

Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area

STATED MEETING

Thursday, May 18, 2023

AGENDA

- 3:30pm Zoom meeting opens
- Check-In Table opens at Valley Community; food and fellowship in Narthex
- 3:40pm Open Spaces: Information Session with the Knox Administrative Commission
- Open Spaces: Information Session with the Presbytery's Institutional Race and Equity Self-Assessment Team
- Both sessions open to in-person attendees only due to technical constraints.*
- 4:00pm Gathering Together: Moderator John Zwier
- Stated Meeting Convenes
- Call to Order
- Forming the Roll
- Declaration of Quorum
- Opening Prayer
- Approval of the Docket
- 4:03pm Welcoming: Moderator John Zwier
- Introduction of New Minister Members
- Introduction of First-Time Commissioners
- Seating of Corresponding Members
- Recognition of Visitors
- 4:05pm Hospitality:
- Welcome by the Host Church TE Richard Buller, Valley Community PC
- Welcome by the Zoom Chat Host TE Brian Entz
- Zoom Chat & Meeting Reminders PAGE 3
- 4:08pm OMNIBUS MOTION/CONSENT AGENDA PAGE 5
- Prior Meeting Minutes for February 25, 2023
- 4:10pm Stated Clerk Report

4:10pm	News & Noteworthy Announcements	
	Erin Anderson, Executive Director of Camp Clearwater Forest	
	Scott Larson, Small Church Network Event	
	Julie Neraas and Carol Hornbeck, Leadership Development Grant to Support Pastoral Leaders	
	Rev. Emily Meyer, Ministry Lab Executive Director, United Theological Seminary	
4:18pm	Nominating & Developing Leaders	RE Jean Emmons
		PAGE 10
4:20pm	Appointing Tellers for paper ballots, amendment voting	
4:25pm	Bills and Overtures	RE Sandra Hawley
	Voting on Amendments	PAGE 11
5:00pm	Worshipping Together	
5:25pm	Instructions for the Meal and Conversation Groups	
5:30pm	Prayer	
	Meal provided by Milton's Vittles; Conversation Placemats provided by IREA	
6:15pm	Reconvene	Moderator John Zwier
6:15pm	Recalibrating Our Spiritual GPS	Institutional Race and Equity Self-Assessment Team (IREA)
6:30pm	Our Recommended Route	IREA
	Overview of Recommendations	
6:35pm	Crystallization Conversations: Breakout Room (Zoom) and Small Groups (in person)	
6:55pm	Reconvene for Open Discussion	Moderator John Zwier
7:15pm	Reimagining Our Journey Together	IREA
		RE Jean Emmons
	<i>The PLT unanimously voted to accept the report and recommends that the PTCA vote to approve all of the included action items recommended in the report without revision.</i>	
7:20pm	TEP Remarks	TE Libby Shannon
7:25pm	Moderator's Report	RE John Zwier
7:30pm	Report of Attendance	SC John Curtiss
7:30pm	Adjourn with Prayer	Moderator John Zwier

Guidelines For Virtual/Hybrid Meetings

Using Zoom Conferencing

The following rules are applicable to meetings of the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area when participating by Zoom Video Conferencing is an option.

1. Each voting participant must connect to the virtual congregational meeting separately. It is preferred that participants connect using the Zoom app on a computer or mobile device (smartphone or tablet) because of the enhanced functionality this allows. If online participation via the Zoom app is not possible, members may connect via telephone. Either way, the rule is one participant, one connection.
2. A quorum will be determined by the standing rules, which indicate that attendees are counted upon registration for the meeting and connecting to the Zoom meeting room.
3. Both online and phone participants will use the “Raise Hand” feature to be recognized before speaking and, in some cases, to indicate a vote. Participants should only raise their hands for those purposes. The hosts are responsible for lowering hands. Participants should not lower their own hands.
4. When called upon by a meeting host, online participants must first **unmute** their microphones and should turn **on** their **camera** before speaking. When done speaking, participants may turn off their cameras and mute their microphones.
5. When multiple participants on Zoom are seeking recognition, the Zoom host or co-host will recognize one participant to speak and organize all other speakers. If you are not recognized in a timely manner, you may unmute your microphone and say “Mr./Madam Chair!” When we also have a chat monitor present, further instructions will be given as to how to utilize the Zoom chat feature appropriately.
6. For online participants, to make a motion other than a procedural motion, the motion should FIRST be entered in writing into the participant “chat.” THEN the participant making the motion should seek recognition. When called upon, he or she should note that the motion is in the chat, and make the motion.
7. Votes will normally be tallied using the Zoom polling feature. Zoom polling allows for anonymous responses and instant tabulation.
 - a. Note that Zoom poll questions are limited to 255 characters, so brevity in composing motions is necessary.
8. When a vote is taken by means of raised hand only, the Chair will quickly scroll through the list of participants for a sense of how many have voted first in favor, and then against the motion, and rule which side has it.
 - a. If the chair is uncertain, he or she may order a counted vote – or a member may move that a counted vote be taken (a motion for a counted vote must be seconded, is not debatable, and requires a majority vote). A counted vote may be conducted by creating and distributing a Zoom poll during the meeting.

Additional Information:

9. Technical requirements for online participants using a computer or mobile device: internet connection, speaker, microphone, and a webcam (optional).

10. Online participants should make sure that they have installed the Zoom app well before the meeting and have tested their ability to connect.

11. Upon connecting to the meeting, online participants should check that they are muted and that their cameras are on or off as desired. Then they should scan the list of meeting participants and read any messages that have already been posted. All of this can be accomplished from the Zoom controls at the bottom of the user interface.

- a. Click the “Mute/Unmute” toggle button to mute or unmute.
- b. Click the “Start Video/Stop Video” toggle button to turn on or turn off your camera.
- c. Click the Participants button to view a list of participants and gain access to the “raise hand” function.
- d. Click the Chat button to see any chat messages.

12. Zoom participants are encouraged to **rename** themselves using the following convention: Name, TE or RE, Church. If the participant is a guest, then Name, Role, Agency represented.

Updated April, 2023

OMNIBUS MOTION/CONSENT AGENDA

I. Board of Trustees

A. The Board of Trustees reports:

1. The BoT has approved adjusting the application of payments received by the buyer of the Dayton Avenue property. They approved switching to an amortization accrual method that applies each payment as received to the next payment that would have been due based on the original amortization payment schedule.

Rationale: Payments have been sporadic. If terms of the original note are followed, this would result in significant amounts of accrued interest due being continually added to the unpaid principal balance of the contract receivable. This would far exceed the original face value of the contract. The revised amortization accrual method more realistically states the true value of the contract receivable on the books of the Presbytery, considering the current situation of payments or lack thereof and does not overstate the value of the contract on our books.

2. The Board also expresses its deepest thanks to the Rev. Dr. Barbara Anne Keely for her service and leadership on the Board of Trustees for the past several years.

Respectfully, Rebecca Tollefson, Chair of BoT

Board of Trustee Members include:

Rebecca Tollefson, Chair;

Scott Barraclough, Richard Buller, Eric Caugh, Barbara Anne Keely, Steve Lewis, Sally Mortenson, Leigh Niebuhr, Tom Radio;

John Curtiss, Stated Clerk; Steve Robertson, Treasurer; Libby Shannon, TEP

The next BoT meeting is Tuesday, June 20th at 4:00 pm via Zoom.

II. Commission on Ministry

A. Report from the February 27, 2023 Meeting

1. First Presbyterian Church, Red Wing MN and Rev. Heidi Bolt and Rev. Greg Bolt:

- a. The pastoral relationship between the congregation and Revs. Heidi and Greg Bolt was dissolved in action approved at a congregational meeting July 31, 2022, and
- b. effective August 9, 2022, and request that their membership be transferred to Presbytery of the Cascades.

B. Report from the March 27, 2023 Meeting

1. First Presbyterian Church, Claremont MN and Rev. Ann Siverling (ELCA): Rev. Siverling was approved to moderate Session.

C. Report from the April 24, 2023 Meeting:

1. **Peace Presbyterian Church of St. Louis Park, MN:** Approve the Administrative Commission for the Installation of TE Scott Larson as Pastor at 3:00 on May 7, 2023:

Name	Congregation
John Zwier	RE Moderator PTCA
Sue Goodspeed	RE – Lake Nokomis PC, Mpls
David Maghakian	TE – First PC, St Croix Falls
John Curtiss	TE – Stated Clerk PTCA
Rochelle LeTourneau	RE – First PC, South St. Paul
Julie North	RE – Peace PC, St. Louis Park
Stephanie Friant	TE – Member at Large

2. **First Presbyterian Church of Kasson, MN and Rev. Amanda Boss:** Approve the dissolution of the call between the congregation and Rev. Boss effective April 30, 2023. The dissolution was approved by the Kasson congregation at a congregational meeting on April 16, 2023, and includes three months severance (salary, housing, pension).
3. **Rev. Bill Davnie:** Approve the request to labor outside the bounds of the Presbytery, as Temporary Associate Pastor at Trinity Presbyterian Church, Arlington, VA, National Capital Presbytery, May 29 to August 28, 2023.

III. Mission, Scholarships & Grants Committee

The Mission, Scholarship, and Grants Committee continues to put the Presbytery's grant and scholarship resources to work by getting them out of the bank and into ministry and mission. For the period January through April of 2023, the following amounts have been awarded by the Committee, the Self Development of People Team, the Presbytery Leadership Team, or the Presbytery in each of the Committee's four ministry areas:

• Congregational Support	\$ 35,000
• Leadership Development	23,022
• Mission & Community Outreach	44,300
• Strategic Ministries	<u>13,500</u>
	\$ 115,822

In Exhibit A: Grants And Scholarships Awarded From January Through April Of 2023 attached to this Report, we list all the grants and scholarships awarded in those months and briefly describe each award's purpose.

Reporting On Outcomes And Learnings

Since the Mission, Scholarship, and Grants Committee's report in February, we have been developing a reporting system for recipients of the Presbytery's grants and scholarships. We are now beginning to receive

reports from grant recipients and hope to share stories of the many successful outcomes we are learning about.

Congregational Development Grants

Congregations can apply for Congregational Development Grants of up to \$20,000 right now. The application deadline is **June 1st** for this competitive process. The grants will be awarded in September of this year.

Other Grants And Scholarships Available Right Now

Many other grants and scholarships can be applied for now. These include Ministry Imagination Grants for congregations and Leadership Development grants and scholarships for individuals and groups seeking to improve their leadership skills. Please visit the Presbytery's website under the Mission, Scholarship, and Grants pages for more information and apply now.

Respectfully submitted,

Walter H. Rockenstein II, Chair

On behalf of the Committee

**Exhibit A: Grants And Scholarships Awarded
In January Through April Of 2023**

Grant Type And Recipient	Purpose	Amount
Congregational Support		
<i>Congregational Dev. Grants</i>		
Now open for applications with a deadline of June 1st		\$ 0
<i>CDG Subtotal</i>		\$ 0
<i>Ministry Imagination Grants</i>		
None awarded to date		\$ 0
<i>MIG Subtotal</i>		\$ 0
<i>Presbytery Direct Grants</i>		
Kenyan Christian Fellowship Grant	Support Kenyan Christian Fellowship worshipping community	\$ 15,000
Liberty Community Church	Support Liberty Community Church's ministry	20,000
<i>PD Subtotal</i>		\$35,000
Congregational Support Subtotal		\$ 35,000
Leadership Development		
<i>Leadership Development Grants</i>		
Pastoral Care Team with Rev. Carol Hornbeck and Rev. Julie Neraas	Pastoral Leader Care Project – clergy get together, guided retreats for pastors addressing vocational challenges, spiritual reinvigoration, and self-care; and consultation for pastors and their Sessions	\$ 20,355
Rev. Eric Schemper	Attendance at Transitional Ministry Workshops, Foundations & Frameworks	700
Rev. David Shinn	Support Rev. Shinn's Louisville Institute Pastoral Study Project titled "Trauma Informed Pastoral Care for Asian American Christian Communities"	1,967
<i>LDG Subtotal</i>		\$ 23,022
<i>Livingston Equipping Leaders Scholarships</i>		
None awarded to date		\$ 0
<i>LELS Subtotal</i>		\$ 0

Grant Type And Recipient	Purpose	Amount
<i>Theological Education Scholarships</i>		
None awarded to date		\$ 0
<i>TES Subtotal</i>		\$ 0
Leadership Development Subtotal		\$ 23,022
Mission And Community Outreach		
<i>Mission Outreach Grants</i>		
Not available yet		\$ 0
<i>MOG Subtotal</i>		\$ 0
<i>Mission Partner Grants</i>		
Clearwater Forest	Support Clearwater Forest's work	\$ 21,750
Greater Mpls. Community Connections (formerly Mpls. Council of Churches)	Support GMCC's work	1,000
Interfaith Action of Greater St. Paul	Supports IA's work	1,000
Joint Religious Legislative Coalition	Support JRLC's advocacy work	1,000
Metro Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing	Support MICAH's work	1,000
Ministry Lab	Support ML's work	7,000
Minnesota Council of Churches	Support MCC's work	11,000
Presbyterian Health, Education, and Welfare Association	Support PHEWA's disability work	550
<i>MG Subtotal</i>		\$ 44,300
<i>Peace & Global Witness Offering Grants</i>		
None awarded to date		\$ 0
<i>PGWOG Subtotal</i>		\$ 0
<i>Self-Development of People Grants</i>		
None awarded to date		\$ 0
<i>SDOPG Subtotal</i>		\$ 0
Mission and Community Outreach Subtotal		\$ 44,300
Strategic Ministries		
Anti-Racism Institutional Assessment	Additional funding of Institutional Assessment	\$ 10,000

Grant Type And Recipient	Purpose	Amount
Small Church Network	Fund initial meetings to set up a network of smaller churches with in the Presbytery	3,500
Strategic Ministries Subtotal		\$ 13,500
Grants & Scholarships Total		\$ 115,822

IV. Presbytery Leadership Team

The Race & Equity report is incredible and I'm in awe of the amount of work our task force members did. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. I also appreciate that the recommendations give us five years to develop a fair presbytery. I believe that we can. We will continually need to question our behaviors and our motives and that is good and positive for everyone. And then after five years I pray that the habit will be so deep that everything we do will be right for everyone. Everyone.

PLT continues to do the work of the presbytery with God's help.

The committee **REPORTS**:

- PLT received the Race & Equity report and continue to be impressed by the imagination and energy that the task force has had to do their work.
- PLT received and approved a grant request from the Presbytery Leader Care Team for \$20,355 for a series of opportunities for spiritual support and direction for groups of pastoral leaders.
- PTCA will be undergoing an audit this year. This occurs every 4 or 5 years.
- Work has begun to complete the 2024 PTCA budget.
- The Administrative Commission for Knox Presbyterian Church - Minneapolis presented a report. The AC has worked for the past two years with a small group of people from Knox. They have requested documents which the group representing Knox has said is too difficult to present. The AC requested that they be allowed to begin legal action to obtain the documents. After much discussion, PLT agreed and moved that up to \$10,000 be made available to initiate legal action up to the discovery process and reception of new documents and information. The motion also noted that if more funds were needed, PLT would bring the matter to the Presbytery. A pre-presbytery meeting will occur before the May presbytery meeting to discuss this move.

The committee **RECOMMENDS**:

1. That the Presbytery allocate up to \$10,000 to pursue legal action to obtain proper documentation from Knox Presbyterian Church, Minneapolis.
2. That, in conjunction with the Board of Trustees, the Presbytery form an Administrative Commission to work alongside the session and church leadership of Baldwin Presbyterian Church for the purpose of "developing a strategy for the mission of the church" (G-3.0303a).

Jean Emmons
Presbytery Leadership Team Chair

OMNIBUS MOTION/CONSENT AGENDA ENDS HERE

Nominating & Developing Leaders

The Committee recommends:

1. Early Intervention and Mediation Team

November 2026 = 3 Years - Jean O'Mally-Laursen, RE, The Associated Church, Owatonna

2. Mission, Scholarships and Grants

November 2026 = 3 Years – Cheryl Irwin, RE, Liberty Community, Minneapolis

3. Personnel

November 2026 = 3 Years – Bart Roush, TE, Oak Grove, Bloomington

4. Pastoral Positions Team

a. November 2026 = 3 Years – Rochelle LeTourneau, RE, First Presbyterian Church, South St. Paul

b. November 2026 = 3 Years – Carol Reed, TE, Plymouth, Plymouth

The Committee **announces:** (informational only items)

NDL is finally beginning to work on our additional charge of developing leaders. We invite interested members of the Presbytery to connect with NDL through David Shinn or Karyn Arazi if they have a special interest in this area. We have noted the following needs, but there are certainly more:

- Reestablish avenues for members of the Presbytery to get to know one another better.
- Demystify the work of the Presbytery for new church leaders so they feel more comfortable accepting a position on a committee with the Presbytery.
- Fulfill identified training needs currently being expressed by pastors, clerks, and other leaders within the Presbytery.

Possible Other Topics might include: Elder Leadership, Clerk training, Theology, Polity, Robert's Rules, Running Meetings, etc.

Committee Members include:

Thomas Ruter, Chair

Jeff Foels

Jean Emmons

Rev. Libby Shannon, Transitional EP, Staff

Karyn Arazi

David Shinn

Heidi Vardeman

The next Committee meeting date/time is June 23 at 5:10PM; the committee will meet via Zoom. Contact information for the chair is: Thomas J. Ruter, Thomas_j_ruter@yahoo.com (651)336-8215.

BILLS AND OVERTURES

Note: Votes on overtures are yea or nay. No amendments or changes are possible.

1. The Bills and Overtures Committee unanimously recommends the Presbytery approve the following overtures: 22D, 22P, 22DD, 22EE, 22FF
2. The Bills and Overtures Committee recommends that the Presbytery approve the following overture: 22I
The Committee's vote on this overture was 2 yea, 1 nay.
3. The Bills and Overtures Committee recommends that the Presbytery approve the following overture: 22CC
The Committee's vote on this overture was unanimous, 3 yea.
4. The Bills and Overtures Committee recommends that the Presbytery approve the following overture: 22GG
The Committee's vote on this overture was unanimous, 3 yea.

Summary of Proposed Book of Order Changes -- May 18, 2023

	BoO Section	BoO Section Title	Summary of Proposed Change
Minor Changes			
22-D	G-1.0503	Congregational Meeting Business	Adds receiving a disciplinary decision against a member of the congregation
22-P	G-3.0106	Administration of Mission	Adds requirement of harassment & antiracism policies to sexual misconduct and child & youth protection
22-DD	D-10.0302	If Charges are to be Filed	Changes "that person" to "they"
22-EE	D-10.0303	Petition for Review	Adds notification of the person who has been accused if no charges to be filed
22-FF	D	All sections	Changes "the accused to "the person accused"

Form of Government

22-I	G-2.0804	Terms of Call	Adds requirement of minimum of 12 weeks of family leave to terms of call
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Rules of Discipline

22-CC	D-3.0106	When Jurisdiction Ends	Redefines the end of a judicial process to continue beyond a renunciation of jurisdiction
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Rules of Discipline Rewrite

22-GG		Rules of Discipline	Total Rewrite to be renamed Church Discipline
		Overall changes	In general, changes are mostly clarifying and less legal language; procedures are spelled out clearly & in detail
			Allows electronic filing of documents, recording of proceedings, & witnesses testimony
			Time allotments often extended
			Change minimum time all records kept from 2 years to 10 years
			Givens: confidentiality, right to remain silent, all work together, not withholding info, preserving records.
			Clarify Session process for allegations against cong. members, CP, CRE
	D-1.0 -> D-5.0	Introductory sections	Reorganization of sections and clarification of language. No major additions/deletions.
			Better defines the purpose of discipline; defines PJs, the membership & contingencies
	D-6.0 -> D-9.0	Remedial cases	Clarifies the presbytery of jurisdiction
			Removes employees & non-PCUSA members, non-ruling elders from bring remedial cases.
			Allows governing bodies to assume jurisdiction when a lower governing body fails to act
			Better defines the limits to relief that can be granted
			Adds definitions of evidence and testimony
			Clarifies appeals process
			Adds a section on the obligation of the GA PJ
			Clarifies challenges to preliminary rulings
			Allows additional issues to be raised in appeal
			Clarifies the appellate review and decisions

		Clarifies requests for vindication including non-PCUSA members
		Allegation changed from Accusation
		Allegations may come from any source
		Effect of admin leave = suspension of ministry until resolution
		Review requested by alleged conducted by 3 members within 45 days; (2,30)
D-7.0 -> D-10.2	Disciplinary Cases	Investigative Commission submit written report to facts alleged within 30 days
		No time limit in initiating a case (from 5 years)
		Accused expected to attend proceedings, (ordinarily)
		Person accused to plead guilty or NG to each change for record
		Witnesses may be either fact or expert witnesses
		Witnesses may be reimbursed for expenses incurred but not given a monetary award
		Parties or counsel shall not communicate with Session/PJE regarding anything
		Loss of quorum results in mistrial and case to be tried again.
		No closed session,(before could request by any party)
		Final decision not permissible until Session/PJC has heard all evidence & closing arguments
		Prosecuting committee shall make opening statement
		No distinction between direct and circumstantial evidence
		Vote of 2/3 to find guilt
	Enforcement	New: Session or Presbytery shall proceed to enforce the decision regardless of an appeal, (replaces a suspension of all proceedings until appeal is decided except in cases of exclusion from ministry)
D-9.0	Censure and Restoration	Adds censure "is never given with malice & vindictiveness but in Christin love to offer correction in error and rstoration of the community. A censure is about the accountability of an individual to the church & should not include names of persons who have been harmed."
	Temporary Exclusion	[D.12.0104h] In the new proposed section, "the council that imposed the censure may approve the restoration..." The shift from SHALL to MAY gives the council permission to not approve the restoration which would allow it to set aside the decision of the PJC. This violates the definition of a PJC and turns it into an Administrative Committee. A PJC is empowered to act, while an AC has to return a recommendation to be acted on by the council that establishes it.
D-10.003	Parties in appeal	Specifies that the parties to a "disciplinary appeal are the person found guilty and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) through the prosecuting of the council that issues the censure."
D-10.04	Withdrawal of Appeal	Clarifies that if all parties ask for withdrawal of the appeal, it can be withdrawn
D-10.0202	Items to be included in notice	Adds a long list of specifics that are to be included in statements of errors alleged

Order of Worship

Call to Worship

Singing Together: Hymn #372 O For a World

O for a world where everyone
respects each other's ways,
where love is lived and all is done
with justice and with praise.

O for a world where goods are shared
and misery relieved,
where truth is spoken, children spared,
equality achieved.

We welcome one world family
and struggle with each choice
that opens us to unity
and gives our vision voice.

The poor are rich, the weak are strong,
the foolish ones are wise.
Tell all who mourn, outcasts belong,
who perishes will rise.

O for a world preparing for
God's glorious reign of peace,
where time and tears will be no more,
and all but love will cease.

Responsive Litany

L: Gracious God, create in us a space of *humility*.

P: Help us to acknowledge that we do not hold all the answers.

L: Holy One, release us from the pursuit of perfection

P: and instead instill in us a desire to learn, unlearn, and learn again.

L: God of mercy, hold us in the midst of our questions

P: Give us patience with ourselves and with each other as we learn to embrace complexity.

L: God of the journey, give us *courage to be transformed by the renewing of our minds*.

P: Encourage us as we travel together on this path of anti-racist living and being.

L: Holy Spirit, instill in us joy and hope

P: Grant us the ability to persevere in prayer, be ardent in spirit, and full of zeal for the work that is before us.

L: God of our lives, as we share this litany together, write these words on our hearts and inspire us to action.

Scripture Romans 12:1-3; 9-13 and Matthew 7:7-8

Meditation

Singing Together: *Seek Ye First*

Seek ye first the Kingdom of God
And His righteousness
And all these things shall be added unto you
Allelu Alleluia

Ask and it shall be given unto you
Seek and ye shall find
Knock and it shall be opened unto you
Allelu Alleluia

Charge and Benediction



Report Primer

Primer for the report submitted for the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area stated meeting, May 18, 2023
by the PTCA Institutional Race & Equity Self-Assessment Team (IREA)

Introduction

In considering how to present a report to the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area, we knew the content needed to be more than just data and numbers. The report had to honor what we heard – both the stories from individuals, the narrative of our faith, and *the collective story we are telling* through our shared life as a presbytery.

Here are some key aspects about the spirit in which we offer both the report and this primer. Using the metaphor of wayfinding and navigation, the report itself is an attempt to map our present and set guide points and invitations toward a hopeful future.

Our Commitments

- **Clarity and honesty** about the realities around race that undergird our history and present as a presbytery, in the PC(USA), and in Christianity, is deeply faithful speech. It's an embodiment of the Reformed Tradition and the gospel of truth and liberation preached by Jesus Christ.
- **This is a self-assessment**, which means that we *all* (including the writers of this report) are a part of the harm – as well as the possibilities for transformation reflected within these pages. No one of us is exempt or “outside” this reality because all of us are a part of the practices, norms, institutions, and systems that make us who we are.
- **This is a starting place.** There is no such thing as a “complete” self-assessment in terms of data, frameworks, or even recommendations. There are many conversations still to be had, but this is a more accurate map than we've ever had – and the recommendations are designed to carry us forward.
- **Our report is a message of hope - not of condemnation.** By following the patterns of our faith, we understand that our collective truth-telling and confession can lead to powerful repentance and healing. Grace, hope, and love are core tenets in these words – including the honest ones about ourselves.

The PTCA collectively commissioned this report, so our recommendations will be focused on the structures of that body – though the data and results are equally drawn from and applicable to congregations.

To that end, throughout this report:

- When we say, “the Presbytery,” we mean every congregation that makes up the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area **and** all the cooperative structures we share like PTCA boards, commissions, committees, officers, and staff
 - When we say “the PTCA,” we mean *only the cooperative structures* we share, such as the Commission on Ministry, the Presbytery Leadership Team, the PTCA staff, and the culture and stated meetings of the PTCA
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- Finally, our most important value is this: **we'll find our way together, guided by God.** We know that not everyone may wish to join this invitation to transformation that we have heard clearly in our conversations, surveys, and focus groups over the past three years, but there it remains: an invitation to life, and life abundant, if only we choose to turn around, and perceive where we stand anew.

May you find grace and hope on this journey, as we did,

Kathy, Megan, Phil, Beth, Riz, Becca, Deborah, Cindy, Alanna, Elsa, and Mary

[The PTCA Institutional Race & Equity Self-Assessment Team](#)

There is no shortcut through a story that needs telling

While we've provided this shorter "report primer" as a tool for conversation at the May 2023 stated meeting of the PTCA, it does not and cannot represent our report itself. These few pages can only *hint* at the stories, theological reflection, and discussion we've invited in the full report.

An encouragement: alongside the more relaxed and readable formatting in the full report, we've made sure the word count of the report is no longer than a long-form news article. The full report is a very attainable read.

More importantly, *the full report is designed to be an experience of spiritual encounter, not just a data summary*, and that can't be replicated here.

Join the deeper conversation by reading the full report [HERE](#)

If you know you can't engage the full report right now, *please do* read on below! And please consider this your invitation to read the full report as soon as you're able.

Purpose/Charge to the Self-Assessment Team

affirmed by the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area at the stated meeting of November 16, 2019:

- o To **understand and claim the gospel imperative** to undertake *antiracism* work as work that examines structures, systems, and norms, not just "attitudes" or "opinions."
- o To **build a common understanding as a presbytery about how racism functions within systems** like our committees, interactions, and norms.
- o To be **honest about our complex history as a presbytery** regarding equity, but also to have a path toward concrete steps for change, including supportive space for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, & people of color) people and communities in the PTCA's boundaries.
- o To develop, from intentional outreach and analysis, **tools for self-analysis, change, and further growth** that we implement together as a presbytery.

In a separate action of presbytery on February 6, 2021, it was noted that "a representative working group will be appointed by the PLT to recommend use of [the \$1,000,000 set asides as Mission Outreach Grants]. The group will be guided by the values and goals raised in the Jubilee Proposal as presented to Presbytery (January 25, 2020), ***the outcome of the Institutional Racism Assessment***, and the learnings of those engaged in the Anti-Racism Pilgrimage." Our specific recommendations regarding these funds are addressed in Recommendation #4 later in this report.

How We Got Here: History of the PTCA

Acknowledging Our History

The Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area traces its origins back to the 1830s with the Pond brothers, Edward Duffield Neill and others. Not only were early Presbyterian churches in the area led by men with mixed legacies around race, but our early memberships included Henry Sibley and other notable early white settlers in Minnesota, whose actions and legacy are also troubling.

Of course, most of us in 2023 would not claim to be the practical and intellectual inheritors of these leaders, but neither have we taken the pains to tell the truth about them: the power, resources, and ideas we may have lived out for many years as a result of their influence, as well as the influence of wider theological trends in Reformed theologies of the time. That means that, even though we have made prophetic statements or had voices that organized for change over the generations, we are, in practice, likely following unhealthy parts of the road maps these founders set out.

A Call to Reorient: Our Theology

Invitation to the Discomfort that comes with Healing

It is true that, for those in our presbytery who have historically and culturally privileged identities like whiteness, or being male, non-disabled, or having a comfortable income or wealth, there are anxieties and costs that come with interrogating and dismantling these parts of our identities. This is a reality which many in our group who identify as white have grappled with in the process of unpacking our theology, our assumptions, and the data. In some ways, this work of Gospel realignment is uncharted territory. But we as a team can testify that the process truly offers healing and liberation. Through the moments of challenge, this work has brought our team joy, humor, courage, and hope.

There is a promise for all of us in reorienting ourselves to the Gospel, especially in deepening our relationships and living into a fuller understanding of who we are as people of God.

Alongside the promise, however, *we must name the cost of continuing to operate as we are/have been*. Continuing to follow the patterns and norms of a hierarchical system of power, voice, and privilege comes with deep relational, religious, and spiritual costs to us all:

- First, we could not claim that we follow Jesus Christ. Instead, we would be following a *distorted image* that does not reflect the fullness of God's image in our midst, and aligns with earthly structures of power rather than the Gospel.
- Second, we would continue to be less than our full selves in community, hindering the expression of God's image in all our lives. Our relationships would lack the breadth, the depth, the trust and accountability, and the joy of being in authentic community with one another.

Beside Scripture and the confessions, the other key guiding document of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is our *Book of Order*, which exhorts us to live as theologians of the cross by living in Christ's transforming love: "The Church is to be a community of faith, entrusting itself to God alone, even at the risk of losing its life."¹

In other words, we are called to embody courage in our journey of faith.

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Check out the [Terms & Definitions](#) at the end of the full report to understand what we mean by key terms we use like "whiteness," which can be a complex idea. Finding common language to talk about important issues is faithful practice!

¹ Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), *Book of Order*: F-1.03.

Our Specific Disorientations

As you read through these ways in which our common life has become “disoriented” from our call to Gospel wholeness and genuine unity (i.e., solidarity with historically marginalized peoples), it will be good to hold these reminders:

- ***This is a primer***, rather than the full report. The data and stories presented here only tell a very small snippet of the story and *leave out some of the most impactful narratives and data* simply because it would be disrespectful to share them without taking time to discuss them without context or time for reflection.
- **Additional clarity is offered in the main report about how we analyzed the data**, the methodology for collecting it, and more.
- **The main report also moves through this data with more nuance and pastoral awareness** that engaging these stories and realities may feel challenging for a variety of reasons. If the data presented here feels “stark,” part of that is simply because this is just a bare-bones overview of a powerful story. So even if this primer is all you have time for right now, it was designed to allow you to participate in a conversation that goes much deeper. With the acknowledgment that *even the full report can’t stand in for the conversations we need to have together*, we’re glad you’re starting here. Our gratitude for your forbearance with the nuance and depth that will necessarily be *missing* from this brief peek at the wider conversation we need to engage together.
- **While it may be tempting to jump to other ways of looking at the data or to look for possible reasons our analysis shouldn’t be trusted, we invite you to refrain from engaging these pages in that spirit.** We understand that there is no way to bring everyone in on the hundreds of hours of self-discovery to arrive here fully with us, nor can a primer stand-in for our full report, but we invite you to let what’s shared here be signposts and indicators that lead you back to the [full report](#) – and *lead us all toward one another* in a spirit of curiosity, compassion, imagination, and self-reflection.

Disorientation One: People as Commodities

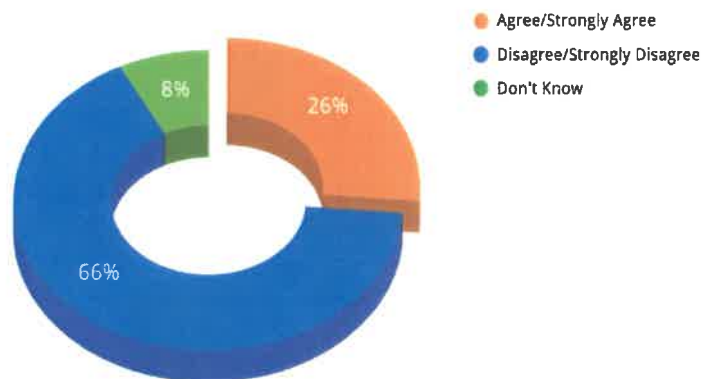
White-dominant culture in our presbytery *prioritizes institutional and congregational survival using metrics as the main tool for assessment of church health*. This impacts people of color individuals and communities, and *all* of us, by reducing people to commodities and relationships to transactions or counts.

Where We Find Ourselves

The data gathered by our self-assessment shows that many within our congregations and PTCA structures are aware that there are times that our focus on maintaining our institutions and structures (and the paid and volunteer energy that requires) actually works *against* our call to value each other beyond what we can “contribute” and to live our call to prophetic and justice-based witness.

For example, congregants and parish pastors were asked how they felt about the statement:

When my church talks about our health and growth, the conversation focuses on membership numbers, financial assets, and number of programs versus quality of relationships.



all responses

Over a quarter of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that it was the case that there is a focus on numbers over healthy community and relationships.²

² For readability, numbers have been rounded in charts (and in narrative when referenced directly) to the nearest whole number, so totals will not add to exactly 100%.

This demonstrates that in many of our congregations there are significant numbers of people who observe that relationships and community tend to come second to standards of measurement that focus on bodies, money and programming.

One statement from the survey noted,

"[my] Congregation sometimes tends to think about the money versus [the] end result,"

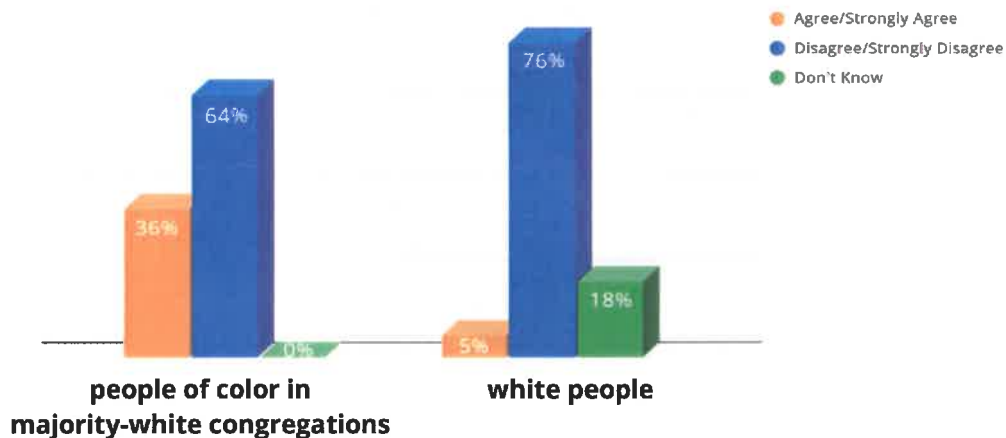
while another noted,

"We have been trying to reframe the metrics we use to assess growth, impact and effectiveness away from numbers and into quality of relationships for more than a decade. We are still mainly stuck."

Responses to other prompts revealed that there are significant impacts as the result of a mindset geared so heavily toward survival and institutional maintenance. Our study found that these impacts tended to "cluster" around marginalized identities and voices, but ultimately the impacts spread to everyone.

One survey question invited people's response to the statement:

People of color are asked to serve on committees primarily because they increase its racial representation quota.



While it was to be expected that many people disagreed with this statement, there was also a significant gap between white people who agreed (5%), and people of color in majority white

congregations who agreed (36%).³ Additionally, almost 1 in 5 white people said “I don’t know” (19%), the impacts of which will be discussed further in Disorientation Two.

While *any* significant number of people in our congregations or PTCA structures agreeing with this statement is concerning, *the gap in communication and experience is critical here*, as are the number of white people who “don’t know” (the third highest total number of “don’t knows” for *all* survey questions), which might be interpreted as part of this “knowledge gap” or a lack of having critical conversations about the impacts of how we engage in our communal life.

Disorientation Two: Overvaluing Hierarchies, Efficiency, and Expertise

White-dominant culture in our *presbytery* over-values *hierarchy, efficiency, and professional expertise*. As a result, within white-majority spaces, certain people and communities, including many people of color or their communities, are forced to work significantly harder for their voices to be heard and their experiences to be seen and valued.

Where We Find Ourselves

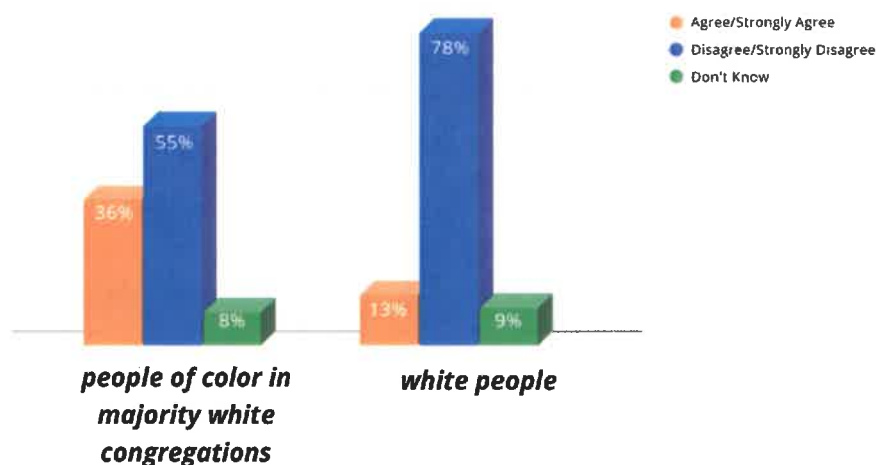
We pride ourselves on orderly agendas, efficiently run meetings, and clear structures and boundaries in the PC(USA) *Book of Order* that guide our work. We enjoy sermons and education that deepen our knowledge, and are pleased when doctors, lawyers, and other highly educated people are a part of our church. Some of the ways we are in community together have even created a robust and skilled readiness to serve and support the wider community when need arises.

And yet, these pillars of identity have also led to certain assumptions that often go unnoticed within our churches and the PTCA. We have adopted attitudes from business culture and Western culture that ultimately contradict our core mission and identity.

This confused identity and functioning showed up in various ways in our self-study, surveys and focus groups. When people responded to this question:

³ In some cases, it was more relevant to sort data between *people of color attending majority-white congregations* and people of color who were part of congregations *predominantly* made up of people of color, to acknowledge the differences in experience around dominant culture. All cases where this occurs will be clearly labeled.

My church favors business, legal and other forms of professional expertise in leadership, undervaluing people's *lived experience and wisdom*, particularly that of people of color



... a full third of people of color respondents who attend majority white congregations agreed that those with formal, advanced training such as doctors, lawyers, bankers, etc., were more highly valued in the church's leadership than those with other types of wisdom and lived experience. Only 13% percent of white respondents agreed.

Indeed, the impacts of these preferences for professional expertise are not only for people of color. Several respondents offered comments about the impact to the entire church community:

"[We] can tend to underuse or not take advantage of all members who could contribute."



"Especially roles that have some element of 'power' have unspoken professional background in field (ex. personnel)"

While this impacts many populations within the church, there are also direct impacts to people of color. For instance, when given this prompt:

The **predominant ways the presbytery and our congregations engage with communities of color is via music, food, worship, and the arts, **rather than** sustained, mutually beneficial relationships.**

... a surprisingly high number of people of all races *agreed* with this statement (27%).

This level of agreement relates back to Disorientation One: that the quality of relationships is reduced to transactions or people are used as commodities. It also is evidence that majority-white

spaces are still in control of *defining what sorts of expertise people of color are allowed to bring into white spaces* (culture, race, etc. but *not* leadership around common identity, nor an analysis of power, nor expertise around most anything besides culture and racial trauma).

This is vital for us to hear: we are being told it is *not* a common practice that people of color are invited to join in collaborative efforts and discussions for long-range planning or meaningful friendship or mutually-beneficial partnerships within our presbytery community. The focus, rather, has been on inviting people of color to be part of educating or, worse, performing their culture for white people *without* mutuality.

Some comments from people of color speak to this:

"We don't feel connected in this presbytery — and it's not because we have not tried. [There is] no space for other ways of being and doing in the collective identities we've constructed and our confusion between our theology and wider social influence."



"I can testify that in the past with this Presbytery, when certain actions occur that negatively affected people of color, they have been asked to let it go because 'it is not enough of you in this organization and we don't have the time to deal with such things.'"

In the end, our hierarchies of power (formalized or informal), and our focus on efficiency and expertise (which inhibits other valuable knowledge and creative possibilities) has negative results for all of us, but especially impacts those of us who belong to groups that have been kept at the margins.

... which leads us to our next Disorientation.

Disorientation Three: Prioritizing Comfort and Control

White-dominant culture in our presbytery prioritizes white comfort resulting in an aversion to risk and the need to maintain control. The impact to people and communities of color is the accommodating of whiteness and the absence of authentic welcome and courageous truth-telling.

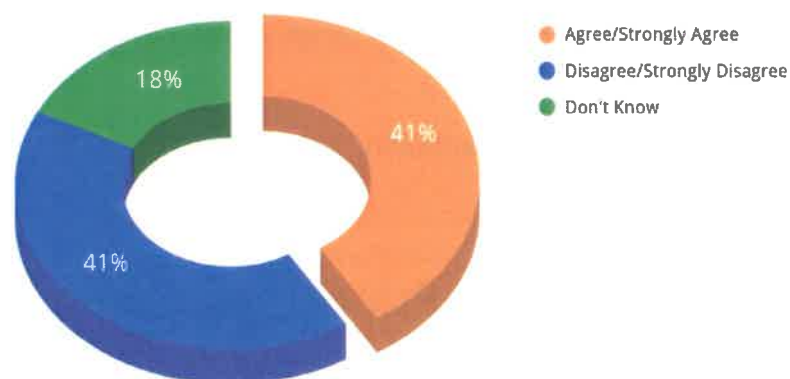
Where We Find Ourselves

For reasons of culture, preference, or otherwise, many of our Christian communities *avoid* outward signs of conflict. Sometimes this is achieved by focusing on politeness, “order,” and a very specific and often unspoken understanding of the meaning of “Christian unity,” but it can ultimately lead to silencing the voices of difference or dissent via avoidance, passive aggression, or appeasement.

We could say this is merely an expression of specific cultural norms (often manifested in the Midwest as “Minnesota Nice” or politeness culture), not impacting much. Yet as an overwhelmingly majority-white presbytery and denomination (93%), this confusion about the meaning of unity can *lead us to favor the experiences, preferences, and norms of the white people who are the majority in many of our congregations* - either numerically, or via structures of power, influence, and access. Doubtless, this is not the intended outcome, but it can nonetheless have a silencing and discounting effect on the realities of those who do not fit the dominant identity and experience.

When people of color were asked how much mission opportunities are chosen on the basis of white people’s *desires* versus actual community needs, there was a clear indication that something is amiss:

As a person of color, the concerns of my community are often dismissed because they do not match with the volunteer interests of predominantly-white congregations/the PTCA.



people of color

Responses showed **41% of people of color respondents agreed** that the real needs of their community are overlooked, in favor of what “works” for white people.

While it is tempting to focus on the even split of “agrees” and “disagrees,” and interpret that as positive, the idea that *any significant percentage* of people of color agrees with this statement, much less such a high proportion, is a sign that there are conversations to be had, and inner spiritual and communal work to be done. In a healthy community, we might expect that hardly

anyone (beyond a statistical level of error) would agree with such an undesirable statement. So even standing alone, the feedback from this question is reason for pause and self-examination.

Consider, then, the great contrast in results of white peoples' responses to this similar prompt:

My congregation selects mission activities based on what would appeal to volunteers *rather than* based on what leads to equity & justice, particularly for communities of color.

Here **89% of white respondents disagreed** that their mission efforts are more self-focused than on true equity and justice for communities of color. In other words, *most* white people who responded to this survey don't see what many people of color are seeing.

The lack of alignment between the responses to the previous two questions indicates that in our congregations, and across the PTCA, we may not yet have a complete understanding of what constitutes community-based equity and justice work or how it is concerned with our collective liberation. We may not have done the inner work to be ready to hear the honest feedback of our siblings in Christ who are people of color.

We may never, before this moment, have realized there was a lack of unity on this point at all.

Our survey clearly revealed this tension between what white people *thought* they were doing and how people of color, repeatedly, experienced those actions differently. This was shown not only through the survey and its comments, but through focus group discussions and through our self-assessment team's power analysis of the PTCA and its congregations.

This overall mismatch between intent and actual impact was helpfully summarized by a white survey respondent, who said:

"I believe [we] want to do the right things. I just have observed our congregation has a lot of information that appeals to our educated congregation and stays away from more difficult 'asks' like difficult and uncomfortable discussions and real examination about where our financial commitments and priorities are."

Authentic welcome implies truly *redesigning how we are together*, not merely allowing others to join in with our pre-set patterns. This means we must have the conversations that allow that redesign, but, more fundamentally, *we have to want to know what we don't currently know*. We have to make ourselves ready to receive loving truth-telling as a gift, rather than an unwelcome intrusion (or an insult).

It is clear from numerous data points that, as a whole, our majority-white presbytery (including individual congregations like the one above) *are not yet perceiving* the ways that our structures and assumptions still center white/majority preferences and comfort, and therefore cause harm.

Recommendations: Our Proposed Route

We've heard clearly the call to see ourselves anew *where we actually are*, and to choose a way forward.

We've heard that we struggle to establish healthy community and meaningful relationships, and that we have a long way to go in terms of investing in people and communities of color in ways that respect the wisdom of those communities.

Unlike the data we shared above, these recommendations apply to PTCA structures and practices only but may be useful for self-studies within congregations since most patterns and themes held true for responses related directly to congregations.

Based on the data as well as our study of PTCA structures overall, **here is our recommended route for our way forward together for the next five years (between mid-2023 and 2028):**

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Want to know more about the PTCA's cooperative structure? [THIS LINK](#) shows an overarching picture where you can Zoom to read more details about each team

Recommendation 1: Shift to relationship-based indicators of health in the PTCA

Vision: Through communal practice and group spiritual formation, each of us take responsibility for our role as leaders and participants in creating *meaningful community*; rich and trust-filled relationships across diverse identities and experience; and healed, gospel-centered collaborations.

- Deepen our practices of community in our PTCA committee meetings;
- Develop and use *qualitative* and *relationship-based* indicators for the health of the presbytery ;
- Expand our understanding of how we are *connected by relationship in our communities*, including through developing land acknowledgement practices for the PTCA; and
- Nominating & Developing Leaders (NDL) and other committees *imagine new and flexible ways of service* with the PTCA.

Recommendation 2: Develop Grounded Community Norms

Vision: We change *how* we interact on a daily level in meetings and community spaces of PTCA to be more courageous, joyful, collaborative, and loving – always grounded in our gospel call to equity and antiracist practice.

- Develop explicit community norms for PTCA spaces;
- All PTCA committees develop gospel-based “mission/vision” statements and antiracist practice goals;
- Implement ways to practice antiracist spiritual capacities in PTCA processes, specifically around discernment, decision-making, and conflict;
- Provide for formation and training opportunities that foster *deepening understanding* of equity, healthy conflict, ethics, and power, which can also function as resources for congregations; and
- Develop *a range of equity-based discernment and discussion tools/capacities* for stated meetings and decision-making spaces in the PTCA to avoid defaulting to Robert’s Rules of Order due to lack of other options.

Recommendation 3: Embed Structures to Support Antiracism within the PTCA

Vision: Ethics & antiracist approaches are explicit, embedded, and enthusiastic parts of PTCA operations and norms, rooted in the Gospel invitation to this work.

- Commission a *Race & Equity Report Implementation Team* (RERIT) by Fall 2023;
- Evaluate the Antiracism Coordinator staff position’s funding for longevity;
- Re-develop an *independent and robust Committee on Representation* (COR) as mandated by the PC(USA) *Book of Order*; and
- *Convene a “5-Year Direction Check” Self-Assessment Team in 2028*, as an expanded version of the RERIT team, to take a more comprehensive view of the PTCA’s progress on implementation of this report and to recommend future steps.

Recommendation 4: Prioritize investment of PTCA resources in the self-determination of communities of color

Vision: We embody trust, foster relationships, and release resources to further the kin-dom of God by seeking the flourishing of people of color.

- Foster *spaces and resources* for people of color gatherings within the PTCA, offering seed funding of \$100,000 for self-determined uses around self-care, community building, speakers as a group, etc.;
- *Invest \$100,000 in capacity-building* among PTCA leaders and commissioners about the Biblical practice of Jubilee, community engagement, antiracism & equity education and other equity-based Christian formation;
- *Preserve \$800,000 as seed funding* for Jubilee actions that arise out of future PTCA antiracist spiritual discernment; and

- *Do a “values audit” of PTCA budgeting and granting processes* to understand our impact on historically marginalized communities and formulate routes for change.

Recommendation 5: Wrestle with the deeper narrative of the racial history in the PTCA

Vision: We clarify the stakes for continued engagement in antiracism work, illuminate relationships needing repair, and recommend models of action.

- *Produce a race & equity history of the PTCA* centering the impacts on and actions of people of color:
 - collect and narrate a gifted income & property provenance history of the PTCA; and
 - include the history of resistance against racism and antiracist theological statements and actions;
- *Develop resources for reflection and action* among PTCA leadership and committees, as well as congregations seeking to do similar work in their own contexts; and
- *Make preliminary/suggested recommendations to the Implementation Team (RERIT) and the Presbytery Leadership Team (PLT)* for future antiracist action.

Charge & Sending

Acknowledgment and truth-telling around the wider story of where we came from, where we are, and *where we want to go* is powerful practice – but it doesn't change us unless we respond.

Response isn't one-time work, but needs to start with making the choice to say YES.

As we contemplate our response, we are journeying to a destination filled with promise of new life - not just for *us* in this presbytery, but for *all people*.

Therefore we go out with courage and hope, reminding ourselves that it is Jesus who helps us.

May it be today and always,

Amen.

Committee on Preparation for Ministry
May 2023

CPM reports that there are 9 persons under care of the committee. There are 3 Inquirers and 6 Candidates, all in good standing. Those persons are listed below:

Jessica Anderson	Inquirer	Church of the Way, Shoreview
Mads Benishek	Candidate	Westminster, Minneapolis
Lisa Ellwoods	Candidate	Buffalo
Will Massey	Candidate	Bryn Mawr

CPM reports that Ryan Currens, Inquirer from Spirit of Life in Apple Valley, has withdrawn from the process.

We are in the process of working with representatives from the Commission on Ministry to establish a process for the preparation and examination of Commissioned Ruling Elders for service in the presbytery.

Our committee is constantly energized by the opportunity to join with Inquirers and Candidates, as well as Ruling Elders pursuing Commissioning, as they discern their calls and engage in preparation for ministry. As the church changes and ministry evolves, it is exciting to hear and see how people are learning about, thinking about, envisioning, and doing ministry in new and different ways. Our committee is also intentional about being welcoming, caring, and supportive of the people under our care and of each other.

We would love to welcome new members to our committee, especially Ruling Elders. You do not need any special knowledge or expertise, just an open heart and a curious spirit. Please feel free to reach out to me or to any committee member to learn more.

Respectfully submitted,

Becca Fletcher, Moderator
Committee on Preparation for Ministry

Committee Members:

David Comstock, TE
John Gay, TE
Alexandra Jacob, TE
Bob Lundberg, TE
Eily Marlow, TE
Sally Narr, RE

**Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area
Board of Trustees
Report to Presbytery
Addendum
May 18, 2023**

The Board of Trustees **recommends:**

MOTION:

Having reviewed all of the information provided by House of Hope, the Board of Trustees recommends that Presbytery approve the loan request of \$5,500,000. The approval by Presbytery is subject to the final approval of the project by the House of Hope congregation during a duly noticed and called meeting of the congregation.

Rebecca Toffelson, Chair, Board of Trustees