

THE PRESBYTERY OF NEW HARMONY
106th STATED MEETING MINUTES
Goodwill Presbyterian Church
295 N. Brick Church Rd. Mayesville, SC 29104
August 16, 2022

All referenced reports and documents are in the appendix of this document.

PRESENT:

Ruling Elders: Bennettsville First – Sharon Beaty; Celebration - Robert Callender; Cheraw First – Dan Tillman III, Congruity – Grace Johnson; Cousar Memorial – LaTishe Moses; Ebenezer – Edith Gail Jackson; Fraser Memorial – Louis Mays; Friendship – Maritta J. Smith; Goodwill – Ruby Jean Boyd; G.W. Long – Karen Wilkerson, John Calvin – Jane Thrower; Kingston – Cindy Magrath; Melina –00 Chars G. Kennedy; Mt. Pisgah – Brooks Peterson; Myrtle Beach First – Jill Griffith, Julia Kimbrell; New Bethel – Robert Luther Carmichael; New Covenant – Loretta Baker-Yates; Salem Black River – Rutledge Dingle; Summerton – Kimberly Fleming; Sumter Second – Ronetta Moses; Swan Lake – Maggie Wilson; Trinity Surfside – Randy Jennings; Wedgefield – Mary Anderson; Westminster – Sheryl Davis; White Oak – Larry D. Watson; Williamsburg – Jean Nexsen.

Teaching Elders: Scott Andrews, Robert Bannan, Vikki Brogdon, Ella Busby, Ashley Cheek, Nick Cheek, Frank Colclough, Tom Dendy, Bob Brearley, Jody Foster, Rodney Foster, Jarred Hammett, Carnell Hampton, Josie Holler, Corey Ingold, Joshua Jang, Jennifer Kottler, Tom Langston, Tony Larson, Jennifer Marshall, Gavin Meek, Jane Osment, John Parks, Mary Ramirez, Dan Sansbury, Nathan See.

Commissioned Pastors: Delcia Harper-Baxter, Marshall Ivey, Othan Sharp, Chuck Staggs, Elijah Washington.

Guiding Council: Pam George, Dorothy McBride.

Corresponding Members: Sy Hughes, Joyce Lieberman, Stefanie Marsden, Mark McCain, Alonza Washington.

NHP Leaders: Robert Callender, Rachel Chandler.

Certified Christian Educators: Avery Dickson.

Presbytery Staff: Juanita McLeod.

Visitors: Tanya Addison, Hope Evans, Carrie Hampton, Ellaree Hampton, George Hampton, Robert C. Johnson, Dorothy Samuel, Madison Scriven, Randy Wells, Melvin Wilkerson.

ABSENT:

Honorably Retired Absent Teaching Elders: Michael Allen, Richard Andrews, Sue Arledge, Alan Arnold, Art Chartier, Robert Chastain, Carol Dickerson, Snow Donmoyer, Malcolm Doubles, Michael Fleenor, Roger Gulick, Howard Hansen, Frank Holsclaw, Ray Howe, Thomas Johnson, Robert Ledbetter, Soo Hoon Lee, Robert Maclin, William Moore, Rhett Talbert, George Wilkes, Robert Wilkes, William Wilson.

Teaching Elders: John Brearley, Annette Brewer, Christa Brewer, Pete Brzezinski, Jim Burton, John Hopkins, Louis Imsande, Don McCann, Jane Osment, Eva Ruth, Mike Sorrell, Sam Sparks, Aaron Stevens, Joan Yates.

Absent Commissioned Pastors: David Bessinger, William A. Johnson, Bob Sloan.

Absent Sessions: Carolina, Chesterfield, Fork, Georgetown, Grandview, Harmony, Hartsville First, Hebron, Indiantown, Jefferson, Kentyre, Korean American, Lake City, Latta, Manning, Marion, McColl, Mizpah, Morton, Mt. Lisbon, Mt. Sinai, Mt. Zion, Murrells Inlet, New Harvest, Olanta First, Pageland Second, Parkwood, Patrick, Pawleys Island, Ruby, Society Hill, St. Paul's Sumter First, Timmonsville, Trinity Mayesville.

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Upon hearing from the Stated Clerk, the Rev. Gavin D. Meek, that a quorum was present, **the Moderator, Elder Dorothy McBride**, declared it so and **called the 106th Stated Meeting of Presbytery of New Harmony to order with prayer at 9:30 am at the Goodwill Presbyterian Church, Mayesville, SC.**

The Moderator requested that the Stated Clerk review the proposed **Docket** and the **Omnibus Motion** (both documents in the appendix of these minutes) from the Guiding Council and, on its behalf, move adoption, which he did; the motion did not need a second, as it came from “a committee of the whole.” The Omnibus Motion was as follows:

Receive the following attached written reports and approve the following therein:

- **Stated Clerk** which included: The report concerning **case 2022-2**, which on May 16, 2022, **the Investigating Committee reported that it has concluded its investigation and determined that there are no charges to be filed.**
- **Guiding Council**, including the approval of the following unanimous recommendation #1, but not recommendations 2 and 3:
 - 1) **Approve the unanimous recommendation of the Proclamation for the Rev. Joyce Lieberman upon her retirement as our Synod of South Atlantic Synod Executive and Stated Clerk.**
 - 2) **Approve the unanimous recommendation to increase by \$1 NHP's Per Capita for 2023.**

3) Approve the request of the John Calvin Administrative Commission that they be dissolved as they have completed their charge; this with deep thanks and appreciation.

- **Committee on Ministry (COM);**
- **Committee on Preparation (CPM);**
- **Camp Pee Dee Administrative Commission;**
- **John Calvin Administrative Commission** including approving their request that it be dissolved as they have completed their charge; and
- **New Harvest Administrative Commission.**

The Moderator stated that a second was not needed since this recommendation came from the Guiding Council, a “committee of the whole.” There were no requests to remove any items from the Omnibus Motion, therefore, the Moderator called for a vote. After the vote, the Moderator stated that the recommendation passed, and thus declared the **Docket and Omnibus Motion approved.**

The Moderator requested that the first-time Ruling Elder Commissioners be introduced.

The following new **Corresponding Member** was seated: Rev. Mark McCain, Charleston Atlantic Presbytery and SC Presbytery Disaster Assistance Team.

The Moderator appointed the following **Tellers** for this Stated Meeting: Rev. Dr. Frank Colclough; Elder Pam George (First, Sumter); and Elder Randy Wells (Congruity).

The Moderator then recognized the **Rev. Nick Cheek**, Bridge Interim Pastor of Goodwill, to **welcome** NHP followed by the **Rev. Carnell Hampton** who shared some brief personal reflections on Goodwill’s long and proud history, in particular with regards to the school it operated during the time of segregation from the end of the Civil War through the Civil Rights struggles.

NHP then moved into a time of worship with the Rev. Nick Cheek preaching, followed by these verbal reports:

- Presbytery Disaster Assistance Commission (PDAC) by Elder Robert Callendar
- SC PDAT by Rev. Mark McCain
- Cultivation and Empowerment Committee (CEC) by Elder Loretta Baker-Yates
- Presbyterian Mission Agency by Sy Hughes, Southeast Region Mission Engagement Advisor
- Texas Presbyterian Foundation (TPF) by Stefanie Marsden

- Synod of South Atlantic by Rev. Joyce Lieberman, Executive and Stated Clerk
- *The Blessings of Serving as a Commissioned Pastor* by Commissioned Pastor Elijah Washington
- Report of our General Assembly Commissioners by Elder Dorothy McBride & Rev. Dr. Ella Busby

The Moderator recognized the **Stated Clerk, Rev. Gavin D. Meek** who made a brief report, sharing that the Investigating Committee in case 2022-2 reported that it has concluded its investigation and determined that there are no charges to be filed.

The Moderator introduced the ***Good News from Congregations*** and almost a dozen Ruling Elders shared.

The Moderator then recognized the **Moderator of the Guiding Council, the Rev. Gavin D. Meek**, who called attention to the report in the Commissioners Handbook. He then moved each of the following unanimous recommendations from the Guiding Council and both were approved unanimously:

- 1) **Increase by \$1 NHP's Per Capita for 2023.**
- 2) **The request of the John Calvin Administrative Commission that they be dissolved as they have completed their charge; this with deep thanks and appreciation.**

He then reviewed the presbytery's design and all the changes that have occurred in NHP committee structure given that it was approved right before the pandemic

The Moderator then recognized the **Rev. Josie Holler, Moderator of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM)** and who made a wonderful presentation on the need for all presbyters and Sessions to be on the lookout for those who God may be calling to ordained ministry as a Minister of Word and Sacrament.

The **Rev. Tony Larson, Moderator of the Committee on Ministry (COM)** was recognized who in turn recognized Elder Robert Henry of our Marion congregation for **examination to serve as the Commissioned Pastor to our Kentyre and Timmonsville Presbyterian congregations.** (The details of the Covenants are included in the COM report which can be found in the appendix). After **voting to end the examination and approve the commission**, the Moderator propounded the Constitutional questions to Elder Henry who answered each in the affirmative. After Rev. Tom Langston, Elder Henry's COM appointed Mentor and Supervisor (Constitutionally required of all Commissioned Pastors) offered prayer, **the Moderator declared Elder Robert Henry the Commissioned Pastor of our Kentyre and Timmonsville congregations.**

Rev. Larson then moved that the **Presbytery grant COM the authority as a commission to dissolve the pastoral relationship between Rev. Samuel Sparks and Melina Presbyterian**

Church should COM discern this is the appropriate and necessary action. He reminded the presbytery that the congregation and COM approved a yearlong Medical Leave for Rev. Samuel Sparks and that yearlong leave ends on October 4. If it is in the best interests of the Pastor and/or the Melina congregation to dissolve the pastoral relationship, the COM would like not to have to wait until the next Stated Meeting on November 15. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Rev. Larson reported that the COM **increased the minimum Terms of Call by 4% for 2023 and the COM encourages Sessions to consider increasing the compensation of pastoral leaders in calls that are above the minimum terms by 4% in 2023.**

At this point in the Stated Meeting, the **Stated Clerk, Rev. Gavin Meek, shared that he was temporarily stepping out of that role** for the next report and recommended that the **Rev. Dr. Ella Busby, NHP's Associate for Pastoral Concerns and Fellowship be the acting Stated Clerk**; Rev. Meek then moved to a pew in the back of the sanctuary saying he and his wife, the Rev. Jennifer Kottler, would step out of the room following the motion in the next report and before any debate, question or comment on the motion. **The Moderator asked the presbytery if there were any objections to the Rev. Dr. Busby being the Acting Stated Clerk and there were none.** The Acting Clerk Rev. Dr. Busby asked the Synod Executive and Stated Clerk, Rev. Joyce Lieberman to sit with her at the Stated Clerk's desk which she did.

The Moderator introduced the Rev. Ashley Cheek, chair of the **Executive Presbyter (and Stated Clerk) Nominating Committee (EPNC)**, to present its report and make its recommendation while reminding the presbytery of the brochure in the Commissioner's Handbook and that the brochure on the candidate was emailed to all Moderators, Clerks, NHP minister members, Commissioned Pastors, leaders and all those Ruling Elder Commissioner who were registered. After introducing and thanking the members of the EPNC, asking them to come forward to sit behind her, Rev. Cheek shared about their prayerful, full and open search of the EPNC looking at 17 candidates closely, initial interviews with seven from all over the country, second interviews with four very good candidates, and in-depth and in-person interviews with three.

Rev. Cheek then introduced the **Rev. Carnell Hampton, a member of the Guiding Council**, who spoke about the removal of the clause in Rev. Meek's contract that prohibited him from applying for the installed position. He shared that Rev. Meek requested the removal at special called meeting of the Guiding Council on March 13. Rev. Hampton said that Rev. Meek was asked why he was making this request and shared the Rev. Meek said that he felt that the Holy Spirit was leading him to apply for the position, that he loved the Presbytery of New Harmony and the people in the presbytery, that he would love to be able to complete the job of helping the presbytery to fulfill its mission and vision and that he stated, and that he wanted to be treated like any other applicant. Rev. Hampton shared that Rev. Meek left the meeting prior to the conversation and vote. Having believed Rev. Meek had done an excellent job at the

Transitional EP and believing he would be a good candidate for the EPNC to consider, the **Guiding Council voted unanimously to remove the prohibition about him not being able to apply.** There were no questions for Rev. Hampton.

Rev. Cheek introduced three EPNC members, **Rev. Nathan See, Rev. Dr. Jennifer Marshall and Commission Pastor Delcia Harper-Baxter to share how Rev. Meek's gifts and skills lined up with the approved NHP mission statement.** Rev. See shared how Rev. Meek has the gifts and ability to do well the work of both the EP and Stated Clerk as he is doing them both well now. As Stated Clerk, he is very knowledgeable, organized and thorough in all his work and as EP, he has the gifts and abilities which "nurtures togetherness with resources for addressing issues of the 21st century," fostering connectedness among the congregations and its leaders as that is a passion of his as seen in his investment in the wellbeing of all the congregations of NHP. Rev. Marshall shared how Rev. Meek walks alongside the pastoral leaders with care, equipping and encouraging faithfulness, growth, and creativity while providing skilled and loving pastoral care to NHP's pastors and their families. Commissioned Pastor Harper-Baxter shared how Rev. Meek "supports, encourages, and promotes racial equality, social justice, and all forms of diversity within worship and ministry" as he has done this already and is committed to continue working on his own awareness of himself as a white male of privilege.

Rev. Cheek introduced Elder Sheryl Davis who presented the following **Terms of Call:**

\$105,509	Salary and Housing
\$8,500	Mileage/Con. Ed./Prof. Expenses
\$39,038	Board of Pensions: Major Medical/Pension/Death and Disability/Temporary Disability (37% of Salary and Housing – 2023 it will be 39% and \$41,148)
<u>\$8,071</u>	SECA (7.65% of Salary and Housing)
\$161,118	TOTAL
	4 weeks of vacation (NHP minimum)
	2 weeks of study leave (NHP minimum)
	10 weeks sabbatical in the 7th year (NHP policy recommendation) with the four years served as Transitional counting
	The Term for the Stated Clerk will be five (5) years

It was noted that Rev. Meek and his wife, Rev. Kottler, left the room at this time.

On behalf of the EPNC, the Rev. Cheek moved the call of the Rev. Gavin D. Meek as the Executive Presbyter and Stated Clerk, with the Stated Clerk position being a term of five years, effective September 1, 2022, with the Terms of call as presented above; a second was not needed as the motion came from a "committee of the whole."

The moderator opened the floor for questions, comment and debate. The only question concerned the five year term as Stated Clerk and as it related to the EP position. The response

was that at the end of five years the Stated Clerk term can be renegotiated and the EP position does not have a term and goes until the foreseeable future.

The vote was by ballot and the Tellers reported to the Moderator who shared it with the presbytery that the motion passed unanimously 51 to 0. Rev. Meek and Rev. Kottler were escorted back into the meeting and to the front. After being introduced as the next Executive Presbyter and Stated Clerk, Rev. Meek made some brief remarks including how he was thrilled, grateful and happy to be called by God to continue to serve the Presbytery of New Harmony, followed by thanking the EPNC and presbytery. The Rev. Dr. Busby offered prayer for Rev. Meek and the presbytery.

The Rev. Cheek then requested that the presbytery dissolve the EPNC. The Moderator asked if there were any objections and upon hearing none, declared it so with deep thanks and appreciation.

Rev. Meek then resumed the role of Stated Clerk.

Following an opportunity for brief announcements, thanking all those who provided leadership, made reports and participated, and announcing that the next Stated Meeting will be **Tuesday, November 15, 2022 at First, Bennettsville**, the **Moderator declared** that all the business for the 106th Stated Meeting was finished and asked if there was any objection to adjourn. Hearing and seeing none, the Moderator **declared it so ordered by unanimous consent**.

The Moderator closed the meeting with prayer at 2:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

**Rev. Gavin D. Meek,
Stated Clerk and Executive Presbyter**