracism Policy and Statement
Adapted from the “Antiracism Statement” of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) A Corp

Our biblical and theological heritage calls us to love and serve all people, for we are equally beloved of God, with each person possessing the divine image within them. Our shared humanity calls us to live and work together toward God’s shalom. In Scripture we read,

So, God created humankind in his own image. In the image of God, he created them; male and female he created them. (Genesis 1:27) And,

Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by^[c] one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. (1 Corinthians 12:12-13)

In the Confessions we read,

God's reconciling love breaks down every form of discrimination based on racial or ethnic difference. (Confession of 1967) And,

We believe...that God’s lifegiving Word and Spirit has conquered the powers of sin and death, and therefore also of irreconciliation and hatred, bitterness, and enmity, that God’s lifegiving Word and Spirit will enable the church to live in a new obedience which can open new possibilities of life for society and the world.... (Belhar Confession)

In Facing Racism: A Vision of the Intercultural Community, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) affirms that “racism is the opposite of what God intends for humanity. ... [it] is a lie about our fellow human beings, for it says that some are less than others.”¹ We state unequivocally that racism and all forms of discrimination and marginalization are sins against humanity and God, inconsistent with our Christian and corporate values and unacceptable within our congregations and presbyteries.

Racism is a practice or system of racial prejudice exerted by those in power — institutionally and individually, consciously, and unconsciously — that is deeply ingrained in the history of the United States. Racism benefits people in the dominant culture socially, economically, and politically while disadvantaging people of color and people from minority cultures. However, for all persons, any racism corrupts the image of God within us. The task of dismantling racism must be a partnership that involves all levels of the church.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is an institution founded and historically run by white people that remains approximately 88% white. Closer to home, The Presbytery of St. Augustine is largely white, while the communities in which many of us live and serve are much more diverse. We must come to terms with those numbers and their implications for the work we do, and the audiences we reach.² We worship and work in a culture whose implicit, often unconscious bias assumes the primacy of white culture: its patterns of behavior and cultural assumptions regarding values and human vision.

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We understand that we may need to unlearn existing habits of thought and behavior that form our speech and our social interactions as well as reform our ecclesial structures and policies, for racism persists despite our expressed values and intentions. If we are to create an antiracist church where “all persons are treated with respect, all gifts are valued and encouraged, and diversity is a gift to be valued,”³ we will be open to courageous self-reflection, confession, and repentance that leads to transformed persons, relationships, policies, and habits of interacting with one another.

We recognize the strides we have made, even as we acknowledge there is more work to do. As we strive to be an antiracist church, we vigorously commit ourselves to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in our life together. Such a commitment to DEI requires that we commit to repent, review, require, and repair.

- We commit to repenting of the role we collectively and individually have played and continue to play in creating and maintaining systemic racism that implicitly biases white cultural practices.
- We commit to reviewing annually the presbytery’s own practices and implementing strategies to disrupt and dismantle systemic bias that presumes the primacy of white culture within our life together. To that end, we will offer educational workshops to better understand biases and deepen our cultural competency.
- We commit to requiring antiracism training of all Ministers of Word and Sacrament in permanent and temporary pastoral relationships, validated ministries, as well as members-at-large. This training is required to be taken once every four to five years. Further, the presbytery commits to requiring of itself that such antiracism training will be offered on an annual basis.⁴
- We commit to repairing the damages caused by racist policies by creating and investing in new strategies to ensure the church’s continuous advance away from past practices.⁵ Recognizing that oppression can come from both external and internal forces we will work to dismantle oppression in the church and in the world in all its forms, including working against internalized oppression.

(WHAT IS INTERNALIZED OPPRESSION? When people are targeted, discriminated against, or oppressed over a period of time, they often internalize (believe and make part of their self-image – their internal view of themselves) the myths and misinformation that society communicates to them about their group.)

3

Racial Equity,” on the Presbyterian Women’s website, https://www.presbyterianwomen.org/what_we_do/build-community/antiracism

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We acknowledge that this work will not be easy, but, as our church wide antiracism policy affirms: “Because of our biblical understanding of who God is and what God intends for humanity, the PCUSA must stand against, speak against, and work against racism. Antiracist effort is not optional for Christians. It is an essential aspect of Christian discipleship, without which we fail to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ.”⁶ Because of our biblical understanding of who God is and what God intends for humanity, the Presbytery of St. Augustine commits to seeking God’s Kingdom for all people.

When we gather as a Presbytery, we will lift up the names of the groups which originally occupied the land through corporate land acknowledgements. We will strive to structure our meetings so that they celebrate the fullness of humanity within our bounds. To that end, we will celebrate the culture and history of our diverse heritages. Normally our February meeting will include the celebration of African, Caribbean or both. Our May meeting will normally include the celebration of Pan Asia, Pacific Islander or both, and our October meeting will include the celebration of LatinX, Native American/Indigenous or both.

Additional Material

Appendix A:

Illustrative (but not exhaustive) List of Potential Topics for Anti-Racism Training

Biblical and Theological Grounding for Anti-Racism Work

Examine such texts as those mentioned in this policy, as well as other biblical and theological examples of how anti-racism work is foundational to ministry practice and community ethics for Christian congregations.

Definition of Anti-Racism:

The active process of identifying and eliminating racism by changing systems, organizational structures, policies and practices and attitudes, so that power is redistributed and shared equitably.⁶

Definition of Intersectionality

The ways systems of oppression overlap to create distinct experiences for people with multiple identity categories.

"If you're standing in the path of multiple forms of exclusion, you're likely to get hit by both." - Dr. Kimberle Crenshaw⁸

Four “I’s” of Concern

(1) Ideological—beliefs, values, and culture; (2) Interpersonal—individual behavior; (3) Institutional—policies and practices; and (4) Identity—self-reflection of inferiority.⁷

Cultural Competency Continuum

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(1) Cultural destructiveness; (2) Cultural incapacity; (3) Cultural Blindness; (4) Cultural Pre-Competency; (5) Cultural Competency; and (6) Cultural Proficiency.⁸

Implicit Bias toward Assuming Primacy of White Culture / Cultural Practices

(1) Focus on perfectionism, (2) Sense of urgency, (3) Defensiveness, (4) Quantity or quality, (5) Worship of the written word, (6) Only one right, (7) Paternalism, (8) Either/or thinking, (9) Power hoarding, (10) Fear of open conflict, (11) Individualism, (12) I'm the only one, (13) Progress is bigger or more, (14) Objectivity, (15) Right to comfort.⁹

Zones / Distinctions in Allyship

(1) Fear Zone, Learning Zone, Growth Zone; (2) White Fragility vs. Weaponized White Fragility; (3) Performative Allyship vs. Authentic Allyship.

Overt vs. Covert Racism

Overt: Lynching, Hate Crimes, Blackface, the N-word, Swastikas, Neo-Nazis, Racist Jokes, Racial Slurs, KKK, Cross Burning

Covert: Weaponized Whiteness, Expecting BIPOC to Teach Whites, Believing We Are "Post-Racial," "But We're All One Big Human Family," "There's Only One Human Race," Housing Discrimination, Bootstrap Theory, School-To-Prison Pipeline, Police Murdering BIPOC, Virtuous Victim Narrative, Higher BIPOC Infant/Maternal Mortality Rate, "But What About Me?," "All Lives Matter," BIPOC as Halloween Costumes, Racial Profiling,

A Partial list of Resources for Churches as they offer Training.

[Trouble the Water: Conversations to Disrupt Racism and Dominance – PMA/OGA film series](#)

[At The River: Struggle and Grace in the Segregated South](#)

[Sarah Augustine, The Land is Not Empty: Following Jesus in Dismantling the Doctrine of Discovery](#)

[Jemar Tisby, The Color of Compromise: The Truth About the American Church's Complicity in Racism](#)

[Carolyn Helsel, Anxious to Talk About it: Helping White People Talk Faithfully About Racism](#)

[Resmaa Menakem, My Grandmother's Hands](#)

[The Book of American Negro Poetry edited by James Weldon Johnson](#)

[Margaret Musgrove Ashanti to Zulu](#)

[Carol Beckwith and Angela Fisher, African Ceremonies](#)

[Daniel Banks, A Mighty King in Battle](#)

[Daniel Banks, Letters to Mr. Davis](#)

[The African Heritage Bible, edited by Dr. Cain Hope Felder](#)

[James H. Cone, A Black Theology of Liberation](#)

[Ibram X. Kendi, How to be Antiracist](#)

[Amanda Gorman, Call Us What We Carry](#)

[Ta-Nahesi Coates, Between the World and Me](#)

[Ibram X. Kendi, How to be an Anti-Racist](#)

[Ibram X. Kendi, Antiracist Baby](#)

[Bryan Stevenson Just Mercy](#)

[Bryan Stevenson Legacy Museum](#)

[Dr. Babara J. Brooks, One House, Block, Street, Community](#)
[Charles Eady, Hidden Freedom](#)
[Jeanne Theoharis, The Rebellious Life of Mrs. Rosa Parks](#)
[Dr. Carol Anderson, White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of Our Racial Divide](#)
[Dr. Carol Anderson, The Second](#)
[Danisha Huntley, Lost Land](#)
[Gilbert King, Devil in the Grove](#)
[Michelle Alexander, The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness](#)
[Wilkerson, Isabell The Origins of Our Discontents](#)
[Origin 2023 A film Based on the life of Isabell Wilkerson](#)

Visit YouTube and look for the Blue Eyes/Brown Eyes experiment.

There is a plethora of valuable material available for increasing one's knowledge and insight in this area, this list is just a sampling of some of the resources that others have found to be beneficial.

- 1 Facing Racism: A Vision of the Intercultural Community, 222nd General Assembly (2016) <https://facing-racism.pcusa.org/item/40835/>
- 2 "Black Lives Matter," on the Presbyterian Historical Society's website, <https://.history.pcusa.org/blog/2020/06/black-lives-matter>
- 3 See Appendix A on page 3 for a list of potential topics to address in that training. The list of topics is illustrative, not exhaustive, and represents the scope and focus of training topics to be offered. It is understood that future years and challenges may necessitate a different list of potential training topics.
- 4 As an example, the Civil Rights movement established the following: the 1965 Civil Rights Legislation and the 1964 Voting Rights Legislation, which include policy changes and investments to sustain the work of moving toward diversity, equity, and inclusion. As an example, taken from the context of our Native congregations, the General Assembly has acted to encourage mid-councils to consider donating a portion of funds received whenever a property is sold go to Native congregations for their benefit and rehabilitation.
- 5 Samantha Davis, presentation to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, May 2023. 8 Samantha Davis, *ibid*.
- 6 Facing Racism, *ibid*.
- 7 Josefina Ahumada, presentation to Presbytery de Cristo Leadership Commission, June 2021.
- 8 Tema Okun, "White Supremacy Culture," DRworks, www.dismantlingracism.org.

Exhibit H-3

Presbytery of St. Augustine Child Protection Policy

As part of our baptismal vows as members of the church of Jesus Christ, we promise to guide and nurture- by word and deed and with love and prayer- the children and youth within our care. Jesus reminds us in the Gospel of Matthew (19:14), “Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs.” As a presbytery, we endeavor to maintain the spiritual, emotional and physical safety of our children and youth in our care. Therefore, we require the following guidelines and practices be implemented.

1. All adult workers, paid and volunteer, sign and certify that they have read and understand the current Child Protection Policy in the Presbytery of St. Augustine.
2. Adult-children/youth ratios should be observed at all times.
3. Respect for the privacy of children, youth, and adults is expected at all times unless the health and safety of the individual is at risk.
4. Responsible use of digital devices and social media platforms is expected in all situations.
5. Children and youth are encouraged to immediately tell an adult about any inappropriate situations. If inappropriate activities are reported, the adult will immediately give the information to the supervising adult or the Lead Presbyter, the Stated Clerk, the Presbytery Moderator or the Chair of Council.
6. All adult workers, paid and volunteer, will abide by the adopted policies of Presbytery of St. Augustine, including the Sexual Misconduct Policy.

Florida Mandatory Reporting Statutes:

Chapter 39 of the Florida Statutes (F.S.) mandates that any person who knows, or has reasonable cause to suspect, that a child is abused, neglected, or abandoned by a parent, legal custodian, caregiver, or other person responsible for the child's welfare shall immediately report such knowledge or suspicion to the Florida Abuse Hotline of the Department of Children and Families, 1-800-962-2873. Abuse may be reported online [here](#).

More information from the Florida Department of Children and Families may be found [here](#).

The following information is taken from the PCUSA Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy. The full policy can be found [here](#).

Definitions:

Child: A child is defined as a person between the ages of 0–11

Youth: A youth is defined as a person between the ages of 12–17

Minor: A minor is defined as any child or youth between the ages of 0-17.

Ratios for adults, children and youth:

The adult to child ratio is 2:10, recommended for both in person and online gatherings.

The adult to youth ratio is 2:17, recommended for both in person and online gatherings.

Supervision requirements:

All children and youth workers must be at least 18 years old and four years older than the oldest youth whom they are serving.

Code of Conduct when working with Minors that emphasizes the following prohibited behaviors:

- Display of sexual affection toward a Minor.
- Discussion of sexual encounters with or around Minors.
- Involving Minors in personal problems or issues.
- Dating or becoming “romantically” involved with Minors.
- Using or being under the influence of alcohol, marijuana or illegal drugs in the presence of Minors.
- Possessing sexually oriented materials-including printed or online pornography- on Presbytery of St. Augustine property, or property being utilized for a church event.
- Having secrets with Minors.
- Staring at or commenting on the bodies of Minors.
- Engaging in inappropriate or unapproved electronic communication with Minors.
- Working one-on-one with Minors in a private setting.
- Abusing Minors, including but not limited to:
 - o Physical abuse: hit spank, shake, slap, unnecessarily restrain.
 - o Verbal abuse: degrade, threaten, curse.
 - o Sexual abuse: inappropriately touch, expose oneself, or engage in sexually oriented conversations.
 - o Mental abuse: shame, humiliate, act cruelly.
 - o Neglect: withhold food, water, or shelter.
 - o Permit Minors to engage in: hazing, bullying, derogatory name-calling, ridicule, humiliation, or sexual activity.

**Presbytery of St. Augustine
Policy on Background Checks and Boundary Training**

For Approval by Presbytery October 1, 2024

AWARENESS / TRAINING / BACKGROUND CHECKS

Scripture calls us to lead a life worthy of the calling to which we have been selected. We take this calling seriously therefore, in seeking to prevent sexual misconduct from occurring, the presbytery places emphasis on educating presbytery representatives concerning appropriate ethical conduct and boundary awareness.

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT POLICY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All incoming and current minister members in active service, commissioned pastors (CPs/CREs), certified Christian educators (CCEs), persons under care (Inquirers and Candidates or I&Cs) and presbytery staff enrolled or employed by the Presbytery shall receive this policy and sign a document stating that they have read and understood this policy. A signed copy of the acknowledgement page shall be returned to the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery by December 15, 2024. The Stated Clerk will report to the Call Commission on receipt of acknowledgements from all ministers, CCEs, CPs/CREs and I&Cs at the January, 2025 meeting of the Call Commission.

The process shall occur annually. The Presbytery shall include a copy of this policy in the materials distributed for the Fall Presbytery meeting. Signed acknowledgments will be reported to the Stated Clerk by December 15 to be processed as stated in the previous paragraph.

Exempt from this policy are those retired from active ministry and who remain inactive.

BOUNDARY TRAINING

All incoming and current ministers, CPs/CREs, CCEs, I&Cs and presbytery staff shall complete a course on maintaining appropriate boundaries, including abuse prevention. For incoming ministers, CPs/CREs, CCEs, I&Cs and presbytery staff, this shall be completed prior to serving a congregation/position within the bounds of the Presbytery. Upon adoption of this policy, all current active minister members, CPs/CREs, CCEs and I&Cs enrolled by the Presbytery and presbytery staff shall complete a course on maintaining appropriate boundaries, including abuse prevention, within the first three months of the adoption of this policy and every three years thereafter.

The Presbytery Communication and Training Team will be responsible for providing the boundary training when required by this policy. Boundary training will normally be offered at a Presbytery meeting, at another Presbytery-wide event and as additionally necessary as determined by the Communication and Training Team. The Communication and Training Team may offer training by in-person meetings, electronic meetings and/or recorded trainings as they may determine.

The Call Commission will provide to the Communication and Training Team the list of current active ministers, CPs/CREs CCEs and I&Cs upon adoption of this policy. The Call Commission will then inform the Communication and Training Team when an incoming minister, CP, CCE or I&C seeks to engage in ministry within the Presbytery. The Lead Presbyter will provide to the Communication and Training Team the list of current

Presbytery staff upon the adoption of this policy, and will then inform the Communication and Training Team when presbytery seeks incoming staff.

The Stated Clerk will report to the Call Commission annually on completion of boundary training by all ministers, CPs/CREs, CCEs and I&Cs. The Stated Clerk shall notify the Lead Presbyter regarding completion by presbytery staff.

BACKGROUND CHECKS

Upon adoption of this policy, all current active ministers, CPs/CREs, CCEs, I&Cs and Presbytery staff will be subject to a national criminal level 2 background check which shall include but is not limited to a check of the sexual offender registry. The Presbytery will cover the cost of the initial background check for a current active minister, CP, CCE, I&C or Presbytery staff. A national criminal level 2 background check will then be conducted every 5 years thereafter. The costs of the reoccurring background checks will be equally split between the Presbytery and the church/ministry/employer.

The Presbytery will cover the costs of the criminal background checks for all incoming ministers, CPs/CREs, CCEs, I&Cs and staff directly employed by the Presbytery. These checks shall be run before employment or service commences. In the event of an incoming minister, CP, CCE or I&C, the Call Commission will complete the background check prior to examining the minister, CP, CCE or I&C for Presbytery enrollment.

Those employed as camp staff and those that volunteer for special events (such as mission trips, disaster assistance, youth events, etc.) shall also be subject to background checks as outlined above.

If anyone subject to this policy has previously obtained a level 2 background check valid under the terms of this policy, then a release of that level 2 background check may be signed in lieu of obtaining a new level 2 background check.

PROCEDURES

The Presbytery Office will organize the background checks by providing disclaimer forms for signature and providing instructions on accessing the background check vendor used by the Presbytery. Returned background checks will be submitted to the Stated Clerk. Any background check that contains an item of concern will then be submitted by the Stated Clerk to the Lead Presbyter, Call Commission Moderator, Presbytery Moderator and Coordinating Council Moderator for further review.

Additional steps that may be taken for failure to complete boundary training and/or for critical items of concern discovered by the background check may include administrative leave, dissolution of the call/contract and any other relief deemed appropriate under the circumstances.

**28. RESOLUTION CLARIFYING AND REAFFIRMING THE PRESBYTERY'S COMMITMENT
TO THE PASTORAL COUNSELING CENTER**
Presbytery of St. Augustine

- I. Findings The Presbytery of St. Augustine hereby finds:
- A. The Presbytery of Suwannee began the Pastoral Counseling Center in 1971 as a ministry to the people of northeast Florida without regard to one's capacity to pay; it was also the intention of the presbytery to provide educational and training opportunities for church professionals at affordable rates.
 - B. It was understood in the original decision to begin the Pastoral Counseling Center that a continued subsidy would be necessary if the Center were to continue as a ministry to all persons including those of limited means, and to continue to provide training and educational opportunities for church professionals as a affordable rates. A goal was set for the Center to reach a level where 67% of its income was generated by fees and 33% was received as subsidy. At the present time the Center is generating about 80% of its income through fees and about 20% comes from subsidy.
 - C. Through continued efforts by the Center and despite inflation, the presbytery was able from 1971 through 1978 steadily to reduce the amount of its subsidy to the Center. By 1979 the Center had reached the maximum of efficiency and the rock-bottom in its need for subsidy; it has therefore requested the same level of funding plus a small increase to cover inflation.
 - D. The presbytery now has two partners in its sponsorship and subsidy of the Center: The Jacksonville United Methodist Mission Board (JUMMBO) and St. Mark's Episcopal Church. These two bodies joined the presbytery in order to expand the service of the Pastoral Counseling Center. They have been steadily giving inflationary increases in subsidy and manifest expectation and determination to continue.
 - E. The presbytery has determined that 1982 will have to be a year of financial stringency for all of its programs and services so that its budget processes can be reorganized on a firm basis. Therefore the Division of Corporate and Social Ministries has recommended that the Pastoral Counseling Center be given no inflationary increase for 1982, but that it be funded at the same level as 1981. Nevertheless, the presbytery is appreciative of the fact that at this time it appears that its two partners (JUMMBO and St. Marks) will provide an inflationary increase.
- II. Declaration of Policy It is the commitment and intention of Presbytery of St. Augustine:
- A. To continue its witness by its sponsorship of the Pastoral Counseling Center as a ministry to all persons regardless of their level of income and as a provider of educational and training opportunities to church professionals at affordable costs;
 - B. To encourage the Pastoral Counseling Center to continue its endeavor to establish sponsorship with other Christian ecumenical bodies with the goal of achieving parity in funding;
 - C. To declare its policy that so long as the same conditions prevail, and the goals of the Pastoral Counseling Center concur with those of the presbytery, and if the way be clear, that the presbytery shall continue to provide funding for the Pastoral Counseling Center at the same base level (\$18,200) with an increase annually to accommodate inflation after 1982;
 - D. That the Goals and Priorities Task Force of the presbytery be instructed to include as part of its studies of goals for the future, the place of the Pastoral Counseling Center in the presbytery's on-going goals;
 - E. That this statement of presbytery policy be transmitted to the Board of Directors of the Pastoral Counseling Center.

Adopted 27 October 1981

Exhibit H-6

**30. SCHOLARSHIP SUPPORT FOR PASTORAL COUNSELING
THROUGH THE GAINESVILLE COUNSELING SUPPORT FUND**

Presbytery of St. Augustine

As a result of a designated gift, funds are available on an annual basis for support of Presbyterians seeking crisis-counseling services in Gainesville. "Crisis counseling" may be taken to include a wide variety of mental and spiritual health needs, but does not extend to premarital counseling or career counseling services. The funds may be accessed by the following procedure:

1. Must have a written referral for counseling signed by PC(USA) minister.
2. Must obtain from the counselor a statement of the approximate cost of treatment.
3. Minister's referral, treatment plan, and cost estimate should be submitted to Ms. Nancy T. Brown, Presbytery of St. Augustine, 1937 University Blvd. West, Jacksonville, FL, 32217.
4. Funds are available to cover the cost of no more than three crisis-counseling sessions.

All applicants submitting required documentation will receive consideration on a first-come, first-serve basis until funds are exhausted for the year.

Adopted May 2001

4. CERTIFIED CHRISTIAN EDUCATORS

Presbytery of St. Augustine

A Christian Educator, sometimes called a Director of Christian Education, is a trained and/or experienced church professional, called by God to a profession of significant responsibility in the church. The following shall apply to all Certified Christian Educators employed full time and persons currently seeking certification and to their employing churches or church related agencies.

A. Calling Process for Churches Seeking Full Time Certified Educators or Educators in the Process of Certification

Persons seeking positions as Certified Christian Educators shall complete and place on file with the presbytery the Personal Information Form. Every church or church related agency seeking to call a Certified Christian Educator shall notify the Member Preparation and Call Commission. Thereupon, a Church Vacancy Consultant will be appointed to work with the church or church related agency search committee, and the Education Vacancy Information Form will be completed. No person shall be called to work in a particular church or church related agency until the Member Preparation and Call Commission has granted approval.

B. Recognition of Certified Christian Educators

The Member Preparation and Call Commission will include in its report to presbytery the recognition of Certified Christian Educators within the bounds who have recently completed the certification process or of Certified Educators moving into the Presbytery of St. Augustine. The Educator will present to the Presbytery a brief statement of faith and work history.

Every calling session shall recognize the Certified Christian Educator with an appropriate installation ceremony at which a representative of the Member Preparation and Call Commission shall be present. This public worship service shall be coordinated with the representative of the Member Preparation and Call Commission.

C. Status of Certified Christian Educators within the Presbytery of St. Augustine

A Certified Christian Educator is one who has complied with the procedures outlined above and who is now engaged in Christian Education in a particular church or ministry validated by this presbytery, or who is participating in the life and work of this presbytery, or who is honorably retired. A Certified Christian Educator is granted the privilege of the floor of the presbytery.

The Member Preparation and Call Commission will make an annual report to the presbytery on the status of Certified Christian Educators within the bounds of the Presbytery of St. Augustine.

D. Presbytery Meetings

All Certified Christian Educators are expected to attend meetings of the Presbytery of St. Augustine and to participate in the life and work of the presbytery.

E. Oversight and Support

The Leadership Development and Care Committee will provide events for educators and heads of staff for the opportunity to clarify mutual expectations, to enhance communication, and to develop effective team ministries.

The Member Preparation and Call Commission will employ the same procedures and guidelines established for ordained/installed clergy regarding the Certified Christian Educator's inclusion with session visits and exit interviews. The Leadership Development and Care Committee will provide newly employed Certified Christian Educators a mentor. The Leadership Development and Care Committee will provide an annual continuing education event for Certified Christian Educators. The Certified Christian Educator will have access to the Leadership Development and Care Committee for support, advice, resolution of difficulties, and pastoral care. (G-11.0503)

F. Guidelines for Compensation and Benefits

The compensation standards recommended by the Church Vocations Ministry Unit of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall be used to help determine the compensation and benefits for Certified Christian Educators.

The minimum salary terms of the Presbytery of St. Augustine established for clergy shall be followed when calling a Certified Christian Educator.

G. Resolution of Difficulties

No church shall dismiss a Certified Christian Educator from its employment without first consulting with the Member Preparation and Call Commission. Any Certified Christian Educator with a grievance against his/her employer is encouraged to first consult with the moderator and session and/or personnel committee in an attempt to resolve the problem, but may not be denied the opportunity to consult with and seek advice and counsel from the Member Preparation and Call Commission in compliance with G-14.0704 of the Book of Order.

H. Non-Certified Christian Educators

While the above guidelines relate to Certified Christian Educators, the Member Preparation and Call Commission encourages sessions to apply the same guidelines to non-certified Christian Educators. Non-Certified Christian Educators are encouraged to complete educational requirements and to seek certification under the process provided for such certification.

Adopted 1 May 1990
Amended 14 July 2007
Amended 1 January 2018

**6. AUTHORITY GRANTED TO TRANSFER CANDIDATES
BETWEEN MEETINGS OF PRESBYTERY**

Presbytery of St. Augustine

The presbytery grants authority to the Member Preparation and Call Commission to dismiss candidates between meetings of the presbytery, with the provision that all such actions shall be reported to the next stated meeting of the presbytery [G-10.0103v].

Adopted 28 April 1989
Amended 1 January 2018

13. GUIDELINES FOR COLLEGIAL RELATIONS AMONG MINISTERS

Presbytery of St. Augustine

The rules of ministerial relationships have, for the most part, been unwritten. These guidelines are presented for the purpose of maintaining integrity in the practice of ministry.

1. Speech And Conduct: Like all Christians, ministers should try to shape their speech and conduct so that it is patterned after Paul's counsel to think about whatever is honorable, pure, lovely, gracious, excellent, and worthy of praise. Acting as God's Servants, they should speak the truth in love. They should use understanding, tact, and discretion, with a sense of respect for all people, a spirit of fairness and decency, and a concern for the Christian community. Their motives should be honest and sincere in desiring to build up the body of Christ. In speaking of fellow ministers, it should be remembered that making disparaging statements is destructive of the peace, unity, and purity of the Church. At all times, Ministers of the Word and Sacrament should strive to share faith, hope, and love in all their relationships.
2. Services For Members Of Another Church: A minister who is called upon to officiate at a wedding, funeral, or baptism for families who are not members of one's own congregation, should ascertain whether they are members of a different church. If they are members of another congregation, they should be urged to procure the services of their own pastor. If that effort fails, the minister should seek to inform their pastor regarding this request and explain the circumstances prior to acting.
3. Calling On Members Of Neighboring Churches: The first responsibility of pastors is to their own flock, and they should concentrate in their calling on the members of their own congregation. They should not call upon persons who are members of another church unless the initiative and interest shown by such persons require it as a courtesy.
4. Multiple Staff Relationships: In staff relationships, as in all intra-church relationships, the objective is to work together with a spirit of cooperation in building up the whole Church. To this end, the ministers should be understanding for one another, accept each other as persons, respect each other's competencies, offer constructive suggestions to one another, forgive misunderstandings, and be tolerant of differences of opinion and style of operation.

A staff person should not aspire to succeed any other person on the staff. Innuendo and gossip should be avoided. Staff members should be encouraged to speak openly and frankly to each other about their differences. Loyal support between members of the staff is a tremendous help toward building a good team. This is as true for parish associates as for other staff.
5. When A Minister Leaves A Parish: When the relationship between a minister and a church is dissolved, the minister should publicly announce that he or she will no longer be available for pastoral services to the members of that church. Thereafter, the minister should fulfill that announced intention by resolutely declining all requests from members of that church to conduct baptisms, weddings, funerals, and other pastoral offices for them. A former pastor, associate pastor, or interim pastor may be called upon for services upon invitation of the present pastor; however, they should not seek or encourage such invitation, but should seek instead to strengthen the ties between the former flock and their present shepherd. During the interim before a pastor is called, they may be called upon to conduct ministerial services. If there is an interim pastor, the same courtesies should be accorded to the interim pastor as to a new pastor. If there is no interim pastor the former pastor may serve as called upon and as approved by the Session. Upon leaving a church they should exercise care in influencing their former congregation either by conversation, correspondence, or other action. They shall seek to be supportive of the new pastor and of the program, policies, and activities of the former church.
6. The Interim Pastor: The purpose of an interim pastor is to prepare a particular congregation for the coming of a new pastor. Interim pastors will not seek to mold loyalties to themselves, but rather to the pastoral office, and, above all, loyalties to Christ and to the Church.
7. Relations To One's Successor in Ministry: When a pastor is called to another parish or retires, due care should be exercised not to influence either by direction or indirection, either by spoken or written word, the selection of the ministerial successor or the successor's ministerial policies. If a minister visits a former parish special discretion is required. It would be proper, in such instances, to pay one's respects to one's successor in ministry. Frequent visits to one's former parish are to be avoided.

8. Relations To One's Predecessor In Ministry: Successors also have a responsibility to be courteous to their predecessors. Moreover, wise pastors might strengthen the acceptability of their own ministry among the people by seeking appropriate occasions in which the former minister(s) can be included.

Nevertheless, the burden of responsibility between predecessors and successors, though mutual, is not entirely commensurate. It is the present pastor who now carries the load, but it is the former pastor who, in most instances, enjoys the longer ties of loyalty. Therefore, though the obligation of courtesy rests equally on both, the obligation of self-restraint rests more heavily upon the former pastor than on the incumbent.

9. The Minister And Retirement: Retired ministers and spouses who remain in the community of their last parish bear an especially heavy obligation of self-restraint in the matters expressed in the four preceding articles of these guidelines. Retired ministers and their spouses shall ordinarily seek congregations other than the congregation of their last active service in which to worship for a period of not less than two years following retirement.

10. At-Large Ministers: All at-large ministers should respect the position of the parish pastors regarding all ministerial functions within the community. Weddings, funerals, and baptisms should not be accepted by the at-large minister unless an invitation has been given by the pastor of the church involved. At-large ministers ordinarily should not counsel with nor advise former members concerning problems in their churches but should encourage them to seek the counsel of their pastors.

Adopted 4 February 1983
Amended 1 February 1985
Amended 14 July 2007

17. MENTORING POLICY FOR INCOMING CLERGY
Presbytery of St. Augustine

The Presbytery of St. Augustine uses mentors as a way of welcoming, introducing, and orienting new clergy to the life and work of the presbytery. It is meant to supplement the New Ministers' Orientation event led by the presbytery staff.

Mentors are fellow clergy who are experienced members of the presbytery, familiar with its staff, procedures, policies, and resources. They are persons willing and able to share their wisdom and information with newcomers in ways that are supportive and constructive to a new member. They are also persons who are friendly, outgoing, and ready to be helpful to a new colleague. Mentors are selected and appointed by the Member Preparation and Call Commission at the time of the reception of an incoming new member.

The mentoring relationship is expected to last at least six months in the case of experienced incoming ministers, and one year in the case of first-call ministers.

Mentoring consists of the following tasks:

1. Welcoming – The mentor is expected to find ways to welcome the incoming minister into the fellowship of the presbytery. Such ways may include, but are not limited to:

- a. Calling the new minister within 7 days of being asked to serve as a mentor
- b. Making appointments for lunch or dinner and conversation; it is especially welcoming to include the incoming minister's spouse in some of these invitations
- c. Arranging to share transportation to and/or sitting next to the incoming minister at the next meeting of presbytery, and introducing him/her to others at the meeting
- d. Writing a short note to the incoming minister, expressing welcome
- e. Checking in with the incoming minister periodically to see if there are questions or concerns

2. Shared Study and Resources – Particularly in the case of first-call clergy, the mentor can help continue the learning process of theological education by selecting a recent book on the practice of ministry for shared study and conversation. The presbytery resource center maintains a large collection of such works, and the Alban Institute provides a significant bibliography of excellent works in this area. Presbytery will provide up to \$50.00 per mentor/incoming minister pair in support of book purchases.

Mentors may also find it helpful to introduce the incoming minister to prayer groups or lectionary study groups of which the mentor is part.

At the very least, the mentor should make opportunities to discuss the ministry context of the incoming minister, and to suggest such resources from the presbytery as may be helpful.

3. Encouragement – The early months of a new parish are at once the most exciting and the most daunting. One of the primary functions of the mentor is to offer a listening ear, patient encouragement, and reliable support to the incoming minister.

If the mentor detects issues of larger concern, such as mental health concerns, conflict in the church, or family adjustment concerns, the mentor should ask the permission of the incoming minister to share these concerns with presbytery staff, or should encourage the incoming minister to share them with staff directly.

4. Reporting – The mentor is expected to make two reports to the Member Preparation and Call Commission during the mentoring period, indicating what activities were shared with the incoming minister, and sharing any concerns the mentor has. Reports to the Member Preparation and Call Commission will ordinarily remain confidential within the committee.

Adopted 10 July 2004
Amended 1 January 2018

31. POLICY ON SEMINARY INDEBTEDNESS
Presbytery of St. Augustine

The Presbytery of St. Augustine believes that the burden of indebtedness carried by many recent seminary graduates seriously impairs their ability to function responsibly in ministry and threatens the freedom with which they can hear and follow the call of God's Spirit in the service of the Church. Toward that end, it adopts the following policy on seminary indebtedness for both its own candidates and those recent seminary graduates whom it receives and installs into first calls.

For Those in Preparation for Ministry within the Presbytery

The Member Preparation and Call Commission shall:

- 1) Strongly encourage all inquirers and/or candidates to participate in at least one "Fiscal Fitness" seminar sponsored by the Board of Pensions during their seminary career, or to meet with a regional representative of the Board of Pensions or other financial planner to assess net worth and to begin developing financial plans to pay seminary costs.
- 2) Inquire in each annual consultation or candidacy review about the inquirer/candidate's level of indebtedness. If the level of indebtedness exceeds 40% of the denominational median pastoral salary as reported by the Board of Pensions, the inquirer/candidate will be referred to financial counseling to develop a plan for dealing with the debt.
- 3) Make available as requested by candidates or inquirers a list of options for pursuing grants and interest free loans and other funding such as is available through the Financial Aid for Studies Office of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and through the seminary financial aid office.
- 4) Inform the congregation of which the inquirer/candidate is a member and other congregations as appropriate, when the inquirer/candidate has incurred a high degree of indebtedness and advocate the generation of greater financial support for the candidate.

For Those Ordained to First Calls within the Presbytery

Member Preparation and Call Commission shall:

- 1) Require that any minister who is installed in a first call and who carries educational indebtedness greater than 40% of the median pastoral salary as reported by the Board of Pensions show evidence of having attended a financial planning workshop, such as the Fiscal Fitness workshop sponsored by the Board of Pensions; or to attend such a workshop within the first year of ministry; expenses for the workshop including registration fees, accommodation, and travel to such a workshop shall be considered legitimate reimbursable expenses from study leave allowance.
- 2) Encourage calling congregations to utilize further debt reduction as a part of the salary package for a prospective pastor who is a recent seminary graduate. Information about seminary indebtedness, including this policy and the Board of Pensions Seminary Debt Assistance Program, shall be included with the material given to each PNC during its orientation.

Adopted 03 May 2005

Amended 1 January 2018

**32. SERVICES OF INSTALLATION/ORDINATION
FOR A MINISTER OF THE WORD AND SACRAMENT
THE PRESBYTERY OF ST. AUGUSTINE**

“The service of ordination and installation, or commissioning, may take place during the Service for the Lord’s Day as a response to the proclamation of the Word (W-3.3503). Ordination and Installation, or Commissioning, may also take place in a special service that focuses upon Jesus Christ and the mission and Ministry of the church and which includes the proclamation of the Word. The service of installation of a pastor or associate pastor shall be conducted at a convenient time to enable the substantial participation of the presbytery.” (Book of Order, W-4.4002)

1. The service of ordination and/or installation of a minister is an act of presbytery.
2. The service of ordination and/or installation of a minister in the Presbytery of St. Augustine shall take place at a time that allows for substantial participation on the part of the minister members of the presbytery.
3. The minister being ordained and/or installed, together with the session of the church, shall coordinate with the presbytery office in scheduling the service.
4. The presbytery office will publish an invitation to all minister members of the presbytery to the service. This will be done by e-mail to each minister member.
5. The commission for ordination and/or installation shall conform to the requirements of the *Book of Order* (G-9.0504b3). The Moderator of the presbytery or his/her designee shall moderate the commission.
6. The service of ordination and/or installation shall conform to the requirements of the *Book of Order* (W-4.4000) and shall use some or all of the resources of the Services of Ordination and Installation in *The Book of Occasional Services*. The Member Preparation and Call Commission Moderator, Stated Clerk, or Relationship Coordination Director shall be available to assist the minister being ordained and/or installed to plan the service.
7. The date of the Service shall be listed on the calendar of the Presbytery of St. Augustine.
8. An offering shall be received at each service of ordination and/or installation for the benefit of the presbytery’s Candidate Support Fund.

Adopted 02 February 2010

Amended 1 January 2018

35. VALIDATING THE MINISTRY OF CONTINUING MEMBERS
Presbytery of St. Augustine

NOTE: THE NEW OPERATIONS MANUAL SUPERCEDES THIS POLICY IN ALLOWING THE MEMBER PREPARATION AND CALL COMMISSION TO APPROVE VALIDATED MINISTRIES RATHER THAN RECOMMENDING THEM TO THE PRESBYTERY.

Preamble

The *Book of Order* requires that presbyteries develop written criteria for validating the ministries of continuing members. The principles that shape these criteria are drawn from the description of the office of Minister of Word and Sacrament and the description of the presbytery's responsibility for validating ministries:

While the ministry is one, specific forms of ministry may emphasize special tasks and skills and the ordering of the offices of ministry shall reflect this variety. There may be forms of ministry in which primary emphasis is given to proclamation of the Word and the celebration of the Sacraments, forms that stress deeds of love and mercy, forms that are primarily educational, administrative, legislative, or judicial, and forms that are primarily prophetic (G-6.0104)

When ministers are designated as educators, chaplains, pastoral counselors, campus ministers, missionaries, partners in mission, evangelists, administrators, social workers, consultants, or in other specific tasks appropriate to the ministry of the church, they shall evidence a quality of life which helps to share the ministry of the good news. They shall exercise pastoral care of those for whom they are responsible and shall seek to fulfill their ministry by serving Christ and their fellow men and women, strengthening the church and equipping it for concern and service to the life of the human community. In addition to fulfilling the particular responsibilities to which they are called, they shall participate in a congregation, in their presbytery, and in ecumenical relationships, and shall be eligible for election to the higher governing bodies of the church and to the boards and agencies of those governing bodies. (G-6/0203)

A presbytery shall determine the ministers of the Word and Sacrament who shall be its continuing members. In making this determination the presbytery shall be guided by written criteria developed by the presbytery for validation of ministries within its bounds. These criteria shall be based upon the description of the nature of ordained office found in G-6.0100 and G-6.0200 and the following standards:

- a. The ministry of continuing members shall be in demonstrable conformity with the mission of God's people in the world as set forth in Holy Scripture, *The Book of Confessions*, and the *Book of Order* of this church.
- b. The ministry shall be one that serves others, aids others, and enables the ministries of others.
- c. The ministry shall give evidence of theologically informed fidelity to God's Word. This will normally require the Master of Divinity degree or its equivalent and the completion of the requirements for ordination set forth in G-14.0402.
- d. The ministry shall be carried on in accountability for its character and conduct to the presbytery and to organizations, agencies, and institutions.
- e. The ministry shall include responsible participation in the deliberations and work of the presbytery and in the worship and service of a congregation. (G-11.0403)

In addition to these references, the presbytery's own Mission and Values Statements shape its consideration of valid ministries within its bounds:

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Presbytery of St. Augustine is to serve Jesus Christ by strengthening our congregations in their ministries and enabling us to accomplish together what none could accomplish alone.

VALUES STATEMENT

In these early years of the 21st Century, the priorities of the Presbytery of St. Augustine are:

- Spreading the Gospel and founding new churches
- Educating people for discipleship
- Working for justice, righteousness, inclusiveness, and reconciliation
- Nurturing spiritual growth with theological integrity
- Developing creative forms of ministry while valuing our Reformed heritage
- Holding ourselves accountable to and responsible for one another
- Respecting our differences without sacrificing our unity in Christ. (*Manual of Operations*, Presbytery of St. Augustine)

I. Validation and Review of Ministries within Congregations

The approval by the Member Preparation and Call of a call to a valid ministry within a congregation (G-11.0409) shall be considered validation of that ministry.

The annual report of Member Preparation and Call Commission of the type of work and salary compensation of each minister in congregational service (G-11.0502, 11.0103n) shall serve as the annual review of the service of each minister so engaged.

The presbytery, acting through its triennial visit process, shall review the character and conduct of ministers engaged in service within congregations. Results of the triennial visit process are reported to the Member Preparation and Call Commission upon completion of the visit. The Member Preparation and Call Commission shall, at its discretion, recommend actions to the presbytery arising from the triennial visit report or other interactions undertaken in the execution of Member Preparation and Call Commission responsibilities (G-11.0502).

II. Validation and Review of Ministries in Other Service of the Church

The approval of a call to other service of the church, either as extended by the presbytery for service on its staff or recommended by the Member Preparation and Call Commission and consistent with the terms of G-11.0410, shall be considered validation of that ministry.

The annual report of Member Preparation and Call Commission of the type of work and salary compensation of each minister in other service of the church (G-11.0502, 11.0103n) shall serve as the annual review of the service of each minister so engaged.

For minister members of the presbytery staff, the annual and five-year reviews called for in the *Manual of Operations* and conducted by the Personnel Committee shall serve as annual and major reviews of the validation of that ministry.

III. Criteria for Validating Ministries Beyond the Jurisdiction of the Church

The standards of G-11.0403a-e shall serve as broad criteria for the validation of ministry beyond the jurisdiction of the church. In considering an application for validation of such a ministry, the Member Preparation and Call Commission shall determine whether or not these standards have been met. Applicants for validation shall demonstrate the validity of proposed ministries in the following specific ways:

A. Demonstrable conformity with the mission of God's people in the world, as set forth in Holy Scripture, the Book of Confessions, and the Book of Order.

This criterion shall be satisfied by the submission of a brief essay describing the ways in which the ministry proposed for validation is consistent with and/or embodies the mission and values of the Presbytery of St. Augustine as outlined in the Mission and Values Statements of the *Manual of Operations*. In addition, the ministry so described shall be assessed by the Member Preparation and Call Commission as to its consistency with Scripture and the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A).

B. Service and/or aid to others, or enables the ministry of others

"The primary thrust of the work being validated is toward serving people. Conversely, it implies that its primary thrust is not toward profit-making activities. This does not suggest that a person in a profit-making position cannot perform ministry; many lay persons do. Nor does it imply that the minister cannot be employed in a profit-making enterprise. The primary functions of one's work, however, should relate to the service of people rather than to the production of goods or of profits." (PCUSA Handbook)

This criterion shall be satisfied by the submission of a brief essay describing the nature of the ministry for which validation is sought (or by the submission of a job description in which the responsibilities of the ministry are detailed). The essay shall make clear the specific aspects of the ministry through which others are served and/or encouraged to serve others.

C. Theologically informed fidelity to God's Word

"The work to which the continuing member is called [shall make] active and effective use of the biblical and theological training that is required for ordination. Normally, this means that such work should provide opportunities to articulate the Christian faith." (PCUSA handbook)

This criterion shall be satisfied by the submission of a brief essay indicating the specific ways in which theological education supports and nurtures the work of the ministry and/or the types of anticipated opportunities for articulating the Christian faith presented by the ministry. It is understood that not all articulation of the faith is verbal; Christian faith may be articulated in acts of compassion and self-sacrifice as well as through verbal proclamation.

D. Accountability for its character and conduct

This criterion shall be satisfied in both of the following ways:

- 1) Submission of a brief written statement (or attachment of separate documentation) indicating
 - a) the persons, entities, or agencies to whom the minister is accountable for the character and conduct of the ministry, whether or not the ministry is compensated, and/or
 - b) the ethical standards of any professional organizations or associations of which the minister is a member in connection with the exercise of this ministry; and
- 2) Regular review by the Member Preparation and Call Commission through
 - a) Annual written reports on the minister's place of residence and performance of the ministry, submitted to the stated clerk of the presbytery, and
 - b) At least one in-person interview with Member Preparation and Call Commission or its designees every three years, unless an exception is granted by the commission.

E. Responsible participations in the deliberations and work of presbytery, and worship and service in a local congregation

This criterion shall be satisfied by both of the following:

- 1) by attestation by the stated clerk of the presbytery that the minister has been in attendance at presbytery at least once in the year previous to application for or review of validation and that the annual report of residence and work has been received for that same year. If the minister seeking validation comes from another presbytery, the stated clerk shall request attestation from the stated clerk of the transferring presbytery. If the person seeking validation is a candidate, the stated clerk shall request evidence of certification of readiness for ministry from the Committee on Preparation for Ministry (or similar body) of the presbytery of care, and
- 2) by written affirmation from the applicant that he or she is a regular participant in the worship and service of a congregation of God's people.

IV. Process for Approval and Review

A. Approval of Application for Validation of Ministry

- 1) The minister or candidate seeking validation for a particular ministry shall complete the Application for Validation of a Ministry and submit the application to the stated clerk or Moderator of the Member Preparation and Call Commission no later than 2 weeks before the date of the Member Preparation and Call Commission meeting at which the application is to be considered.
- 2) The Member Preparation and Call Commission Moderator shall place the application on the agenda of the committee and, if deemed appropriate, schedule an interview for the minister with all or part of the Member Preparation and Call Commission.
- 3) The Member Preparation and Call Commission shall consider the application and recommend to the presbytery whether or not the ministry should be validated.
- 4) At its next stated meeting, the presbytery shall consider the Member Preparation and Call Commission recommendation and shall determine whether or not to validate the ministry.
- 5) If the ministry is validated, the minister or candidate shall be commissioned by action of the presbytery. A commissioning liturgy may be celebrated by the presbytery to mark the beginning of the ministry.
- 6) The stated clerk shall notify the minister or candidate in writing of the decision of the presbytery.

B. Review of Validation

- 1) Annual Review

The minister engaged in a ministry validated by the presbytery shall report annually concerning the following:

- Current mailing address, telephone number, and (if available) email address
- Character and conduct of the ministry accomplished in the time since validation or previous review
- Any changes in the character and conduct of the ministry anticipated for the coming year.

The report shall be submitted to the stated clerk no later than 30 April of each year, and shall be reviewed by the Member Preparation and Call Commission and reported to the presbytery, ordinarily at its stated fall meeting. The Member Preparation and Call Commission may, and in the case of recommendation to rescind validation shall, interview the minister concerning the report and the character and conduct of the ministry.

- If the Member Preparation and Call Commission recommends continuing validation of the ministry, this action may be included in the consent agenda for the presbytery meeting
 - If the Member Preparation and Call Commission recommends rescinding validation of the ministry, it shall report its findings and reasons for so recommending to the presbytery, and the minister shall be offered opportunity to respond.
- 2) Major Review

At least once every three years after the validation of a ministry, the Member Preparation and Call Commission shall conduct an in-person interview with the minister to inquire into the ongoing character and conduct of the minister. This triennial review shall replace the annual review for that year. The content of the interview shall include, but may not be limited to:

- Conduct and activity of the ministry
- Goals for the ministry
- Long-range plans of the minister for continuing education or other personal and professional growth
- Ways in which the presbytery can be of greater support to the minister.

On the basis of this interview, the Member Preparation and Call Commission shall recommend to the presbytery whether or not to continue the validation of the ministry, under the same terms as the annual review.

If being present in person for the triennial interview poses a significant hardship for the minister, the Member Preparation and Call Commission may, at its discretion, choose some other means by which to conduct a conversation about the character and accomplishments of the ministry (e.g., on-line electronic discussion, telephone interview, etc.)

Adopted 18 October 2005

Amended 1 January 2018



PRESBYTERIAN YOUTH

TRIENNIUM 2025

JULY 28 –31, 2025

LOUISVILLE, KY

Presbytery of St. Augustine

CALLING ALL RISING JUNIOR, SENIOR AND 2025

HIGH SCHOOL GRADS

**We want you to join our presbytery delegation for
this AMAZING PCUSA YOUTH CONFERENCE!**

**JOIN THOUSANDS OF OTHER YOUTH FOR EXCITING
WORSHIP, RECREATION AND SMALL GROUP EVENTS**

COST: \$1000(approximately)

**Travel and Chaperones arranged by the Presbytery
Young Adults 19—23yrs can apply for Work Crew and
serve as PYT staff behind the scenes**

**Watch the Presbytery of St. Augustine website for
additional information and registration process.**

**Conference at the Louisville Convention Center and
Housing in Local Hotels**

More Info Contact Vickie Bossuot 904-472-6376



Opening to Grace Retreat Day

Explore the *Unique* Way God is Working in You

Friday November 22, 2024

9:30 am to 5:00 pm

Riverside Park United Methodist Church Parlor

819 Park St, Jacksonville, FL 32304

This retreat will give you an opportunity to:

Experience a model of healing ministry that integrates Gestalt growth work with spiritual companionship and healing prayer. Gestalt Pastoral Care trusts that God desires to heal holistically--- body, mind, spirit, emotions, and social context---in a way that is unique to each person.



- **Fee: \$75.00 for Full Participant (Limit of 5)**
Includes the opportunity for personal healing work
- **\$50.00 for Observer Intercessor (No limit)**
**Fully present to the healing work as witness
and prayer, without time for personal healing work**

Meals: Drinks, snacks and lunch provided as part of fee

Facilitator: Susan Silhan
United Methodist Deaconess
Gestalt Pastoral Care Minister/Trainer

For more info contact susan.silhan@gestaltpastoralcare.org

Register at: gestaltpastoralcare.org

Financial Assistance Available information on the website

Exhibit J-1

Moderator-Elect of Presbytery

Barbara Darby RE F B Woodlawn

Coordinating Council

Ben Hawkins	RE M B	Woodlawn	Class_of 2027
Rev Adam Anderson	TE M W	South Jax	Class of 2027
Rev. Robert Scott (unexpired term)	TE M W	Fort King	Class of 2025

Board of Trustees – Presbytery

Rev. Larry Graham-Johnson (recommended by Ana Lugo)	TE M W	St. Andrews	Class_of 2027
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Call Commission

Jessi Higginbotham	TE F W	St. Giles	Class_of 2027
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Montgomery Board

Cynthia Montgomery (fill unexpired term)	TE F W		Class_of 2026
Vickie Frameli	RE F W	Murray Hill	Class of 2027

Presbytery Disaster Commission

Joe Albright	TE M W	Geneva	
John Booth	RE M	Westminster	

Ordination Exam Readers

Rev. Becca Putnam	TE F W	Westminster	2 nd Year
Reginald Touchton	RE M W	Fort Caroline	1 st Year
Greg McMillan	RE M W	South Jax	2 nd Year
Rev. Adam Anderson	TE M W	South Jax	1 st Year



From the Director's Desk

September 24, 2024

I was recently asked by a long-time Montgomery supporter, "I hear there are changes coming to Montgomery. Can you tell me more about what to expect?"

"Of course!" I responded, "Many changes are occurring behind the scenes. The biggest change I hope you will see is the improved quality standards of hospitality and housekeeping." One thing hasn't changed: we have no money. Montgomery has been running a deficit for at least a decade. We struggle to keep up with decades of deferred maintenance.

But we have hope! "Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see." Hebrews 11:1 Hope, however, is not a strategy. God always provides, but He doesn't want us to sit idly by waiting for a miracle.

There are several opportunities that could directly impact the future of Montgomery, including:

1. The sale of approximately 20 acres of undeveloped land at the front of the property could save the ministry from the compounding financial struggles. We are simultaneously researching a conservation easement in the same area to protect the threatened gopher tortoise habitat.
2. With the pledge of not one, but TWO matching gifts of \$100,000, every dollar that you give is doubled with a little help from our friends! Gifts may be made by check, with "matching gift" in the memo line, or by giving online through our [secure giving platform](#).
3. Our CPA completed the paperwork last July for ERC funds and found us eligible for \$164,000. There have been delays in fund distribution due to widespread fraud, but we prayerfully anticipate receiving the funds by year's end.
4. A local realtor estimated monthly rent at the Lakehouse from \$2000 to \$2500. This adds to our revenue potential as a long-term rental, or short-term rentals as a retreat house. However, there are tax implications for rental property, and so more research is needed. The house needs about \$10k in repairs and a new roof to be habitable.

Would you join us in praying that if the way be cleared, we would follow faithfully in the direction God is leading? More than anything, we want to be sure that we *never end up in this situation again*. We cannot pursue these opportunities without also taking a hard look at our operations. We have a team in place currently scrutinizing every penny of income and expense from the past year to evaluate our financial viability. We are working with a business executive (on loan from DCSI, thank you) to guide the process and assist in developing a business plan moving forward.

As my Presbyterian family, you all have shown up. You have celebrated with me, grieved with me, and encouraged me along the way. You, my Presbyterian family, make me excited to continue in this ministry! While we haven't met all of our revenue goals for the year, two line items that exceed our revenue expectations on the balance sheet are POSA Meetings, and POSA Church Groups. *Thank you*. Thank you for choosing Montgomery as your preferred space for meetings and church retreats! We see you. We are grateful.

In the meantime, we are picking up the pieces from 2024 and moving forward. I have spent the year learning each department and job responsibility at a deeper level, spending many hours in the trenches to continue operations. This has opened my eyes to outdated methods.

I am implementing operational changes in an effort to conserve resources, work more efficiently, and use 21st century technology to our advantage. One such change is a streamlined system for booking groups. You can see the first step of the process with an [embedded guest inquiry form](#) on our website via Monday.com. This captures specific needs from guests in the initial inquiry, reducing the time needed to create an estimate and provide a contract, therefore improving the quality of service provided to our guests. There are many similar changes that we are transitioning to across departments.

2024 has been a challenging year. I appreciate all who have reached out to see how I/we am/are doing, who have shown up to help in times of need, and who have answered the phone to brainstorm ways that we might continue sharing the love of God with all we encounter. This has been a grace-filled year, if we just have eyes to see.

We have continued to move forward with the help of generous donors, who have funded a new AC unit for the dining hall, drinking water fountains throughout camp, and acoustic panels in the dining hall (in progress), resurfaced the walk-in cooler, donated a reach-in cooler, and purchased a Monday.com subscription. Thank you for your ongoing support for the ministry's day to day needs!

In closing, I have a few announcements to share from Montgomery Center:

- We will not be doing a pie fundraiser this year. In reviewing the time, energy, and resources required, we determined that this is not a viable fundraiser. We are grateful for those who have ordered pies to support Montgomery over the years, but regret to inform you that we will not be providing your holiday pies this year.
- Save the Date! This year's gala will be held on **Friday, December 6**. We pray that this is a meaningful time to fellowship and celebrate the season together with friends and family.
- Our biggest fundraiser is coming up at [McIntosh 1890s Day](#) on Saturday, October 12. A day where the sleepy town of 400 explodes to a population of 40,000. Montgomery will serve biscuits and gravy, and pulled pork sandwiches for hungry festival go-ers. Find us on the corner of Avenues F and 7th on the lawn of McIntosh Presbyterian Church!
- Registration for both [Winter Camp](#) (Jan 3-5) and [Summer Camp](#) are live now! Spring retreat dates are set for Feb 28 to March 2.
- The last day to register for Cruising with Montgomery in the Caribbean is quickly approaching! Contact [Jimmy Steele](#) to book your stateroom today.

See our attached calendar of events to learn more about our upcoming programming. We look forward to seeing you at camp again for any of our [upcoming events](#).

Faithful in hope. Patient in affliction. Steadfast in prayer.

Rebekah Rodgers
Executive Director

Montgomery

Camp & Conference Center



EVENT CALENDAR



2025

OCT 4-OCT 6

Presbytery's Fall Youth Retreat
Register by September 15, 2024

DEC 6

4th Annual Gala

JAN 3-JAN 5

Winter Camp

JAN 6-JAN12

Cruising for Montgomery

JAN 18

Officer Training

JAN 25

PW Winter Gathering

FEB 28-MAR 2

Spring Youth Retreat

MAR 7-APR 11

Fish Fry Fridays

APR 21-APR 24

After-Easter Pastor's Sabbatical

JUN 15-JUN 20

Summer Camp Session #1

JUN 22-JUN 27

Summer Camp Session #2

JUL 6-JUL 11

Summer Camp Session #3

For more information:



[montgomerycenter.org/
events](https://montgomerycenter.org/events)