

# PRESBYTERY REFLECTION

By Sheppards and Lapsley Moderator, Deborah Thomas

MAY 2024

HOST: OAKMONT CHAPEL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Highlights of the May Presbytery meeting



## Ministry within our Presbytery

The Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley held its Spring Stated Meeting on May 9, 2024, at the Oakmont Chapel Presbyterian Church in Birmingham, Alabama. After opening the meeting with prayer, the moderator, Deborah C. Thomas, a Ruling Elder, validated that a quorum was present after consulting with the stated clerk.

The proposed docket was approved with no objections. Upon docket approval, corresponding members were seated and first-time commissioners were extended welcome.

An omnibus motion that was prepared by the stated clerk in collaboration with the executive council was approved.

### Omnibus Motion:

- Approve the minutes of the February 15, 2024 Meeting.
- Approve requests for absences from today's meeting.
- Adopt an "Electronic Meetings Rule" for this meeting so that virtual attendees seeking recognition from the Chair be allowed to unmute themselves and call for the attention of the Moderator for recognition and obtaining the floor.
- Receive and record the minutes of the Commission to install Rev. Caroline Kelly as Pastor of Grace Presbyterian Church of Tuscaloosa on March 3, 2024.

Rachel Winter, Minister of the Word and Sacrament and pastor of the host church, gave greetings and presided during a Service of Worship and Sacrament. Rev. Lukata Mjumbe, a Corresponding Member from The Presbytery of the Coastlands, gave the sermon that was based upon Matthew 7: 21-27. The Service of Commissioning to the 226th General Assembly was led by the Presbytery's Moderator. (Ruling Elder Debra Love, Teaching Elder Nick Reed, and Young Adult Advisory Delegate Abby Bunn will serve as commissioners).

The Executive Council provided a status report of action items since the Winter Stated Meeting of the presbytery and included the presentation of two overtures for concurrence by the Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley. Moderator Thomas expressed that over the last two months, the executive council had scheduled reviews of the presbytery's commitment to the Matthew 25 Vision and its alignment to mission. Working to fulfill its promise in keeping track of the impact of ministries and sharing stories with the PC (USA) and the presbytery, Vice Moderator Jonathan Yarboro and Minister of the Word and Sacrament, led a Good News Presentation on behalf of the presbytery and facilitated presentations from two congregations.

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Two overtures referred to the executive council by the Bills and Overtures Committee (Nick Reed, Minister of the Word and Sacrament, Chair) were approved by commissioners.

### Approved Overtures

- **OVT-13:** Concur with OVT-013 “On removal of investments in and subsidies for fossil fuels”; Montevallo Session and Susquehanna Valley Presbytery.
- **OVT-016:** Concur with OVT-016 “On amending Book of Order G-2.1002 on Use of Commissioned Pastors” from Palo Duro Presbytery.

Additional motions that were passed during the Spring 2024 Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley are included in the following list.

### Action Items

- **Commission on Ministry**
  - ◇ Approve the Rev. Bruce McLendon to be declared Honorably Retired.
  - ◇ Approve the Rev. Richard Hanna to be declared Honorably Retired.
  - ◇ Approve terms of call for the Rev. In Chan Bae, installed pastor of Korean Presbyterian Church of Birmingham.
  - ◇ Examine and approve the Rev. Lukata Mjumbe, Executive Director of the Alabama African American Civil Rights Heritage Sights Consortium, for Validated Ministry within Sheppards and Lapsley.
- **Commission on Preparation for Ministry**
  - ◇ The CPM recommends that Inquirers Teddy Vaughn and Daniel Killilea be advanced to the Candidacy stage of the ordination process.
- **Nominating and Representation**
  - ◇ Commission on Ministry – unexpired term Class of 2024: Lee Cleveland, South Highland
  - ◇ Permanent Judicial Commission – full terms (six years) Class of 2029: Robert Posey, Independent; James Tucker, FPC Tuscaloosa
- **From the Administrative Council for Five Mile Presbyterian Church**
  - ◇ Approve to have all documents related to sale and closing reviewed by Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley Trustees and be given the authority to execute the contracted sale if the way be clear.

A report from representatives to the Synod of Living Waters was presented. (Representatives: Sharon Schuler, a Minister of the Word and Sacrament, and Judith Baldwin, Ruling Elder).

Additional informational items from agencies of the mid-council were presented.

- Mission Coordination
- Anti-Racism Committee
  - ◇ (A statement on SB 129 on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policies was presented for review and action at the next meeting of presbytery).
- Presbyterian Home for Children
- Living River
- Presbyterian Women

Reports from the General Presbyter, the Rev. Dr. Sue Westfall, and the Stated Clerk, the Rev. Dr. Jay Wilkins were also received.

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Acknowledgments were given to Rev. Rachel Winter and members of the Oakmont Chapel Church for hosting the meeting and for providing a delicious luncheon meal that provided another opportunity for commissioners to share Good News Stories from their congregations on the Matthew 25 Initiative as invited by the stated clerk.

The next stated meeting of the presbytery will be held on August 15, 2024, at Mountain Brook Presbyterian Church, Birmingham.

The meeting closed with prayer.

Grace and peace,

*Deborah Thomas, Moderator*

Additional Highlights from the meeting.

