

**Presbytery of San Jose: Notice of Stated Meeting**  
**Saturday May 4, 2024 at 9:00 am**  
**Hybrid Meeting: Zoom**  
**Presbytery Office/Cornerstone Church, 890 Meridian Way, San Jose**  
Registration link <https://sanjosepby.org/>

**Note: All presenters attend in person, commissioners on Zoom or in person**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>9:00 Welcome</b>                                       | Moderator,<br>Rev. Andy Rausch  |
| <b>9:05 Opening Prayer</b><br><b>Land Acknowledgement</b> |   |
| <b>Reflection</b>   | Rev. Nancy Martin Vincent<br>Executive Presbyter,<br>Synod of the Pacific |
| <b>9:30 Transition to agenda</b>                          |   |
| <b>9:35 Stated Clerk</b>                                  | Rev. Erica Rader  |

Change in the Docket; Quorum call (8 ministers/8 elders/6 churches);  
Corresponding Members; First time attendees; Visitors

**Approval of Agenda and Consent Agenda (All new business must be referred)**

**Consent Agenda:**

1. Motion to approve the February 3, 2024 minutes of the Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of San Jose.(pp.4-36)
2. Motion to approve Agenda
3. Motion to celebrate Communion at September 28, 2024 Standing meeting of Presbytery as the annual celebration of Communion
4. (New Addition 5/2/24) Motion from Financial Affairs: Approve a three year lease between Trinity (San Jose) and Emmaus Rd Church and Home School (An Anglican mission organization)

*Note: Use of church buildings for worship (school chapel) requires approval of Presbytery.*

## **Reports and Announcements Received in Docket**

Draft Minutes from February 3, 2024 Stated Meeting of Presbytery (pp. 4-36)  
Candidate Biography for Rev. Dr. Neal Presa (p.37)  
Reports from Committee on Ministry (pp. 38-43)  
Report from Committee on Preparation for Ministry (p.44)  
Report from Financial Affairs Committee (p.45)  
GA Overtures 13 and 14 (pp.46-52)  
Report from Polity and Government Sub-committee (p.53)  
Report from Watsonville Administrative Commission (pp.54-57)  
Announcement: Clergy Women lunch (p.58)

### **9:45 Executive Presbyter Search (p.37)**

Rev. Anne McAnelly  
Rev. David Watermulder

The Executive Presbyter Search Committee moves that the Presbytery of San Jose  
1) approve Rev. Dr. Neal Presa to the appointed position of Executive Presbyter with  
the recommended employment package 2) approve transfer of membership into the  
Presbytery of San Jose into this validated position 3) elect him as the President of the  
Corporation of the Presbytery of San Jose.

*This action is recommended by the Personnel Committee, the Financial Affairs  
Committee and the Presbytery Coordinating Council.*

### **4) Motion from Coordinating Council to Dissolve the Executive Presbyter Search Committee**

*If prior motions are successful, the Presbytery dissolves the Executive Presbyter  
Search Committee*

Committee members: Elder James Lee (Daesung), Elder Denise Martin (Gilroy),  
Rev. Anne McAnelly (St. Andrew), Rev. Robby Olson (validated-at large),  
Elder Sharon Rowser (Foothill), Rev. Dave Watermulder (Los Gatos),  
Rev. Andy Wong (Foothill)

### **10:15 Break**

### **10:30 Board of Pensions update**

Rev. Christine Long

### **10:45 Committee on Ministry (p. 38)**

Elder Lizanne Reynolds

### **Introduction of new minister members**

### **Second reading and vote on new policy (pp. 39-43)**

### **11:00 Synod of the Pacific updates**

Rev. Nancy Martin Vincent

**11:10 Watsonville Public House**

Rev. Robby Olson

**11:15 Motions from the Session of First Presbyterian Church Palo Alto:**

1) That the Presbytery of San Jose concur with General Assembly Overture 13: On Removal of Investments In and Subsidies for Fossil Fuels (pp.46-48)

2) That the Presbytery of San Jose concur with Overture 14: On Becoming Free from Plastic Pollution (pp.49-52)

**11:30 Mission and Outreach Work Group: Peru Trip**

Elder Mary Green Vickrey

**Commissioning of Peru Mission Team:** Elder David Heacock, Rev. Deborah Troester, Elder Olga Enciso-Smith, Rev. Libby Boatwright, Rev. Karla Kress, Elder Mary Green Vickrey, Elder Barry Vickrey

**11:40 Polity & Government Sub Committee Updates (p.53)**

Rev. Erica Rader

**11:45 Watsonville Administrative Commission**

Elder Denise Martin  
Rev. Julie Center

**11:50 Announcements**

Women Clergy Luncheon (p.54)

**11:55 Stated Clerk**

Rev. Erica Rader

**12:00 Adjournment and Closing Prayer**

Rev. Andy Rausch

Next Stated Presbytery meeting: September 28, 2024 at Presbytery/Cornerstone (Hybrid in person and Zoom). 890 Meridian Way, San Jose

**Minutes of Stated Meeting  
Presbytery of San Jose  
February 3, 2024  
at Northminster Presbyterian Church, Salinas and Zoom**

2024 Moderator, Rev. Andy Rausch, Pastor of Northminster Presbyterian Church, Salinas, opened the meeting at 9:05 by welcoming both in-person and online. “We wish you were here.”

Opening prayer was a hymn, “For the Beauty of the Earth.” Rev. Andy Rausch led a round of “Portrayal” to illustrate how games can be used in Christian Formation in our churches. In his reflection on Acts 2:41-47, he reminded us of the importance of being together. “It’s hard to have all things in common when we’re not in common. ...It’s worth it to be together.”

Outgoing Moderator Elder Elsa Amboy formally installed Rev. Andy Rausch as Moderator and invited the audience to lay on hands. Rev. Andy Rausch was presented with the Moderator’s stole, his gavel, and “just a few reference books.”

**Transition to Agenda**

- Stated Clerk pronounced a quorum, both online and in person.
- No corresponding members were present.
- The Moderator and Stated Clerk welcomed first time attendees and visitors.
- Online, Elder James Lee introduced Andrew Swanson, newly elected Elder of Daesung Pres., attending his first Presbytery meeting.
- Sonya Meza of 1<sup>st</sup> Pres Palo Alto introduced herself as the church’s first “Zoom Elder” who lives out-of-state and is thankful for the zoom connection that allows her to attend.
- Rev. David Watermulder introduced Elder Abby Hoekstra, at the meeting as PCLG’s youngest Elder and first-time commissioner to Presbytery.

**Attendance** *\*Attending by Zoom*

**Ruling Elder Members Present**

**(Synod Commissioners, Past Moderators, Coordinating Council)**

Amboy, Elsa	Panighetti, Carlo
Hamm, Claudia*	Reynolds, Lizanne
Martin, Denise*	Viale, Lynn*
Notor, Nannette*	Zisch, Rosaleen
Odell, Jane*	

**Teaching Elders Present**

Arishvara, Vincent*	Kim, Taelor*	Raines, Jim
Bales, Jennifer*	Lane, Bill	Rausch, Andy*
Bennett, James*	Logan, Molly*	Ross, Neneth
Cabaness, Jack*	McAnelly, Anne	Sohn, Yo (Joe)*
Esterline, Jane*	Olson, Robby	Troester, Deborah*
Evans, Sammie*	Park, Joe	Watermulder, David
Franzen, Bryan*	Peterson-Iyer, Karen *	Woodsmall, Dennis*
Hahn, Taejinn *	Rader, Erica	

**Teaching Elders, Honorably Retired, Present**

Boatwright, Elizabeth*	Bracey, Dale*	Macway, Evie*
Bowles, Robert*	Kress, Karla	McCreath, David*

**Teaching Elders, Not Present**

Althaus, Ryan	Hoffman, Daniel J	McGinnis, Katheryn
Barclay, Annanda	Kim, Han Ho	Minerva, George
Barraca, Jason	Kim, Hardy	Peake, Mark
Boyer, Tim	Koeker, David	Pearson, Marjorie
Browning, Geoff	Mosgofian	Person, Brian
Choi, Don	Kuo, Ruth	Potts, James
Crocker, Douglas	Lai, Hsien-Chang	Reyes-Chow, Bruce
Drescher, Kent	LeClaire, Sharon	Swanson, Erik
Esaki, Ted	Lee, Fred	Van Laar, Trevor
Eschen-Pipes, Kathleen	Lee, Irene Pak	Williams, Chris
Fullmer, Paul	Lee, Jaeguen	Wong, Andy
Hansen, Chris	Lee, Ting-Yin	Wong, Lindsey Woods
Hanson, Duncan	Macway, Evie	Yoon, I Sil
Hejmanowski, Karin	Matusiewicz, Stella	

**Teaching Elders, Honorably Retired/Retired, Not Present**

Allen, Stephanie Lutz	Harrington, Nancy	McCreath, David
Bender, Jim	Harvey, Bill	Menser, Bruce
Bland, Byron	Hollingsworth, Mark	Momrow, Ed
Boatwright, Libby	Hseih, Stephen	Nelson, Jim
Bowles, Bob	Joy, Judith	Norman, Stephen
Bracey, Dale	Kim, David Kwang	Palmer, Marge
Breeden, Edd	Kim, Insik	Rowlinson, Bruce
Bristol, John	Kim, Kyung Jae	Schmidt, Lyle
Burke, John	Kim, Young Han	Smith, Kent
Dosker, Richard	Knowles, Steve	Solis, Dick
Doyal, George	Kwon, Young Bai	Spencer, Dick
Erickson, George	Lee, Joey	Swanson, Nan
Esterline, David	Lewis, Charles	Takarabe, Hei
Gardner, Thomas	Longley, Jack	Thorson, Martha
Hansen, David	Lyke, Brian	Tsai, Andrew

Tyler, Lee

Vilardo, Larry

Yeane, Darrell

**Ruling Elder Commissioners Present**

**Aptos, St. Andrew**

Manning, Pat\*  
Mihm, Eileen\*

**Gilroy**

(none)

**Gonzales, Community**

Beadell, Ken\*

**Los Gatos**

Barry, Beth\*  
Bierly, Reid\*  
Eldridge, Steve  
Hoekstra, Abby  
Smith, Angie  
Thompson, Jeff\*

**Monterey, El Estero**

(none)

**Monterey, First**

(none)

**Mountain View, First**

Edmundson, Bruce\*

**Palo Alto, Covenant**

Bernstein, Frank  
Holsinger, Carol\*  
Kerns, Kathy\*  
Wunder, Ellen\*

**Palo Alto, First**

Choi, Sukgi\*

Forbes, Ellen\*

Meza, Sonya\*

Noble, Lela\*

**Salinas, Lincoln Avenue**

(none)

**Salinas, Northminster**

Gash, Jackie  
Tunstall, Patricia  
Perry, Barbara

**Salinas, St. Phillips**

(none)

**San Jose, Cornerstone**

(none)

**San Jose, Foothill**

Moore, Woody\*  
Rowser, Sharon\*

**San Jose, Santa Teresa**

**Hills**

Barrons, Ross\*  
Burgess, David\*  
Frost, Steven\*

**San Jose, Stone**

Ludwig, Marcia\*  
McCreath, Ruth\*  
Nelson, Steve\*  
Thorn, Alice\*

**San Jose, Taiwanese American**

(none)

**San Jose, Trinity**

Cox, Jon\*  
Parmentier, Tim\*

**San Jose, Westminster**

Barrons, Ross\*  
Burgess, David\*  
Frost, Steven\*

**San Martin**

(none)

**Santa Clara, First**

(none)

**Santa Cruz, Bonny Doon**

(none)

**Santa Cruz, Trinity**

(none)

**Saratoga, Westhope**

Brooksbanks, Susan\*

**Sunnyvale**

(none)

**Sunnyvale, Daesung**

Lee, James\*  
Swanson, Andrew\*

**Watsonville, Westview**

(none)

**Visitors**

**Gonzales Community Church:** Susan Warner

**Northminster:** Terry Heffington, Louis Hembree

**Presbytery Staff:** Diane Case\*, Collette Lynner

**Watsonville AC/Somos:** Julianne Porras-Center

**Westminster Presbyterian Church:** Olga Encisno-Smith

**Action: Presbytery voted to approve Consent Agenda.**

**Consent Agenda:**

- *Motion to approve the November 18, 2023 minutes of the Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of San Jose.*
- *Motion to approve Agenda*

**Reports and Announcements Received in Docket**

Report from Presbytery Coordinating Council – **APPENDIX A**

Statements from GA Commissioners and Young Adult Delegate – **APPENDIX B**

Reports from Committee on Ministry – **APPENDIX C, D, E**

Reports from Stated Clerk and Polity and Government Sub-committee – **APPENDIX F**

Report from Financial Affairs Committee – **APPENDIX G**

Peace and Justice Work Group Report – **APPENDIX H**

Peru trip application materials from Mission and Outreach Work Group – **APPENDIX J**

Northminster Pres Announcement: Explore Theology of Play – **APPENDIX K**

**Committee on Ministry Report, Elder Lizanne Reynolds**

**Action:** Presbytery grants voice and vote at Presbytery meetings to Watsonville Organizing Pastor Rev. Julianne Porras-Center while serving in our Presbytery.

**Amendments to Policy PS-1/PT-6 - APPENDIX D**

The basis of these amendments is to clarify issues that a lot of churches may have struggled with such as calculating vacation. Defaults for certain issues can be overruled by Sessions (there is flexibility for allowing more vacation time, allowing extra time to accrue.) The policy is compliant with California law, which views pastors as employees of their churches. The audience was invited to review a “redline version” and a “clean version” published in the docket.

This policy does not affect sabbaticals. There is a separate policy for sabbaticals.

**Lizanne Reynolds informed the Presbytery about new Minister members - APPENDIX E**

- Rev. Joe Park, new Pastor of El Estero Presbyterian Church
- Rev. James Potts, new Associate Pastor of First Pres Monterey
- Rev. Tom Harris, new Pastor of First Pres. Palo Alto coming onboard soon.

Lizanne Reynolds thanked PNC Liaisons: Elder Frank Bernstein for First Pres., Palo Alto, Rev. Andy Rausch for First Pres., Monterey, Rev. Mark Peake for El Estero Pres.

**Polity and Government Sub Committee Updates, Rev. Erica Rader**  
Rev. Bryan Franzen is attending by Zoom.

**Statistical Report deadline is Feb 10**, ministers are asked to support their Clerk of Session. If your Clerk is asking you about participant numbers and membership numbers. Contact Erica Rader with questions about reporting statistics.

**Boundary Training and Information APPENDIX F**

Rev. Erica Rader referred the audience to Appendix F which highlights differences between Boundary Training and Child Protection Training.

Erica Rader described trainings at the Presbytery Offices for Teaching Elders / Clergy / Minister members / Pastors in San Jose as a “first round,” asking for people who cannot attend to contact the Presbytery. Feedback will be used to plan later offerings at convenient locations.

While the Presbytery’s Boundary Training is not obligatory for Ruling Elders, changes to the Book of Order that the Presbytery approved last summer included an amendment that each council’s policy *shall include* requirements for boundaries training that is separate from child abuse prevention training. The Session is a council, and the Presbytery is a council. Sessions can have their own trainings or come to the zoom sessions that the Presbytery offers to Ruling Elders.

Please reach out to Erica Rader with questions. “Fundamentally we believe people seek to be healthy and whole in their ministry relationships, so our training comes from that orientation. We all know the things we’re not supposed to do, but we should cultivate the ways in which we prevent that, by wholeness, by good relationships with each other, by seeking self-agency and balance.”

Bruce Reyes-Chow developed two Boundaries Training courses for the Presbytery of San Jose: one for Minister members of the Presbytery and one for Ruling Elders. Each course is offered on two different days. It is only required to attend one day.

Bryan Franzen adds other news for Clerks of Session: Session Minutes will be read in October on two different dates: one in San Jose and one located in the South. There will be a training for Clerks in early 2025. Submit questions to members of the Polity and Govt. Subcommittee.

The frequency of training is once every 36 months, for both Safe Church and for Boundary Training.

**Church Health and Growth Work Group, Rev. David Watermulder**

Church Health and Growth Work Group continues to meet to consider grants; most are for new audio/video technology in churches. The work group will plan a pastors’ retreat for a getaway with New Exec Presbyter, when they are hired. David Watermulder solicits your ideas for Church Health and Growth.



**Mission and Outreach Work Group, Olga Encisno-Smith**

Peru mission trip - Info and Application **APPENDIX J**

The Mission and Outreach Work Group is committed to travel every other year to meet our partners in mission in other countries. It is their hope that these trips will permit our congregations to go and see what the Lord is doing in the world. Partnership implies that we exchange ideas and pray for one another. On years we don't travel, we receive our partners in San Jose Presbytery. In 2016 Mission and Outreach Work Group traveled to Indonesia. In 2017 we received our friends from Indonesia here. In 2018 and 2019 we took trips to Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria. This upcoming trip to Peru was planned for 2020. The trip was delayed first by pandemic and later by a major governmental change. Olga Encisno-Smith and Rev. Vincent Arishvara will serve as interpreters.

**Executive Presbyter Search Committee, Rev. David Watermulder**

The search committee meets each week by zoom and in person and appreciates the Presbytery's trust. A strong and diverse field of candidates has been narrowed down; a special meeting of the Presbytery will likely be called to affirm and vote on that person.

**Downtown San Jose Commission/ Westminster Presbyterian Church, Rev. Neneth Ross**

You are invited to the March 7, 6 – 8pm Dedication and Open House for the new Urban Ministry Center and Bill Wilson location, to celebrate completion of construction for the new Bill Wilson Center. Bill Wilson offers counseling, youth services, and an array of support services. Please come support the dedication, connect with Bill Wilson, and enjoy the food and drink. An eventbrite link is forthcoming.

**Watsonville Public House, Rev. Robby Olson**

Final inspection and occupancy has been approved by the city. Brewing is underway. A soft opening will be announced soon! See <http://watsonville.pub> online or Facebook/ Instagram handle @watsonville.pub.

**Peace and Justice Working Group, Elder Collette Lynner**

Peace and Justice Work Group seeks to build relationships with congregations and members of those congregations who want to take action to support justice, offering resources, support, and education. The work group also continues to help build relationships with the most directly-impacted members of the community in the pursuit of peace and justice.

Contact chair, Elder Meredith Hurley [pjwg@sanjosepyb.org](mailto:pjwg@sanjosepyb.org) to receive a quarterly newsletter from the Peace and Justice Work Group. Members of the Presbytery are welcome to send Meredith a peace and justice related image and caption to post on Instagram (@sjpby\_pjwg )

Please join Westhope Presbyterian Church and the Peace and Justice Work Group for a February discussion series “Seeking the Roots of current issues through Black/African History.” **APPENDIX H** Since 2020, Westhope has been building a relationship online with a predominantly Black congregation in South Carolina with Rev. James Richard. This series begins with two online sessions (February 5, 12), and culminates in an in-person celebratory meeting and dinner at Westhope Presbyterian Church in Saratoga.

**Stated Clerk, Rev. Erica Rader**

Rev. Erica Rader thanked Rev. Bill Lane in sound booth and thanked Northminster Presbyterian Church for hosting the meeting. Presbytery returns to Northminster in November.

**Announcements**

Rosaleen Zisch, PWP Moderator, Elder from Stone Church reminded us that March 1 is World Day of Prayer. The Stone Church Sanctuary will open for meditative prayer, music, and words of wisdom from women in Palestine.

Elder Steve Eldridge, Presbyterian Church of Los Gatos, invited the Presbytery to join 2<sup>nd</sup> annual post-covid Messiah Sing, 7pm Palm Sunday March 24, 2024 at Los Gatos Presbyterian Church.

Rev. David Watermulder, Presbyterian Church of Los Gatos, asked for blessings on Elder Steve Eldridge and his wife Brenda as they move in retirement, and for prayers for Paul Hoekstra in hospital. Paul is the father of Elder Abby Hoekstra.

Rev. Julianne Porras-Center Organizing Pastor of AC Watsonville invites you to Somos Watsonville, a newly renovated youth space, community gathering space, and coffee shop. Open Monday – Friday 2-5pm for food service and other hours for events.

Rev. Andy Rausch called the audience’s attention to gift bags: a set of dice and a page of dice games. He invited participants to lunch, to play tabletop games on display in the lobby on the way to lunch, and then after lunch, to participate in a talk on “Theology of Play” using board games by Rev. Bill Lane.

**Moderator Andy Rausch closed the meeting in prayer.**

**Meeting adjourned 10:38 am.**

**Next Stated Presbytery meeting: May 4, 2023 at Presbytery/Cornerstone 890 Meridian Way, San Jose**

## Coordinating Council Report

### Information items:

#### General Assembly 226 Commissioners

In December, the Coordinating Council elected these three GA 226 Commissioners who provided their application and nomination information to the Coordinating Council:

Teaching Elder Commissioner: Rev. Dr. Bryan Franzen, Westminster

Young Adult Advisory Delegate : Elder Sebastian Salazar, Westminster

Ruling Elder Commissioner: Elder Roseleen Zisch, Stone Church

Our Standing rules permit the Coordinating Council to act on emergent business, and our Presbytery's submission of our Commissioners and YAAD by the December deadline required that the Coordinating Council act on these nominations. No other nominations were received.

**The Coordinating Council met on January 18 by Zoom.** The Chair of the Coordinating Council for 2024 is Elder Carlo Panighetti.

The planned dates/locations for 2024 Presbytery meetings is as follows:

Feb 3 2024 - Northminster Pres, Salinas (Hybrid)

May 4 2024 - Cornerstone Church/Presbytery Office (Hybrid)

Sept 28 2024 - Cornerstone Church/Presbytery Office (Hybrid)

Nov 23 2024 - Northminster Pres, Salinas (Hybrid)

Each will be offered in a Hybrid In-Person and Zoom. Presenters will be asked to attend in person.

The Rev. Dr. Bryan Franzen

Personal background in the Presbyterian Church;

My grandfather, the Rev. John B. Wild, baptized me at the Covenant Presbyterian Church in West Des Moines, Iowa. When my family moved to Illinois we began to attend Knox Presbyterian Church in Naperville, Illinois where I was active in the youth group and the church's mission committee. Before college, Knox sent me to be a missionary in Sisseton, South Dakota where I had the joy of working with the Dakota People. In college I became involved working with youth at the Westminster Presbyterian Church in Decatur, IL and later became youth director at the Monticello Presbyterian Church.

From college, Millikin University, a Presbyterian-related college in Decatur Ill, where I received a BA in Religion, I went to San Francisco Theological Seminary in San Anselmo, CA to receive my Master of Divinity with an emphasis in World Christianity in 2000. In 2011, I graduated from Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, GA with a Doctor of Ministry in Gospel and Culture.

I have been working for Presbyterian churches since I graduated from high school and went on that mission to Sisseton, South Dakota. In addition to missionary work prior to ordination, I worked as a Youth Director, Student Minister, and Chaplain. My two previous calls were:

- Pastor/Head of Staff of the First Presbyterian Church, Hightstown, NJ
- Pastor/Head of Staff of the First Presbyterian Church, Council Bluffs, Iowa

Personal hopes and desires for the Church;

My current concern for our church is that we might find civility and a focus on how we build each other up in faith. I believe that the church should be a place where we welcome all types of families and individuals, young and old. I also know that the strongest faith comes when people are encouraged to explore and question, be challenged, and ultimately grow in their own understanding and relationship with God.

Brief descriptions of several significant issues facing the Church;

The Westminster shorter catechism states, "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever." While seemingly straightforward, many battles have been waged over what it means to glorify God. Explanations and debates over centuries have polarized the church. Today we are caught in the middle of a revolution in the church, forced to scrutinize between tradition, faith, and belief. We must reexamine what it means to Glorify God.

Being raised in a mission-oriented home, I find that one of the most important ways to glorify God is to seek justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with our Lord. Thus, I feel that it is important for us to be open to all. When we are open to others, we open ourselves to God. When

we are more inclusive and tolerant, we are able to have a truly honest discussion of theological issues.

I find it crucial that as a church we rediscover the importance of dialogue and seeking, knowing that no one person has the complete insight into God, and that those who espouse hate go counter to the glory of God.

I believe that we have fallen into a trap as a church of buying into what society says is success rather than honoring individuals as gifts of God. Power in the Church, just like our community is far too often held within the privileged or wealthiest communities and success is mark with numbers rather than impact. Which often leads the church to make decisions that does not always include the voices of the impacted.

I also think that we sit in our privilege way too often, helping with things we like and often coming up with missions and outreach that fit a narrative rather than helping out individuals. I believe that we need to embrace trauma informed justice work. Empowering the affected communities to lead the change while walking along side to support and respond.

A statement that, if elected, she/he intends to be a General Assembly resource for the Presbytery in the year following service as commissioner.

If elected, I intend to be a General Assembly resource for the Presbytery until the next General Assembly.

Sebastian Octavio Salazar

226<sup>th</sup> General Assembly Response Requirements

Response A: Personal background in the Presbyterian Church.

Here is a quick personal background of the Presbyterian Church. After asking my mom, “Why we don’t attend Church?”, I began attending First Presbyterian Church of San Diego. Less than a year later, my father got a job in Silicon Valley, and we had to move. When moving, my parents enrolled me in the private Catholic institution, and we started going to mass at Westminster Presbyterian Church. Slowly, I began to identify differences between Catholicism and connect more with Presbyterianism.

To make a long story short, I examined my beliefs and relation with God. My conclusion was that I value and identify most with Presbyterians because of its commitment to theology. Many others believe that by critiquing established beliefs it expresses doubt in one’s faith. The reality is the opposite. In examining one’s beliefs, one either proves how robust their beliefs are, or identify old, irrelevant, or even dangerous beliefs and discard them. It is this that I resonate so deeply with. During my time at Catholic institutions, I noted how prevalent dogma was throughout. This is not the case in Presbyterian Churches, and it is this commitment to critical thinking that I am a Presbyterian. (The 226 GA is a concrete example of commitment to reason through examination of our doctrine!)

Response B: Personal Hopes and desires for the Church.

A personal hope for the Church is to see a major emphasis on helping others in concrete programs, charity, and support. The goal of organized religion ought to be to connect people to God. I believe that people can only develop their connection with God if certain necessities for living are met. If our mission is to connect people with God, we must first address their necessities of living, so that they may then develop their relation with God (Similar to Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs).

Response C: Brief descriptions of several significant issues facing the Church.

**Homelessness:** As mentioned before, one of these necessities for living includes shelter and food. I have already seen how my own Church has dedicated time to the homeless in the form of the Bill Wilson Center, but I hope to see a denominational change in which Presbyterians Church are required to dedicate some form of time, money, space, or resources to those without a home.

**Mental Health:** In this contemporary era, isolation is a leading variable in mental health. There are numerous cases of dangerous individuals hurting others because of a shattered mental state from the lack of an outlet, especially among youth (but not limited to). Some ways to help could include requirements for Churches to have access to a therapist, visits to the lonely (like elderly), focusing on community engagement and congregation growth, expansion of youth groups in Presbyterian Churches, or even a curriculum for youth and adults on how handle stress.

**Climate Change:** Climate change is a universal problem. It is uniquely a problem that affects everyone — the rich, the poor, the old, the young, and so on. If humans live on Earth, it affects all. The significance of the issue is well documented, but some potential concrete solutions for the Presbytery could be reducing carbon footprint, sustainability, and water conservation.

Response D: A statement that, if elected he intends to be a General Assembly resource for the Presbytery in the year following service as commissioner.

Yes, I, Sebastian Octavio Salazar, intend to be available as a resource for the Presbytery throughout the following year even if I should travel.

**ROSALEEN M.G. ZISCH**

**1228 Rodney Drive  
San Jose, CA 95118**

**Phone: (408) 723-8456/408-373-9043  
Email: rmgzisch@gmail.com**

**TEACHING EXPERIENCE** Herbert Hoover Middle School & Edwin Markham Junior High, SJUSD and 2002-Current at San Jose State University Dept. Education= Supervisor-Social Science Teacher Candidate

**PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH** Stone Church of Willow Glen

Elder (two terms) and Deacon, CE Director, Youth Director, Church School Teacher, Chair of Vacation Church School, Mission Coordinator, Moderator of Presbyterian Women for San Jose Presbytery, Curriculum Writer for PCUSA “We Believe”, APCE member & workshop leader, Honorary Life Membership PW

**PERSONAL HOPES AND DESIRES FOR THE CHURCH**

Our church has made both good and bad decisions over the years. As a life long Presbyterian, I have watched it change over the years. I remember my church at age 15 not sponsoring any dancing for a formal party. Today at our church youth group we would not sponsor a formal event. Casual is key. The atmosphere and activities that the church sponsored have changed as have the number of kids involved. I'd love to see our church grow. Reaching the young where they are and finding our Lord to guide their path.

Our church has leaders that are gifted but are not reaching much of their congregation due to communication issues. Reaching people and then getting the message out on a regular bases is a challenge. Our old ways of organizing people is unique for religious groups but so many don't understand it. We have rules that I see as valuable and many don't get them. We draw membership from other faiths who never get to know why our Book of Order does work. Making the language friendly & theology simple can be a challenge. To grow, this is necessary.

Understanding the history of the church is another area that I hope will be addressed. Apologies to the Native Americans /indigenous people have been formally made a few years ago. But there is little happening to teach our members about local tribal groups who occupied the land their church sits on today. What happened? Why it happened? What should we do about it today? Questions we need to address.

**Issues and Hopes -** “Peace and Justice” work is vital to the Church's future. With war in the Holy Lands it makes our position difficult. Understanding why this conflict continues to flare up leaving the innocent dead is difficult to see on TV. Our world has many regions that make me cry. Peace is impossible without justice. The stories of this land and the people there, must be shared and prayers offered for all of them.

If selected to be a commissioner for San Jose Presbytery, I will be happy to share what I learn at the 226th General Assembly

Presbytery of San Jose Committee on Ministry  
Report to Presbytery February 3, 2024

Items for Docket:

1. Approve voice and vote for Julianne Center, Organizing Pastor of Somos Watsonville, as part of an orderly exchange of ministers for a UCC pastor.
2. Proposed amendments to Policy PS-1(PT-6) – Minimum Terms of Call (First Reading)

Information Items:

1. COM approved the following agreements during November 2023 through January 2024:
  - a. Agreement between Stone Church and Rev. Bruce Reyes-Chow for Transitional Pastor services effective Nov. 1, 2023.
  - b. Agreement between First Presbyterian Church of Palo Alto and Rev. Nan Swanson for Bridge Pastor services effective Dec. 1, 2023.
  - c. Agree of separation between Stone Church and Rev. Irene Pak Lee effective Feb. 28, 2024
2. COM approved Rev. Kent Drescher's request to release him from ordination on November 13, 2023.
3. COM conducted a "fit" interview for Rev. Joseph Kwang Park and approved his transfer of membership to the Presbytery contingent on the vote of the El Estero Presbyterian Church's congregation to call Rev. Park, which occurred on Dec. 3, 2023.
4. COM conducted a "fit" interview for Rev. James Potts and approved his transfer of membership to the Presbytery contingent on the vote of the First Presbyterian Church of Monterey's congregation to call Rev. Potts as their Associate Pastor, which occurred on November 19, 2023.
5. COM conducted a "fit" interview for Rev. Tom Harris, approved his Terms of Call, and approved his transfer to the Presbytery contingent on the vote of the First Presbyterian Church of Palo Alto's congregation to call Rev. Harris as their pastor, which occurred on January 7, 2024 (March 4, 2024 start date).
6. COM approved Rev. Bryan Franzen's sabbatical for April-September 2024.
7. COM scheduled an exit interview with Rev. Irene Pak Lee.
8. The Watsonville Administrative Commission (WAC) has formed a corporation – Somos Watsonville, Inc. – for the new ministry at the former First Presbyterian Church of Watsonville property and is seeking 501(c)(3) nonprofit status from the IRS. The WAC members comprise the corporation's board of directors.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lizanne Reynolds  
COM Chair



**COM- First Reading on Policy Amendment PS-1/PT-6**

COM Background on proposal to amend PS-1-PT6 “Minimum Terms of Call”

- The Change to the “Policy Statement” updates its scope.
- The change to “Session Responsibilities” adds to our current practices.
- Under the “Components for the Minimum Terms of Call”, we clarified the amount of “Vacation” to be accrued each year to be 30 days including weekends but not federal holidays.
- The Department of Industrial Relations (DIR) sets the laws and regulations around labor law. [https://www.dir.ca.gov/dlse/FAQ\\_Vacation.htm](https://www.dir.ca.gov/dlse/FAQ_Vacation.htm)
  - DIR places restrictions on the employer in fulfilling their obligations:
    - DIR rules state that earned vacation is considered wages as it is earned, therefore we need to have a policy about the rate that vacation is earned.
    - DIR rules state that vacation cannot be clawed back if the employer allows it to be taken before it is earned therefore, we need a policy stating that vacation needs to be tracked. Pastors should have the flexibility to take vacation when they need to with session approval if they have not accrued sufficient vacation. Note that vacation is considered wages by the DIR.
    - DIR states that employers can encourage employees to take their vacation during the year but cannot mandate it. However, employers can set a cap on the maximum amount of vacation that can be accumulated. Therefore, we need to set a cap on the amount of vacation. Industry standard is 1.5 times the annual accrual amount. We should encourage our pastors to take their vacation each year as part of their selfcare.
    - DIR states that upon termination, unused vacation must be paid at the employee’s pay rate. Therefore, we need a policy giving how to calculate the payment at the time of pastoral dissolution.

Presbytery of San Jose

Policy PS-1(PT-6)

Effective Date: ~~11xx/19xx/2024~~2022

## MINIMUM TERMS OF CALL

### Policy Statement

The Presbytery of San José requires that terms of call for all pastors include the following categories: salary and housing, auto allowance, study leave, Board of Pensions dues, and vacation. It is the responsibility of each church to make it possible for all ordained staff to find and afford decent and appropriate housing reasonably close to the church. Additionally, the Presbytery requires that each church comply with federal, state and local government tax, vacation and salary requirements.

### Rationale

The Presbytery of San José provides this information in order to guide congregations in fulfilling their commitment to pay fairly the ministers who serve them.

### Responsibilities

#### Committee on Ministry (COM) Responsibilities

At the request of any session, personnel committee or pastor, COM shall provide a representative to be present for salary negotiation.

COM shall insure that all arrangements with an incoming pastor are in writing, and are clearly understood by the pastor and the session.

COM shall consider a particular church's request for exemption from this policy.

COM shall report to Presbytery the annual cost of living (COLA) figures as reported by the Social Security Administration, with the annual salary component adjustments reflecting these figures (See Appendix A for Methodology)

#### Minister Responsibilities

Ministers shall familiarize themselves with this policy.

Ministers shall report annually to Presbytery the approved terms of call.

**Presbytery of San Jose****Policy PS-1(PT-6)****Effective Date: ~~11xx/19xx/2022~~2024****Session Responsibilities**

The session shall recommend annually to the congregation a salary that recognizes with fairness the unique gifts the pastor brings to the church, and in any event shall recommend to the congregation Terms of Call that meet or exceed the minimum terms of call set forth in Appendix A. The congregation shall vote whether to approve the Terms of Call.

The session may allocate as reimbursable such professional expenses as:

- a. travel and living expenses for activities associated with performance of duties (e.g., attendance at General Assembly);
- b. hospitality expenses;
- c. book allowance;
- d. professional organizations and publications;
- e. continuing education expense for ministry-related courses other than those taken during study leave.

The session shall explain the components of the terms of call to the congregation.

The session may request COM to grant an exemption from this policy, stating reasons for the request.

**Stated Clerk and Executive Presbyter Responsibilities**

The Executive Presbyter and/or the Stated Clerk shall maintain records of terms of call for each minister.

**Additional Responsibilities/Information**

Congregations and ministers may agree to allocate the Salary and Housing components of the minimum Terms of Call in a manner that meets both of their needs as they see fit, consistent with requirements of local, county, state, and federal taxing authorities

See other Presbytery policies ([www.sanjosepby.org/policies](http://www.sanjosepby.org/policies))

See Board of Pensions ([www.pensions.org](http://www.pensions.org))

Presbytery of San Jose

Policy PS-1(PT-6)

Effective Date: ~~11xx/19xx/2022~~2024

## Appendix A

## Components for the Minimum Terms of Call

The minimum Terms of Call consist of the following components:

- **Minimum Salary and Housing:** For a given year, the amount in Appendix B from the preceding year, indexed by the Social Security Administration Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA). See <https://www.ssa.gov/cola/>. The actual housing provided shall take into account the particular minister's reasonable needs but shall, at a minimum, provide a two bedroom residence within a reasonable driving distance of the church or an equivalent cash allowance.
- **Effective Salary:** Typically Salary and Housing. The Board of Pensions may call for inclusion of other compensation as Effective Salary. Refer to The Board of Pensions publication "Understanding Effective Salary." See <https://www.pensions.org/file/what-we-offer/benefits-guidance/forms-documents/Documents/pln-103.pdf/>.
- **Board of Pensions:** The yearly designated dues (medical, pension, and death and disability) for Member + Family. (If a covered partner has access to qualified healthcare coverage, a waiver may be granted for the eligible family members.) ([www.pensions.org](http://www.pensions.org))
- **Auto Allowance**
- **Study Leave:** Minimum requirements are 14 days per calendar year and \$1000 (reimbursed expense); refer to PS-6, *Use of Study Leave*, for additional requirements.
- **Vacation** — ~~One month~~ {30 calendar days. ~~The 30 days shall include weekends but not federal government holidays. A pastor shall accrue vacation at a rate of 2.5 days per month as of the first day of each month unless a church session approves a different vacation accrual schedule. With session approval, a pastor can take vacation days before having sufficient accrued days. Session shall have a mechanism to track accrued and taken vacation days and report them to the pastor.~~  
The maximum amount of accrued vacation is shall be 45 days unless a church session approves a different maximum amount (but not less than 30 days). At dissolution of a pastoral relationship, reimbursement for unused but accrued vacation is shall be calculated by multiplying the effective salary by the number of unused accrued vacation days and dividing by 365.

**Presbytery of San Jose**

**Policy PS-1(PT-6)**

**Effective Date: ~~11xx/19xx/2022~~2024**

**APPENDIX B**

Minimum effective salary, by county in which the church is located, shall be as follows for calendar year 202X4:

Santa Clara County:      ~~\$111,417~~\$114,982

Santa Cruz County:      ~~\$93,373~~\$96,361

Monterey County:      ~~\$68,372~~\$70,560

## Rev. Tom Harris- Brief Biography

My family moved to the barrier islands on the east coast of Central Florida when I was less than a year old. Until I left for college, we lived in a house about a mile from the beach. I would ride my bike there. Across the street was undeveloped Florida scrub land including a murky lake. I spent hours exploring this area. To the west, I could ride my bike to my grandparents house located on the Banana River Lagoon in the Indian River Estuary. We were a boating family and I was often on the water in some kind of boat. I go to the trouble to describe this area because my first sense of awe, wonder, and reverence was experienced in this portion of God's Creation. I still find God in the natural world.

My mother faithfully attended a local Presbyterian church. My Father was somewhere between an atheist and an agnostic and had pretty antagonist feelings about church. My mom brought me to church with her until sometime in elementary school I asked to stay home with my dad and was allowed without argument. We still attended her church as a whole family on Christmas Eve and Easter every year and I have good memories of those services.

In high school I was invited by a friend to a youth group at another Presbyterian Church in town. I took to it immediately. I enjoyed the programmed fellowship which helped me overcome my shyness and awkwardness. I enjoyed the singing and Bible study. Reading the Bible was new to me and I found it enthralling. I read it twice through before I finished high school. I did not know it then but this PC(USA) church was very conservative, evangelical, and somewhat charismatic. I didn't know those terms at the time, but I did not know any alternatives and found the idea of invisible powerful forces just below the service of reality very appealing. I also appreciated the clear and easy teachings about right and wrong offered in that context at that time in my life.

When I went to college at Clemson University, I quickly got involved with the Presbyterian Student Association. There I was introduced to historical and literary critical Biblical interpretation and the idea that the church should be out in the world helping the poor and disadvantaged. I also learned about social justice. These ideas offered me an alternative to what I had been taught in High School youth group and they made a lot more sense to me. I was beginning my long journey as a progressive Christian.

The vocation of ministry was at first a fairly rational decision. I loved church, the Bible, people, and especially being present in very sacred moments, and I was a pretty good writer and public speaker. I got married to my wife the summer I graduated from college while she still had two years left to go. I did a variety of social work kinds of jobs and a short stint as an Interim Christian Education Coordinator at a Presbyterian Church. When my wife finished college we left for San Francisco Theological Seminary.

The first church I served after seminary was in Deckerville, Michigan. The church had about 100 members and the town had about 1000 people. I enjoyed small town life, but it was very isolating for my wife and our newborn son. So, after a couple years, I accepted a call in North Charleston, SC. This was her hometown and close to her loved ones. That church had a very conservative element and my advocacy for LGBTQ equality was met with stiff resistance. There was an effort to dissolve the pastoral relationship but the Presbytery brought in a mediator and

the very conservative folks found that they were in the minority in the congregation, and I agreed to adjust my preaching to be less prophetic. However, I also knew I needed to find a call where I could lead a congregation excited about social justice work. I found that church in Baltimore, Maryland at Govans Presbyterian. I have served there for 17 years, and though I find that everything is going very well in so many ways, I feel called at this time in my life to make a change; to find a new challenge. My youngest child has now gone to college and we have the freedom to explore a new chapter in our lives. I am looking for a theologically and socially progressive church where I can focus on preaching, teaching, community outreach, and pastoral care.

## Autobiography of Joseph(Joe) Park

### **Background and Family Introduction**

I was born as the youngest of four children in a pastor's family. My mother, who was the wife of a poor pastor serving a small island church in South Korea, struggled to give birth to me due to anemia. It may sound like a story from a Christian novel, but I, as a baby, was deemed hopeless by the midwife immediately after birth. My mother prayed fervently to God to save her baby, and by God's grace, I was miraculously spared from death. Growing up, I constantly heard, "You were almost a lost child, but God saved you. Therefore, you must dedicate your life to God who granted you life." This message was ingrained in me deeply. Whenever adults asked what I wanted to be when I grew up, I would promptly reply, "I will be a pastor and live for God." Despite this, I hadn't personally encountered Jesus Christ and continued a culturally-influenced religious life until middle school.

Let me take a moment to talk about my mother, who is now in heaven. She was the third among eight siblings in a superstitious non-believer family. As a teenager, she fell into nihilism and planned suicide, but her destiny changed after attending a revival meeting at a local church, orchestrated by God's amazing providence. My mother became the first convert in the staunch Choi family, leading her entire family to salvation and guiding her two younger brothers (my uncles) to become pastors. Today, when I see myself, my brother, and two cousins serving as pastors in the United States and Korea, it's astonishing how God transformed a family on the brink of destruction through a young girl contemplating suicide.

I remember our family always struggling financially. However, looking back, we were a harmonious family in Christ, gathering every evening for family worship. I attended elementary, middle, and high school in Seoul, and immigrated to New York towards the end of my high school years. My parents had to give up migrating due to my father's ministry, so in essence, my move was both immigration and study abroad.

### **Testimony of Faith**

In my second year of middle school, I attended the 'New Year Fasting Prayer Meeting' with my uncle, who dedicated himself to the ministry. I joined out of curiosity and competitiveness, but that prayer meeting became a turning point in my life.

One evening during the fasting prayer, I realized my immense sinfulness before God and truly believed in Jesus Christ, who died and resurrected for my sins. At that moment, I confessed all my sins and accepted Jesus Christ as my personal Savior and Lord. What had been a mere repetition of wanting to be a pastor became a personal confession of faith.



When I became a high school student, I moved to New York, facing cultural shock and language barriers, which shook my dedication to God. In college, I thought that someone with weak faith like me serving as a pastor might harm God's kingdom. However, in my junior year, a sermon by a visiting pastor at a college retreat about God using the weak ignited a passionate realization in my heart. I became convinced that God was calling me to pastoral ministry, and I rededicated myself to the Lord at that retreat.

Rev. James M. Potts

I was born and raised in Danville, IL; I am the youngest of four siblings having three older sisters. Growing up, my family attended First Baptist Church; my sisters and I all attended the First Baptist Christian School. It was here at this school in jr. high, I began to feel God calling me to ministry.

I excelled in music throughout high school. My plan was that I could teach music in a local school system while also serving in a local church. I took a year off after high school, before attending Maranatha Baptist Bible College in WI. for one semester. During my brief time there, I was told that I did not have enough classical piano training to continue in the program. I was told that I could change my major or I could take time off, build up the skills I needed, and return in a year or so.

I decided to take time off. However, it wasn't just to build up the piano skills. By that point in my life, I knew that I was gay. I'd known for quite a while, but I wasn't ready to come out yet. I began working with a piano teacher back in my hometown while also taking classes at the local community college. It was there that I began to question many of my own beliefs I had been taught at the Baptist Church.

After coming out, I began reaching out to all the churches in town asking what they taught and believed about LGBTQ+ people. The only pastor to respond was the pastor of the PCUSA church. I started to skip services at the Baptist church only to begin attending the Presbyterian Church. It turns out that my piano teacher was the organist there. This helped because she introduced me to so many people who have become like family to me.

The pastor asked me to get more involved in different aspects of ministry; but having heard that I was going to hell all my life, I was skeptical. As I got more and more comfortable volunteering in different areas, the pastor took me to lunch one day and told me that he felt I had many gifts for ministry and that I should consider seminary. I remember being shocked, yet also feeling affirmed. I remember asking him if gay people could serve as pastors or if they must stay in the closet. I remember him being very honest with me that the denomination (at the time) was still struggling with this, but that there were many people doing the hard work to make sure all God's children were fully included at the table and in positions of leadership.

In 2012 I participated in the Young Adult Volunteer (YAV) program through the denomination. I served in Chicago working in an after-school program on the west side. I also taught music to preschoolers twice a week. While there, I was introduced to McCormick Theological Seminary. I applied and was accepted even though I didn't have a bachelor's degree at the time. While in seminary, I grew more spiritually, and my faith deepened.

After graduating from seminary, I went to Cincinnati, OH to complete a Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) internship at the Veteran's Affairs hospital. While there, I offered pastoral care to veterans and their families. This was an incredible learning opportunity while also growing even more in my faith.

After finishing CPE, I relocated to Hollywood, FL and served for a year as the Director of Family Ministry at First Presbyterian Church. From there, I went to Nashville, TN., to serve as the Director of Children's Ministry at Second Presbyterian Church. While in Nashville, I became certified ready to receive a call; I also finished my undergrad degree in psychology with a concentration in child and adolescent development.

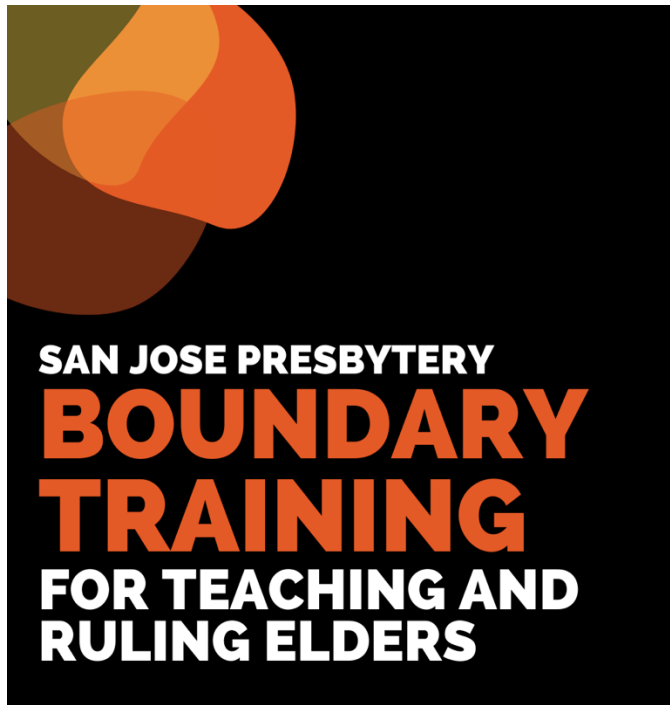
When the pandemic happened, I took some time to discern what would be my next step in ministry. My discernment led me to seek a solo pastor call at a small church at a small church in rural Illinois.

When the FPC Monterey opportunity came along, I began to pray about whether it was something I should consider or not. The more I prayed about it and the more I talked with the APNC, it became clear that this was where God was leading me. I'm excited about the opportunity to partner with the good folks there and to get back to my passions of Christian education and faith formation.

I am currently working on a doctorate in educational ministry (DEdMin) at Columbia Theological Seminary. Outside of ministry, I am an award-winning quilter always looking ahead at the next quilt to make. I also really enjoy baking and trying new recipes.

**Information for Clerks of Session**

- Statistical Reporting to the Office of the General Assembly is due on February 10. Clerks have received information about this reporting.
- Session Records Review for 2024 will be held on October 19 and 26, locations to be confirmed. One will be held in San Jose and the other will be held in Santa Cruz County.
- We will be establishing a Clerk of Session Newsletter, to support our Clerks. If there is a change to your Session's clerk please contact Collette Lynner to update our list [collette@sanjosepby.org](mailto:collette@sanjosepby.org)



## DATES & DETAILS

Boundary Training is required for both Ruling and Teaching Elders. Led by Bruce Reyes-Chow, San Jose Presbytery will hold two sessions for each group at the dates/times listed below. **Elders need only attend one session total.**

### **FOR RULING ELDERS**

*Both Sessions via Zoom*  
Wednesday, February 28, 2024, 6pm-7  
Saturday, March 2, 2024, 9am-10

### **FOR TEACHING ELDERS**

*Both Sessions at the Presbytery Office*  
Tuesday, February 27, 2024, 2pm-4  
Wednesday, March 6, 2024, 10am-12

**RSVP to Collette Lynner**  
collette@sanjosepby.org

## ETHICAL CONDUCT POLICY GUIDELINES AND TRAINING 2024

We seek to witness to God's love by the way we intentionally care and plan for safety of all people in our midst. This information is provided to help Minister members and Sessions understand the new requirements and discern the difference and overlap between different training offerings.

### Definitions

**Boundary training** is about preventing illegal misconduct such as sexual misconduct and forms of harassment as well as the improper use of authority, power and relationships. Our approach to this training will focus on the aspects of prevention through self awareness, self care and intentional choices, anticipating that most people seek to cultivate personal wholeness and healthy relationships.

**Child Protection training** has some overlaps with boundary training, but is a separate requirement focused primarily on the boundaries and policies to prevent abuse of minors. These training materials develop awareness and reinforce the responsibility for adults to report boundary violations or concerns.

### PC(USA) and Presbytery of San Jose Requirements

2023 amendments to the Constitution (Book of Order) now requires that:

*"All Councils shall adopt and implement a sexual misconduct policy and a child and youth protection policy. Each Council's policy shall include requirements for boundary training which includes the topic of sexual misconduct and child sexual abuse prevention training for its members at least every thirty-six months"(G-3.0106)*

The Presbytery's ethical conduct policies can be found at <https://sanjosepby.org/policies> The Presbytery determines the clergy boundary training to meet the requirement for minister members.

The Presbytery is providing this mandatory training with two dates in early 2024. Afterwards we will evaluate other times and alternative training options. All minister members must participate in boundary training regardless of employment or retirement status. Compliance with this requirement is ultimately part of a minister member's ecclesiastical status of "membership in good standing"

**New requirement for Ruling Elders**

As a way of resourcing the Sessions of our churches, we are offering a one hour zoom Boundary training for Ruling Elders. We interpret that the new constitutional requirement that "each council's policy should include boundary training" means that each Session (a council of the church) must provide this training in some fashion. Sessions can provide their own training, but are seeking to help Sessions with an accessible way to provide this training.

**State of California Requirements**

We seek to meet or exceed State requirements regarding reporting and ethical conduct training in our churches.

**Mandated Reporter** training recognizes the legal state requirement to report suspected child abuse. Churches should ensure that employees, officers, leaders and those working with minors take the California state training for Mandated reporters. <https://mandatedreporterca.com/>

**Sexual Harassment Prevention** training is required for both employees and their supervisors in California. To meet this requirement specifically for employed church staff, churches can use the free California state training <https://calcivilrights.ca.gov/shpt/> Alternatively, many of your insurance companies provide free training to meet California requirements.

**Resources and Questions**

We will need to all work together as we seek to make our churches and ministries safe for all people. The Stated Clerk and the Coordinating Council's Polity and Government Sub Committee will provide clarity about requirements and provide resources to our Sessions and Minister members. We rely on the important work of Clerks of Sessions who track and report on behalf of Sessions. The Committee on Ministry oversees clergy compliance with Presbytery policies. Contact Stated Clerk, Rev. Erica Rader [erica@sanjosepby.org](mailto:erica@sanjosepby.org) or the chair of Polity and Government Rev. Bryan Franzen [Bryan@westpres-sj.org](mailto:Bryan@westpres-sj.org) with any questions.

## Financial Affairs report

The financial affairs committee met in January to review our year-end financial reports and per capita giving.

Our year end balances for Investments were: \$7,812,627.46

Our year end balances for fixed assets (including real property and equipment) were: \$5,967,538.57

Our cash assets were: \$112,869.67

The committee reviewed a request from the Executive Search committee and personnel committee to consider our current budget and advise regarding expenses for the position of Executive Presbyter so that the Executive Search committee might have the ability to negotiate a call with a potential candidate.

In reviewing the request, it came to light that several income and expense lines in the budget lacked clarity. These included the compensation for staff paid through the synod, grant income received from the synod, and investment withdrawals used to subsidize the presbytery's annual budget. Further, we received new information that the costs for staff compensation paid through the synod are anticipated to be higher than what is currently reflected in the 2024 budget.

The committee is requesting further information regarding year end statements from the Synod and investment accounts and is following up with breakout meetings to clarify these areas and potentially make recommendations for improvement.

We did affirm the presbytery's ability to support the proposed terms of call based on our year end investment balances.

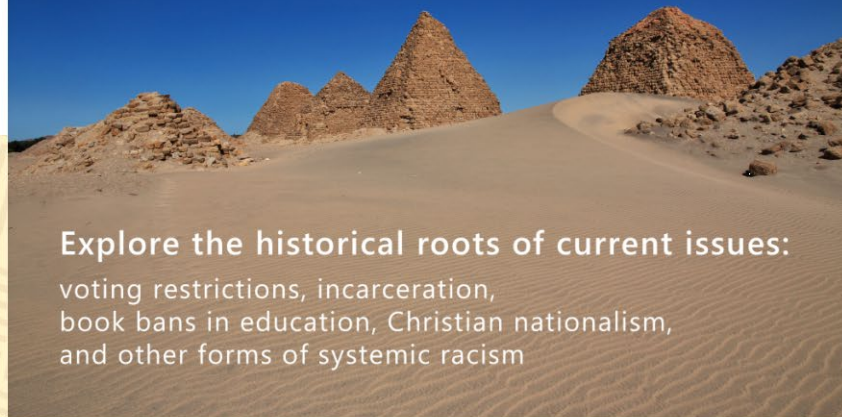


# Celebrating **BLACK HISTORY**



Visit <http://tinyurl.com/BlackHistoryMonth2024> to join a multi-week Black History Month study led by Rev. Erik Swanson of Westhope Presbyterian Church in Saratoga and Rev. James Richard of Foundation of Faith in S.C.

## Seeking the Roots of Current Issues through Black/African History



Explore the historical roots of current issues: voting restrictions, incarceration, book bans in education, Christian nationalism, and other forms of systemic racism



**Monday Feb 5, Feb 12: 6:30-8:30 pm**  
Study on Zoom

**Monday Feb 26, 6-8:30 pm**  
Final Meeting and Celebration Dinner

**Westhope Presbyterian Church**  
**12850 Saratoga Ave, Saratoga, CA 95070**  
Doors open/Appetizers served at 5:45pm.

<http://tinyurl.com/BlackHistoryMonth2024>

Peace and Justice Ministry of Westhope Presbyterian Church and the Presbytery of San Jose Peace and Justice Work Group are honored to organize this event for all in the Presbytery. Please share this invitation!



## Presbytery of San Jose Peru Mission Trip

May 18-26, 2024

The trip would allow participants to see first-hand the work and challenges being addressed by our PCUSA partners in Peru and provide the opportunity to engage in conversation with partners and the communities they serve. The two places we will be visiting:

- La Oroya, Peru (central Andes), where we have been addressing human and environmental health in relation to mining contamination, as well as reforestation work in response to climate change
- Callao, Peru (near Lima), where PCUSA partners are beginning new work in addressing human and environmental health in relation to industrial pollution and oil spills.

### **Cost:**

The cost is \$1000/person for our portion of the trip. This includes all in-country travel (air and ground), hotels, meals, water, honorariums, and administrative costs. It does NOT include air travel to/from Peru. It also does NOT include an extended trip to Machu Picchu.

### **Optional trip to Machu Picchu:**

You could do this part on your own through a tourist agency. Or our Mission Partner, Jed, in Peru can facilitate it, which basically would be passed off to a local tourist agency (meaning payment would still go directly to them. Our mission partner will not accompany you on this trip to Machu Picchu) The approximate cost based on the experience in prior years is about \$900-\$1000 per person (including flight to Cusco, 4 days/3 nights hotel in Cusco, train and entrance to Machu Picchu and some meals).

### **A tentative schedule:**

Saturday, 5/18: Arrive in Peru (activities to be determined based on arrival time)

Sunday, 5/19: Worship and Lunch in Lima at local church (ecological theme); afternoon travel by air to Huancayo, Peru

Monday, 5/20: Travel by van to La Oroya; full day with partners in La Oroya (mining contamination); return to Huancayo at night

Tuesday, 5/21: Full day with partners in Huancayo (climate change theme)

Wednesday, 5/22: Fly back to Lima / Afternoon Conversation with partners in Lima

Thursday 5/23: Full day in Callao (adjacent to Lima), visiting local communities and environmental degradation sites

Friday, 5/24: Another Full day in Callao visiting local communities and environmental degradation sites

Saturday, 5/25: Closing Conversation with partners / Afternoon tourism in Lima / Late-night return to the US?

Sunday, 5/26: Early morning return to the US? Or Trip to Cusco/Machu Picchu

### **Dues:**

\$500 (half of the total cost to our PCUSA partner in Peru, apart from the airfare) is due on February 26, 2024. The balance is due on May 1, 2024

SVPC PW Global Mission Circle  
Peru Study Guide

**Introduction to Peru**

World Factbook

<https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/peru/>

[Map of Peru](#)

**Machu Pichu**

[Mysteries of Machu Pichu Revealed](#) (45 minutes)

**Jed and Jenny Koball's Ministry**

[Koball Mission Agency Home Page](#)

**Movie:** *Aguirre, the Wrath of God* (1972) written and directed by famous German director Werner Herzog (96% on Rotten Tomatoes) German with subtitles

Don Lope de Aguirre (Klaus Kinski), a ruthless Spanish conquistador, vies for power while part of an expedition in Peru to find El Dorado, the mythical seven cities of gold. Accompanied by his daughter, Flores (Cecilia Rivera), Aguirre faces off against his superior, Don Pedro de Ursua (Ruy Guerra), and grows increasingly volatile after seizing control of the group. As Aguirre presses deeper into the Amazonian jungle, he descends further into madness.

This movie was shot on location using indigenous men from the Andes. It has some graphic violence.

**Peruvian Food:** Inka's Restaurant, 700 S. Winchester Blvd., San Jose CA 95128

Papa A La Huancaína

Causa Rellena

Fried Yucca

Various Seafood Dishes

My circle had a zoom meeting with Jed and studied Peruvian poetry. I also shared a powerpoint on Dolls and Nativities from Peru that focused on clothing, textiles, and dances.

Mary Green Vickey

**2023 Presbytery of San Jose Mission Study Tour to Peru  
Application  
Deadline March 15, 2023**

Name	Email Address	
Street Address	Phone Number	
City	ST	Zip Code
Church		
Special Skills such as Videography or Spanish language		

---

Describe previous connections by your church to Peruvian ministry, organization, or mission co-worker there.

---

How will this Trip inform and enhance your ministry?

---

How will you share your mission study trip experience with others?

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Signature	Date
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Received by Presbytery of San Jose Mission and Outreach Work Grou

# EXPLORE *Theology of Play*

**HOW BOARD GAMES CAN CHANGE THE WAY YOU SEE FAITH, AND YOUR MINISTRY**

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 3RD

**12:30PM**  *Explore Game Library*  
Browse and explore a wide variety of board games for all ages. Pastor Bill will be on hand to answer questions and talk about the games.

**1:00PM**  *Theology of Play*  
We will briefly explore the importance of play and look at how board games build community, strengthen mental health, and can be used in Christian formation. Also, we'll briefly talk about building your collection and hosting game events.

**1:45PM**  *Let's Play*  
Pastor Bill and Pastor Andy invite you to now stay and play some of the games. They will happily teach you any of games.

**LEADERSHIP**

**Bill Lane** is the pastor at Gonzales Community PC. He is also a board gamer. He has more than 1000 games in his collection. Bill attends conventions and competes in board games. He leads workshops about board games for churches, senior centers, and children and youth programs. Several designers and publishers have him playtest their games.

**Andy Rausch** is the Pastor at Northminster PC in Salinas. He is also a board gamer. His collection is 300+. Andy has been a workshop leader for play/games. He has hosted several board game events in his ministry.

**IF INTERESTED PLEASE SIGN-UP (NOT REQUIRED)**

<http://tinyurl.com/c982bcxs>






**The Rev. Dr. Neal D. Presa, Ph.D.** is a teaching elder of the Presbytery of San Diego. He has served pastorates in Southern California and New Jersey for the past two decades. His recent ministry is as Vice President of Student Affairs and Vocational Outreach and Associate Professor of Preaching and Worship at New Brunswick Theological Seminary. He also serves as Affiliate Associate Professor of Preaching at Fuller Theological Seminary and Fellow of the Center for Pastor Theologians.

In 2012, at the age of 35, he was elected Moderator of the 220<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, the youngest to have been elected to that post in the denomination's history. He is the immediate past chair of the Board of Trustees of the Presbyterian Foundation. From 2022-2030, he represents the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) on the World Council of Churches Central Committee and Executive Committee, where he serves as Moderator of the Finance Committee. From 2018-2024, he is the co-vice chair of the Third Round of Bilateral Dialogues between the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Episcopal Church. He was previously the Convener of the Caribbean and North American Area Council of both the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the World Communion of Reformed Churches, and served on the executive committees of both bodies. He chaired the General Assembly Special Committee on the Heidelberg Catechism, and was the PC(USA)'s ecumenical representative to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 2013.



His research and publications are in the areas of Reformed theology, pastoral theology, ecclesiology, worship/liturgics, preaching/homiletics, ecumenism, and Filipinx American theologies. He is the author/editor of nine books and more than 100 book reviews, essays, chapter contributions, including the forthcoming monograph *Worship, Justice, and Joy: A Liturgical Pilgrimage* this Fall as part of the Worship & Witness series of Cascade Books.

He received the B.A. in political science (w/ highest honors) and history (w/ honors) from the University of California, Davis; the M.Div. from San Francisco Theological Seminary; the Th.M. from Princeton Theological Seminary; the M.Phil. and Ph.D. from Drew University; a graduate certificate in project management and a Master of Professional Studies (MPS) this May from Missouri State University.

Neal is married to Grace and they have two sons: Daniel, an undergraduate junior at Davidson College, and Andrew, an undergraduate freshman at Loyola Marymount University. The Presas' family dog is Calvin Nigel, a playful shar pei/cattledog/cockerspaniel.

Presbytery of San Jose Committee on Ministry  
Report to Presbytery May 4, 2024

Items for Docket:

Motion to do a second reading and adopt amendments to Policy PS-1(PT-6) – Minimum Terms of Call (First Reading done at Feb. 3, 2024 Presbytery meeting)

Information Items:

1. COM is working with churches whose pastors' compensation did not meet the minimum effective salary requirements in 2023 to understand the circumstances.
2. Rev. James Potts was installed as Associate Pastor of First Presbyterian Church of Monterey on April 14, 2024.
3. Rev. Tom Harris began serving as Pastor to the First Presbyterian Church of Palo Alto on March 4, 2024. Installation date to be determined.
4. COM examined and approved the terms of call for Rev. Kim Dorr-Tilley, and the congregation of First Presbyterian Church of Mountain View unanimously approved her call on March 3, 2024. She starts June 2, 2024.
5. Trinity Presbyterian Santa Cruz is still searching for a new pastor.
6. COM approved Rev. Jane Esterline's status from active to retired.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lizanne Reynolds  
COM Chair

## COM- Policy Amendment PS-1/PT-6

### COM Background on proposal to amend PS-1-PT6 “Minimum Terms of Call”

- The Change to the “Policy Statement” updates its scope.
- The change to “Session Responsibilities” adds to our current practices.
- Under the “Components for the Minimum Terms of Call”, we clarified the amount of “Vacation” to be accrued each year to be 30 days including weekends but not federal holidays.
- The Department of Industrial Relations (DIR) sets the laws and regulations around labor law. [https://www.dir.ca.gov/dlse/FAQ\\_Vacation.htm](https://www.dir.ca.gov/dlse/FAQ_Vacation.htm)
  - DIR places restrictions on the employer in fulfilling their obligations:
    - DIR rules state that earned vacation is considered wages as it is earned, therefore we need to have a policy about the rate that vacation is earned.
    - DIR rules state that vacation cannot be clawed back if the employer allows it to be taken before it is earned therefore, we need a policy stating that vacation needs to be tracked. Pastors should have the flexibility to take vacation when they need to with session approval if they have not accrued sufficient vacation. Note that vacation is considered wages by the DIR.
    - DIR states that employers can encourage employees to take their vacation during the year but cannot mandate it. However, employers can set a cap on the maximum amount of vacation that can be accumulated. Therefore, we need to set a cap on the amount of vacation. Industry standard is 1.5 times the annual accrual amount. We should encourage our pastors to take their vacation each year as part of their selfcare.
    - DIR states that upon termination, unused vacation must be paid at the employee’s pay rate. Therefore, we need a policy giving how to calculate the payment at the time of pastoral dissolution.

Presbytery of San Jose

Policy PS-1(PT-6)

Effective Date: ~~11xx/19xx/2024~~2022

## MINIMUM TERMS OF CALL

### Policy Statement

The Presbytery of San José requires that terms of call for all pastors include the following categories: salary and housing, auto allowance, study leave, Board of Pensions dues, and vacation. It is the responsibility of each church to make it possible for all ordained staff to find and afford decent and appropriate housing reasonably close to the church. Additionally, the Presbytery requires that each church comply with federal, state and local government tax, vacation and salary requirements.

### Rationale

The Presbytery of San José provides this information in order to guide congregations in fulfilling their commitment to pay fairly the ministers who serve them.

### Responsibilities

#### Committee on Ministry (COM) Responsibilities

At the request of any session, personnel committee or pastor, COM shall provide a representative to be present for salary negotiation.

COM shall insure that all arrangements with an incoming pastor are in writing, and are clearly understood by the pastor and the session.

COM shall consider a particular church's request for exemption from this policy.

COM shall report to Presbytery the annual cost of living (COLA) figures as reported by the Social Security Administration, with the annual salary component adjustments reflecting these figures (See Appendix A for Methodology)

#### Minister Responsibilities

Ministers shall familiarize themselves with this policy.

Ministers shall report annually to Presbytery the approved terms of call.



## Presbytery of San Jose

## Policy PS-1(PT-6)

Effective Date: ~~11xx/19xx/2022~~2024

### Session Responsibilities

The session shall recommend annually to the congregation a salary that recognizes with fairness the unique gifts the pastor brings to the church, and in any event shall recommend to the congregation Terms of Call that meet or exceed the minimum terms of call set forth in Appendix A. The congregation shall vote whether to approve the Terms of Call.

The session may allocate as reimbursable such professional expenses as:

- a. travel and living expenses for activities associated with performance of duties (e.g., attendance at General Assembly);
- b. hospitality expenses;
- c. book allowance;
- d. professional organizations and publications;
- e. continuing education expense for ministry-related courses other than those taken during study leave.

The session shall explain the components of the terms of call to the congregation.

The session may request COM to grant an exemption from this policy, stating reasons for the request.

### Stated Clerk and Executive Presbyter Responsibilities

The Executive Presbyter and/or the Stated Clerk shall maintain records of terms of call for each minister.

### Additional Responsibilities/Information

Congregations and ministers may agree to allocate the Salary and Housing components of the minimum Terms of Call in a manner that meets both of their needs as they see fit, consistent with requirements of local, county, state, and federal taxing authorities

See other Presbytery policies ([www.sanjosepby.org/policies](http://www.sanjosepby.org/policies))

See Board of Pensions ([www.pensions.org](http://www.pensions.org))

Presbytery of San Jose

Policy PS-1(PT-6)

Effective Date: ~~11xx/19xx/2022~~2024

## Appendix A

## Components for the Minimum Terms of Call

The minimum Terms of Call consist of the following components:

- **Minimum Salary and Housing:** For a given year, the amount in Appendix B from the preceding year, indexed by the Social Security Administration Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA). See <https://www.ssa.gov/cola/>. The actual housing provided shall take into account the particular minister's reasonable needs but shall, at a minimum, provide a two bedroom residence within a reasonable driving distance of the church or an equivalent cash allowance.
- **Effective Salary:** Typically Salary and Housing. The Board of Pensions may call for inclusion of other compensation as Effective Salary. Refer to The Board of Pensions publication "Understanding Effective Salary." See <https://www.pensions.org/file/what-we-offer/benefits-guidance/forms-documents/Documents/pln-103.pdf/>.
- **Board of Pensions:** The yearly designated dues (medical, pension, and death and disability) for Member + Family. (If a covered partner has access to qualified healthcare coverage, a waiver may be granted for the eligible family members.) ([www.pensions.org](http://www.pensions.org))
- **Auto Allowance**
- **Study Leave:** Minimum requirements are 14 days per calendar year and \$1000 (reimbursed expense); refer to PS-6, *Use of Study Leave*, for additional requirements.
- **Vacation** — ~~One month~~ {30 calendar days. ~~The 30 days shall include weekends but not federal government holidays. A pastor shall accrue vacation at a rate of 2.5 days per month as of the first day of each month unless a church session approves a different vacation accrual schedule. With session approval, a pastor can take vacation days before having sufficient accrued days. Session shall have a mechanism to track accrued and taken vacation days and report them to the pastor.~~  
The maximum amount of accrued vacation is shall be 45 days unless a church session approves a different maximum amount (but not less than 30 days). At dissolution of a pastoral relationship, reimbursement for unused but accrued vacation is shall be calculated by multiplying the effective salary by the number of unused accrued vacation days and dividing by 365.

**Presbytery of San Jose**

**Policy PS-1(PT-6)**

**Effective Date: ~~11xx/19xx/2022~~2024**

**APPENDIX B**

Minimum effective salary, by county in which the church is located, shall be as follows for calendar year 2024:

Santa Clara County:     ~~\$111,417~~\$114,982

Santa Cruz County:     ~~\$93,373~~\$96,361

Monterey County:     ~~\$68,372~~\$70,560

Report from Committee on Preparation for Ministry  
Information items

The Committee on Preparation for Ministry met April 18, 2024 for annual consultations with Inquirer Nicholas Hurley (Stone) and Candidate Valerie Weirauch (Sunnyvale Presbyterian Church).

The committee approved 20/hr week church internship for June-August 2024 at Foothill for Steve Fainer (candidate Los Gatos) He will complete this alongside his continued employment at Los Gatos.

Report from Financial Affairs Committee  
Information Items

Since our last presbytery meeting, the financial affairs committee has been hard at work. In the "odds and ends" area of our work, we have approved a lease for Daesung for a portion of their parking lot as well as an easement request for Westview from Caltrans. In the "looking towards the future" area of our work, we approved a grant from the Cypress Fund (a fund designated for Korean ministry and Korean minister development) to support Taelor Kim in her seminary studies.

Finally, in our broader work of the stewardship of the assets of the presbytery, we have been delving into better understanding our liquid investments and use of those funds and clarifying the payment processes, especially in their relationship with the synod. We look forward to welcoming some synod staff to our May meeting to answer some of our many questions about block grants and reconciliation regarding staff payroll.

This study has been particularly important as we reviewed requests from personnel and the search committee regarding both the short term affordability of the package offered to our Executive candidate and the long term financial future of our funds and their uses. We approved the affordability of the package for the incoming Executive, and are hopeful of working alongside him to improve our long-term use of the assets with which we are entrusted.

**[ENV-02] On removal of investments in and subsidies for fossil fuels.**

<b>Source:</b>	Presbytery	<b>Event:</b>	226th General Assembly (2024)
<b>Committee:</b>	[ENV] Environmental and Climate Justice	<b>Sponsor:</b>	Susquehanna Valley Presbytery
<b>Profile #:</b>	[OVT-013]	<b>Type:</b>	General Assembly Full Consideration

## Recommendation

**On Removal of investments in and subsidies for fossil fuels.**

**The Presbytery of Susquehanna Valley overtures the 226th General Assembly (2024) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to:**

1. Declare that continued support of the exploration, development, funding, and exploitation of fossil fuels through investment of PC(USA) funds, violates the equitable welfare of all life and our biblical charge as humanity to care for creation, and is irretrievably incompatible with the mission and goals of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).
  
2. Declare that all publicly traded companies whose primary source of income is derived from the exploration, development and production of fossil fuels are to be placed on the General Assembly's list of prohibited securities.
  
3. Strongly encourage all congregations, presbyteries, synods, the Board of Pensions and the Presbyterian Foundation, as well as Church-related educational institutions and individual church members, to align their investment decisions with this declaration with all due speed and diligence.
  
4. Call on all PC(USA) members and institutional investors to seek out investments in clean renewable energy companies.
  
5. Request reports from the Board of Pensions and the Presbyterian Foundation and other investing entities at the next General Assembly on the steps taken to align their investment decisions with the intent of this overture.
  
6. Call on the U.S. government to end all subsidies for the development and production of fossil fuels.

## Rationale

**Rationale**

**Our Values:** Past General Assemblies have repeatedly stated the vocation of earth care as an essential mark of Christian discipleship and the Church's mission and ministry. Our responsibilities as a faith institution are clear: God created the earth, and it is sacred. The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it. We are a part of and not independent of the created order and are meant to be caretakers and protectors of creation and our neighbors.

**Our Reality:** We are in the midst of a climate crisis that is primarily caused by the production and burning of fossil fuels which release greenhouse gases, such as methane and carbon dioxide that are warming the planet. The scientific consensus, established over many years and with increasing levels of certitude, is that the warming of our atmosphere beyond 1.5 degrees Celsius over pre-industrial temperatures will undermine the entire web of life on the planet with catastrophic consequences.

**The Solution:** In order to avoid this, the Intergovernmental (scientific) Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reported in March 2023, that the nations of the world must cut our carbon emissions by 48% from 2019 levels by 2030 and reach net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, but last year, as in previous years, these emissions continued to climb. And while the U.S. has recently taken action to bring down its own emissions, we now

produce and export more fossil fuels than ever in history. The U.S. also subsidizes the fossil fuel industry with estimates ranging from \$10-50 billion per year, while our northern neighbor, Canada and several other fossil fuel producing countries have announced that they are ending their subsidies.<sup>1</sup>

The world has to change the path it is on, but it requires two huge changes. The most critical change is a “fast, full and fair” phase out of fossil fuel production and usage. The second is the rapid expansion of sources of renewable energy. The church’s investments have power and influence which can contribute to these changes and bear witness to the world that we acknowledge the climate crisis, the suffering it is causing and its link to the burning of fossil fuels.

**The Denomination is Responding to the Climate Crisis:** The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has long recognized its obligation to take actions as faithful stewards of God’s Creation to respond to climate change. The General Assembly actions in 1981, 1998, 1999, 2003, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018 and 2022 acknowledge the realities of global warming and its effect on the “least of these” throughout our world.

The Mission Agency has raised the importance of earth care to a matter of high priority for every part of its programming and the work of our Presbyterian Hunger Program and Earth Care Congregations program are exemplary in their efforts to inform and lead the church in the fulfillment of its mission. In addition, our Office of Public Witness became a sponsor of an initiative, to be called the Fossil Fuel Non-proliferation Treaty, launched by the governments of several South Pacific island nations (among the most vulnerable of our brothers and sisters). This initiative is calling for the phase-out of both new and existing sources of fossil fuels.

**The Denomination’s Response is Inconsistent:** Such educational and advocacy efforts on behalf of our denominational commitment to earth care are undermined by institutional strategies which continue to seek profit from investment in the fossil fuel industry. This practice is hypocritical at a minimum and potentially endangers our evangelistic message and leadership within the ecumenical community of church bodies. While the percentage of total investments is small, (3.4% for The Foundation [1] as of December 2023), the dollar value is in tens of millions of dollars. MRTI has begun a company by company divestment review, but the climate crisis is getting worse faster than our actions can bring about significant change.

Further, these PCUSA directed entities not only have a fiduciary duty to conserve and protect the church’s assets and return an increase through the investment process, but are also obligated to duties of loyalty and obedience to our mission and established values to the extent allowed by secular law related to such.

**Existing Policy Provides Option for Removal of Funds from an Entire Class of Firms:** The original founding document from 1984 upon which our Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) is based, “Divestment Strategy: Principles and Criteria”, clearly states that divestment of holdings can be in a particular “firm or class of firms” and that this is both part of the normal management of funds and potentially an occasion for Christian witness to God’s call for justice and renewal of society. (Paragraph 25.202) It also states that divestment is a conscious decision to dispose of any current financial stake in an enterprise or ‘class of enterprise’ because of policy or practice in regard to a social issue and to prohibit future stake so long as the offending situation holds. (Paragraph 25.261) [emphasis and quotation marks added]”

Existing Policy also Provides for Proscription of a Class of Firms: Furthermore, that document identifies that there are some classes of investments which should not be considered because of their nature which is fundamentally and irretrievably incompatible with the nature and purpose of the church. Thus, there is a list of such classes of economic activity which are excluded or “proscribed”. This list excludes from our investment portfolio, investment in companies whose primary activity is in production of tobacco products, nuclear weapons, for-profit prisons and a few others.

**The Presbyterian Foundation is Moving in the Right Direction:** The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has a long history of aligning our corporate investment decisions with our values and enabling our members to do so. In fact, according to our Presbyterian Church Foundation’s New Covenant Trust Company’s website description for their “Fossil Free Strategy” they have established an instrument specifically “[f]or investors concerned with fossil fuel emissions and climate impact” which “can be configured to exclude the entire energy sector and other firms with a high carbon footprint.”

**The Path Forward for the Whole Denomination is Not Easy:** We understand that the modern world and each of our lives are deeply intertwined with the fossil fuel industry and cannot be easily divorced from it. We live on the continuum between purity of moral conviction and the pragmatic exigencies of the current patterns

and practices of the modern world. Yet we must act and act quickly, acknowledging the destructive nature of our fossil fuel investments.

In doing so, we refer the reader to the actions of our last General Assembly in support of communities where the loss of fossil fuel industry jobs will present hardship.

**We Must Change:** We understand and appreciate the role of our MRTI in encouraging enterprises to alter their practices to align more nearly with our values. However, we also know that there are some enterprises which are fundamentally such that no amount of change in practice will ever bring them into alignment. We feel it is past time for us to name the fossil fuel industry as one of these and existing policy provides for this.

For the sake of the integrity of our denomination's Christian witness, our purpose within the created order, the maintenance of the web of life upon which all humanity depends and our children's children, we must act quickly to withdraw all our resources, regardless of their size, either in dollar amount or percentage of those used, from the production of fossil fuels and to identify fossil fuels as a proscribed class of investments.

[1] <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-12-09/us-opts-out-of-dutch-plan-to-end-fossil-fuel-subsidies-at-cop28?leadSource=verify%20wall>

## Concurrence

**Boston Presbytery**

**Highlands Presbytery**

**Northwest Coast Presbytery**



**[ENV-03] On Becoming Free from Plastic Pollution****Source:** Presbytery**Event:** 226th General Assembly (2024)**Committee:** [ENV] Environmental and Climate Justice**Sponsor:** Susquehanna Valley Presbytery**Type:** General Assembly Full Consideration**Profile #:** [OVT-014]**Recommendation****On Becoming Free from Plastic Pollution**

The Presbytery of \_Susquehanna Valley overtures the 226th General Assembly (2024) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to commit ourselves as a church, a people of faith and a social organization embodying Christian values, to:

1. Encourage all our settings to commit to changing from a disposable culture to a reusable, sustainable one.
2. Encourage education within our congregations and in our communities to advocate for alternatives to single use plastics, whether through mitigation efforts and campaigns or by supporting local and state bans on single use plastics, and
3. Encourage all settings of the Church to determine the best pathway forward for strategies and actions to mitigate plastic pollution, using as examples the following resources:
  - a. The Story of Plastics, (95-minute documentary)[i]
  - b. Sierra Club Solutions to Plastic Pandemic[ii]
  - c. Ten Towns –Ten actions Toolkit of New Hampshire[iii]
  - d. National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF): Join the Fight for Reducing Plastic Pollution[iv]
  - e. Break Free Plastics: resources, articles, list of the worst corporate polluters and suggestions for actions[v]
  - f. The Five Actions Congregations Can Take from the United Church of Christ[vi]
  - g. Presbyterians for Earthcare webinar and resources on becoming free from plastics[vii]
4. Reduce the use of single-use plastics and packaging.
5. Commend all settings of the church to join in possible opportunities for participation in addressing plastic pollution including to:
  - a. Encourage all settings of the Church to commit to change from the throwaway and disposable culture and consumptive practices to reusable and compostable products.[viii]
  - b. Encourage replacement of single use plastics such as cutlery, plates, cups, straws, lids, and bottles with bioplastics, reusable, truly recyclable (like aluminum or paper) or compostable substitutes.
  - c. Preach on ecological sustainability principles articulated by Sallie McFague on responsible use of ecological resourcesix and the sustainable goal of mitigating single-use plastics.
  - d. Educate on the importance of mitigation of single-use plastics and plastic straws as well as plastic bottles at our churches, their events, and gatherings.
  - e. Educate on the toxicity of plastic pollutions and microplastics to the health of our environment, to our own health, and the health of non-human life.
  - f. Educate on policies and practices of local recycling and composting services and advocating for better practices.
  - g. Organize low or zero waste events in collaboration with local organizations and infrastructures.
  - h. Support businesses that use sustainable practices such as reusable containers and reusable bags.
  - i. Participate in public cleanup of God's creation, including all bodies of water, parks, and beaches.[x]
  - j. Install fountains for water bottles in church campuses, wherever possible.
  - k. Actively support and lobby for local, state, national, and international legislation and policies that align with the intention of this resolution including bans of or fees on single use plastics.

- I. Encourage the Mission Responsibility Through Investment Committee of the PC(USA) to engage with companies and corporations to reduce their production and use of plastics, particularly eliminating single-use plastics wherever possible.
6. Acknowledge that accommodations in expectations need to be made for certain impacted groups such as those who are disabled or unhoused.
7. Encourage people in all settings to speak truth to the public square against plastic pollution of our planet.

## Rationale

### Rationale

The 222nd General Assembly overwhelmingly agreed that “caring for God’s creation” should be part of our constitution and this received concurrence of 150 Presbyteries[xi]. Our Book of Order now states “God sends the Church to share in the stewardship of creation, preserving the goodness and glory of the earth God has made”[xii] and includes “caring for God’s Creation” in the commitment to participate in Christ’s mission. In keeping with this, all Presbyterians should seek to reduce the use of plastics, especially single-use plastics, in their homes, churches, workplaces, communities, states and nation.

In 2023, our sisters and brothers in the United Church of Christ (UCC) General Synod passed the overture “Free from Plastic Pollution: A Resolution of Witness”.[xiii] We overture the 226th General Assembly (2024) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to join them. The UCC’s Rationale can be found in their Resolution.

The PC(USA) General Assembly has affirmed that creation care is a fundamental part of who we are as Presbyterians. The biblical mandate for the overture “On Amending G-1.0304, The Ministry of Members, by Adding “Caring for God’s Creation”[xiv] by Dr. William P. Brown (William Marcellus McPheeters Professor of Old Testament at Columbia Theological Seminary) applies to our need to become free from plastic pollution as well:

The fundamental biblical mandate for creation care comes from Genesis 2:15, where God places Adam in the garden to “till it and keep it” (NRSV). A better translation from the Hebrew is “to serve it and to preserve it.” In Genesis 1:26–28, God blesses humankind with dominion over the earth. Human “dominion” as intended in Genesis is best practiced in care for creation.

In Christ “all things hold together” (Colossians 1:17), and “every creature under heaven” is to receive God’s good news (v. 23). According to Revelation, God’s work in the world is “make all things new” (21:5), to bring about a new creation that does not destroy the old but transforms it, renews it. If the church is the sign of the new creation, then the church must lead the way in caring for creation.

Since the UCC General Synod passed their Resolution of Witness, further evidence of the danger of plastics to God’s Creation have been realized. Studies have found plastics in almost every food they tested, often at high levels.xv Water from disposable water bottles contains about 240,000 nanoparticles per liter.[xvi] Plastics in our bodies can have serious impacts on our health and inhaled plastics have been correlated with lung inflammation, shortness of breath and a higher risk of lung cancer.xvii These impacts disproportionately fall on vulnerable and disadvantaged communities. Mary Johnson (Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health) said, “Vulnerable populations are at even greater risk of the negative health impacts from the production, use and degradation of plastics”.[xviii]

Approximately 99 percent of plastic comes from fossil fuels, generating 3.4% of global greenhouse gas emissions.[xviii] Petrochemical companies have undertaken a massive increase in plastic production referred to as “Plan B for the fossil fuel industry”.[xviii] Expanded the use of plastics serves to increase demand for fracked gas.[xix] Leaked methane, the largest component of fracked gas, has 28 times as much impact on warming the climate as does carbon dioxide[xx] and is responsible for about 30% of the rise in global temperatures since the Industrial Revolution,[xxi] resulting in 2023 being the warmest year on record, by far.xxii And while governments and international bodies are trying to limit plastic production, petrochemical industries are working to weaken legislation and international treaties.[xxiii]

Currently, 430 million tons of plastic is produced yearly resulting in a production of 11 billion metric tons of plastic in the last century, surpassing the biomass of all animals on earth. Despite efforts to convince people recycling is effective, only 9% of the plastic ever produced has been recycled, and 19% has been incinerated.[xxiv] Plastics are now one of the largest environmental disasters on our planet, polluting the Earth we are passing on to our children and subsequent generations.

God placed Adam in the garden to serve it and to preserve it. It is time for the Presbyterian Church (USA) to preserve creation by becoming free from plastic pollution.

#### **Citations**

- i The Story of Stuff, <https://www.storyofstuff.org/movies/the-story-of-plastic-documentary-film/how-to-watch/>
- ii Resources on Plastic Pollution Solutions, Sierra Club Maryland Chapter, <https://www.sierraclub.org/maryland/zero-waste/story-of-plastic>
- iii Ten Towns Toolkit, <https://www.10towns.org/>
- iv National Environmental Education Foundation, <https://www.neefusa.org/nature/water/join-fight-reduce-plastic-pollution>
- v #BreakFreeFromPlastic, <https://www.breakfreefromplastic.org/>
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## **Concurrence**

**Arkansas Presbytery**

**Highlands Presbytery**

**Northwest Coast Presbytery**

Polity and Government Sub Committee Report

**Review of Overtures Overture 13: “On Removal of Investments In and Subsidies for Fossil Fuels” Overture 14: “On Becoming Free from Plastic Pollution”**

Polity and Government reviews overtures for the Presbytery and provides advice based on the polity of the overture(s) without evaluating the merit of the overtures. The two overtures for consideration were reviewed and Polity and Government reports no concerns about the Presbytery considering these overtures for concurrence. As these are concurrences with the overtures submitted by other Presbyteries, we note that we may not amend the language of these overtures.

**Clerks of Sessions Save the date:**

Annual Session Records Review for 2024 will be held on October 19 in St. Andrew Presbyterian Church Aptos and October 26 at Westminister Presbyterian Church, San Jose. Clerks, please plan to attend one of these dates.

**Fall Boundary Training Save the date(Registration is Required):**

**Teaching Elder Boundaries** Training is offered in person at the Presbytery office on Tuesday October 8, 2024 from 2:00- 4:00 pm OR Wednesday October 16 9:00-11:00 am. It is compulsory for all minister members to attend training approved by the Presbytery every three years.

**Ruling Elder Boundaries Training** will be held on Zoom on Wednesday October 16 at 6:00-7:00 pm All Councils of the church (including Sessions) must provide boundaries training. This training is provided as a service to Sessions who have the option to create their own training.

The Watsonville Administrative Commission ( WAC) is delighted with the progress made by Pastor Julie Porras-Center in creating Somos Watsonville, a “Third Space, Coffee Shop and gathering space at the Beech Street property. The chapel in the Education wing has been converted into a vibrant gathering place with a coffee cart, counter seating, cozy side sofas, and a wall-sized chalkboard for guests to write on and share events. The name of this new worshipping community ministry is Somos.

WAC oversees the property use with ongoing, month-to-month leases with Martha’s Kitchen (food distribution) and Salud Para Gente (medical and other services for the community) and is engaged in a conversation about a longer-term lease of ½ of the education wing to Alcove, a subsidiary of Community Health Trust of Pajaro Valley that will provide walk up, wrap-around mental health services for youth. Alcove and Somos may complement each other’s mission well. WAC continues to discern the long-term use of the property, manage the leasing activities and tenants on behalf of the Presbytery, and serve in the defining process for Somos. Somos is an emerging new worshipping community and is in the process of obtaining religious welfare non-profit status. This summer, WAC and Pastor Julie will meet to discern the next steps for the property and Somos, as Julie has far exceeded any expectations, and we are way ahead of where we thought we’d be!

From Julie via the Somos Newsletter:

*Somos Watsonville opened its doors on January 18 with one hope in mind. It wasn’t to make the world’s greatest vanilla cappuccino — though we have heard ours is better than Starbucks’. It wasn’t to make any money — every drink we’ve served has been free of charge. No, we opened our doors with the hope of establishing a sanctuary in the city where people could feel empowered to explore and experience emotional, psychological, and spiritual wholeness. And just three months into this vision, we think we’re on track. We’ve served over 250 cups of coffee, oftentimes with baked goods and other treats donated by the local community. We’ve hosted three main events. And most importantly, we’ve engaged in sacred conversations with holy human beings made in God’s image.*

*Throughout this season, we’ve experimented with dates and times, board game nights and prayer mornings, language and branding, and so much more. We’re called Somos, and we’ve been trying to figure out just quien somos, who we are. Now, having experimented with so many ways of building community, we need some time to take the long view — to reflect on the seeds that have been planted and to identify what is taking root. We need to connect to the Higher Power guiding all of this movement.*

If you’d like to see what is happening with Somos, please subscribe to the newsletter:

<https://us17.campaign-archive.com/?u=199c4aca1a748073476366258&id=74503b07a5>

Or check out the Somos website:

<https://somoswatsonville.com/>

Here are some photos of how the former space has transformed!

Old Space:



SOMOS!



The Hip Hop Pop Up!



Pastor Julie Porras-Center with some friends







Hanging out and building community

If you have any questions about WAC or Somos, please reach out to any of us!

Respectfully submitted,  
Denise Martin  
Chair, WAC

Committee:

Cory Piña	Trevor VanLaar
Charlie Mays	Dan Hoffman
Lizanne Reynolds	Sammie Evans

Somos:  
Rev. Julie Porras-Center

## Women Clergy Luncheon

All female minister members are invited to join a Presbyterian Clergy Women's lunch on May 16th at 12:00 pm at Shepherd & Sims, 15970 Los Gatos Blvd, Los Gatos, sponsored by the Presbytery of San Jose. Please RSVP to the Presbytery office by May 14 -- reservation deadline at the restaurant.

Come and fellowship with us to get to know each other better and discuss the possibility of forming a clergy women's support group. We are looking forward to meeting up with you and enjoying a delicious lunch together. If you have any questions, please contact Rev. Neneth Ross at [neneth@westpres-sj.org](mailto:neneth@westpres-sj.org).

Peace and Blessings,  
Rev. Neneth Ross and Rev. Erica Rader