

Report from the August 22 , 2021 Presbytery Meeting

This document is the Transition Plan as adopted by Providence Presbytery on August 22, 2021.

The amended pieces of the report are typed in purple, so readers can see what has been amended.

The one strike through in the items to be moved is because there was a motion made and passed pertaining to this particular motion, making the motion irrelevant.

Transition Team of Providence Presbytery Report

Adopted, August 22, 2021

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Section 1. Introduction

Scriptural focus

*“Behold, I am doing a new thing;
now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?
I will make a way in the wilderness
and rivers in the desert.”*

Isaiah 43:19

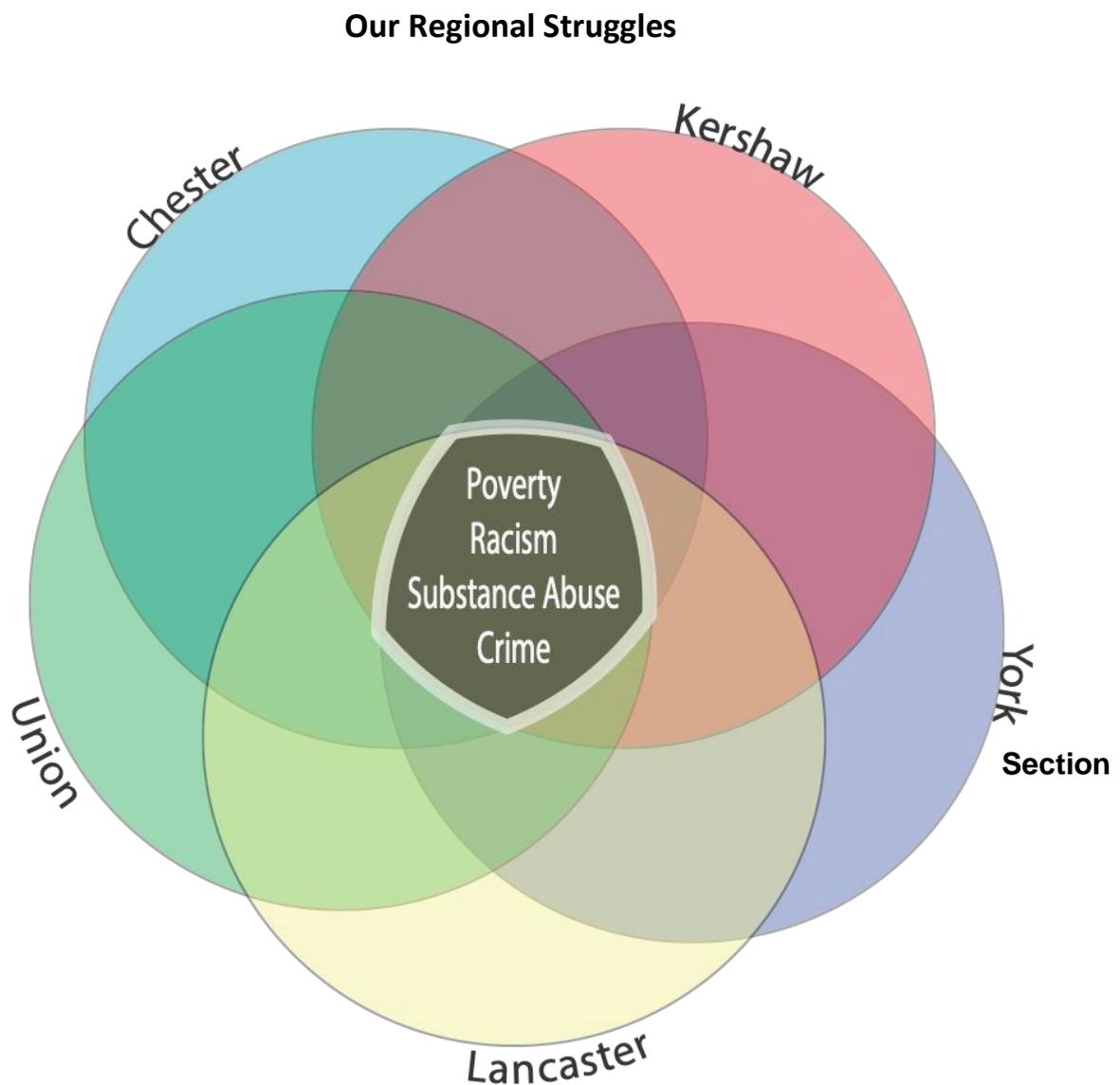
The purpose of this proposal is to set a clear direction for the future of Providence Presbytery. Our primary goals as a presbytery are:

- 1) Growth, support, and development of church leaders

- 2) Education and communication between the Presbytery and its congregations
- 3) Heightened sensitivity to inclusion given Providence Presbytery's history and that of its predecessor presbyteries regarding historic, systemic racism

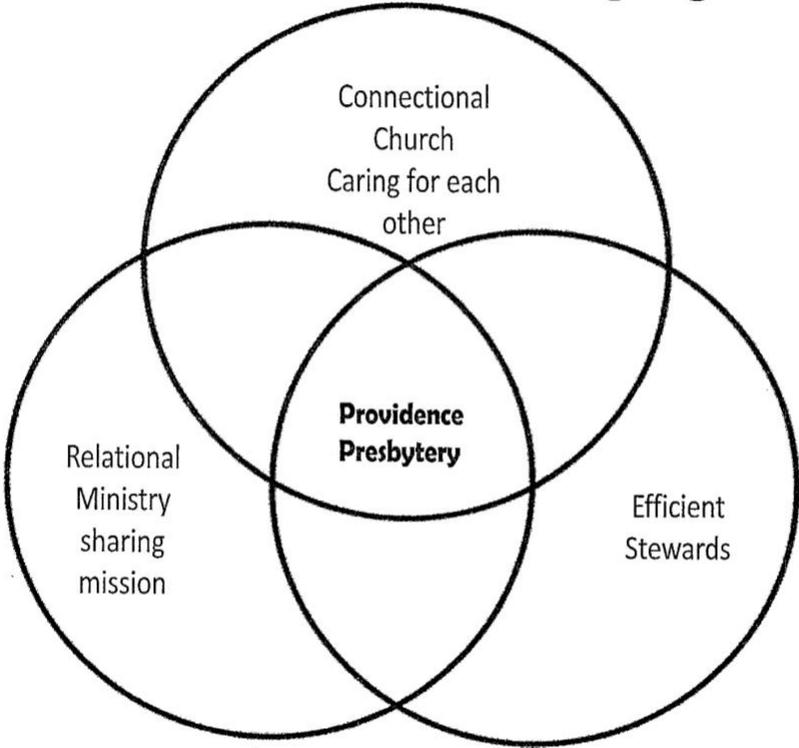
Name the Challenges

We are a Presbytery with a diverse population of urban, suburban, and rural congregations in five counties. We know that some of the main challenges in all our communities include poverty, racism, substance abuse and crime. (Venn Diagram, below)



The Transition Team members also gathered information from the churches of Providence Presbytery. This Venn Diagram indicates the common themes.

What we heard from congregations



2: Telling Our Stories, Celebrating Our Successes, & Admitting Our Mistakes

The Presbyterian Church over the centuries has made many positive contributions to our country and the world. Among those contributions are the inclusion of the Separation of Church and State in our constitution, the building of fine educational institutions that include colleges, universities, and seminaries. Presbyterians have emphasized an educated clergy and laity and education for all people. We have built hospitals and other places of healing in our country and world. Presbyterians were active in the American Revolution with twelve Presbyterians (11 laity and one clergy) signing the Declaration of Independence. The focus of our future mission hinges on acknowledging our past failures as well as our successes. In looking back, we see how God has bestowed many blessings upon us. We also must acknowledge the sins we have committed against God and our Neighbors. As we move forward, we desire to embrace our mission and ministry together as the full body of Christ welcoming a rich diversity of people.

Presbyterians were early settlers to the geographical region to which Providence Presbytery belongs. And our treatment of Native Americans who occupied this territory before white settlers arrived is not a history to be celebrated. We acknowledge the land in which our congregations gathered are the ancestral homes of the Catawba and Cherokee. We acknowledge that our presence in this land has been detrimental to their very existence.

We also acknowledge the sinful history and legacy of slavery which was often defended from the pulpits of our congregations. The Presbyterian Church has at times taken a courageous and prophetic stand concerning racial reconciliation that has encouraged African Americans to believe a hopeful allegiance was possible. On other occasions, the church experienced a failure of courage that induced alienation. The impact of racial division has been felt in Providence Presbytery as well. Providence Presbytery (1987-present) was formed upon the reunion of the northern and southern branches of the Presbyterian churches. Providence Presbytery is the result of a merger of the congregations from Kershaw County (Congaree Presbytery), Union County (Presbytery of Piedmont), former Bethel Presbytery (1824-1987) and Fairfield-McClelland Presbytery (1865-1987). Bethel Presbytery was a part of the Presbyterian Church United States (PCUS). Fairfield-McClelland Presbytery United Presbyterian Church United States of America (UPCUSA) was a result of missionaries from the North who came to form churches and schools among freed slaves in 1865. Providence Presbytery continues to be impacted by our failures to embrace one another completely. The merger of the Fairfield-McClelland Presbytery into the Providence Presbytery brought several African American churches and pastors into the Presbytery. The African American Churches were not represented on committees of the presbytery or integrated into the presbytery's administrative structure. This brought about suspicion and mistrust within the African American congregations. We acknowledge our sin of not showing the hospitality and affirming spirit that these congregations deserved. In the future it is our hope that Providence Presbytery will seek to honor the voices of the Black Presbyterian community and will seek to nurture these vital Presbyterian communities of faith.

Along with the greater Church, the Presbyterian Church has often neglected the gifts of women. We were one of the first to ordain women as elders (1930s) and pastors

(1956). At the same time, female clergy are still not treated equally today. There continues to be discrepancies in the pay clergywomen receive as well as the type of work clergywomen receive.

This history deserves deeper study and reflection to lift up our joys and our sorrows. There are many more people and events to celebrate as well as lament. It is our hope that by acknowledging these things we might point to our continued need for healing through Christ. As we move forward in mission and ministry may we do so united in Christ.

Acknowledgment of Transgressions

The Transition Team and Coordinating Team realize that Providence Presbytery should provide leadership in acknowledging, in detail, our errors, mistakes and sins with our African American congregations, women, and Indigenous People and make sincere apology for these things. Such repentance can free us before we move to the work yet to be done.

Acknowledgement of Transgressions

As the scriptural theme of Providence Presbytery's Transition is Isaiah 43:19, and as the Spirit is moving the presbytery into new territory, Hoover and Olivia, along with the Transition Team and the Coordinating Team, understand that for the presbytery to go where the Spirit is leading, we all must recognize and admit the sins of our past, and ask God, through grace, to:

“Cleanse me with hyssop and I will be clean;
. . . . Create in me a pure heart, O God, and
Renew a steadfast spirit within me.”

Psalm 51: 7a,10 (NRSV)

And,

“‘Even now,’ declares the Lord, ‘return to me
with all your heart, with fasting and
and weeping and mourning.’
Rend your heart and not your garments.’”

Joel 2:12-13 (NIV)

We, the leadership of Providence Presbytery, past and present, offer confession...
...For Seasons when we have abused power by forcefully enslaving human beings;
...For our complicity in failing to acknowledge the full value of the Christian faith in Sisters and Brothers of all shades of skin color and race;
...For the underpayment and undervaluing of gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation, in labor and employment within our presbytery;

...For times when misuse of power and emotional abuse has resulted in actions of sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, or sexual abuse has occurred
...For using Scripture to isolate or bring hatred upon any human;
...For any way that Providence Presbytery has failed to live out the fullest expression of Jesus Christ's love, grace, forgiveness, and resurrected hope;

...On behalf of Providence Presbytery and its predecessors, we admit our failings, apologize for our sins, and ask for forgiveness from all who experienced abuse by our decisions, our feelings, our hatreds, or our physical harms.

As Jesus teaches, "Come to me all who are heavy laden, and I will give you rest", we come, seeking the gift of grace, so that in our rest, we may gain strength and hope to walk in faith as God walks with us on a journey which will guide us to serve others, and love our neighbors as ourselves as God works to create something new. Amen

Section 3: Structure

What we are doing is not working. We are continuing to try to plug fewer people into an unwieldy and outdated structure. Turning to the *Book of Order, F 1.0301*, we read:

The Church is the body of Christ. Christ gives to the Church all the gifts necessary to be his body. The Church strives to demonstrate these gifts in its life as a community in the world (1 Cor. 12:27–28):

The Church is to be a **community of faith**, entrusting itself to God alone, even at the risk of losing its life.

The Church is to be a **community of hope**, rejoicing in the sure and certain knowledge that, in Christ, God is making a new creation. This new creation is a new beginning for human life and for all things. The Church lives in the present on the strength of that promised new creation.

The Church is to be a **community of love**, where sin is forgiven, reconciliation is accomplished, and the dividing walls of hostility are torn down.

The Church is to be a **community of witness**, pointing beyond itself through word and work to the good news of God's transforming grace in Christ Jesus its Lord.

Believing that God does indeed give to the Church all the gifts necessary, we believe that creating a flexible, adaptable structure (a "snapshot" rather than a "blueprint") is the best course for us right now.

To that end, we propose **5** Communities of Care, attached to the **4** criteria listed above. Witness has two Communities of Care: Ministerial Services and Mission and Advocacy. Except for those committees required by the Book of Order to be elected

entities, each community of caring will consist of whoever feels called to that group. Smaller communities of care may gather around particular interests.

1. Faith

Providence Presbytery connecting with its Congregations.

This Community of Care seeks to be a resource for education and communication with its congregations. That means regional workshops, zoom meetings, exposure to helpful internet resources such as Alban Institute and Presbyterian Outlook, or other communication platforms. Elder training, Confirmation training, and the Resource Center have been traditional efforts to support smaller congregations. The use of technology must be embraced for future thinking about education and communication with congregations. This Community of Care will include a Technology “piece”; members of congregations who will be able to work with churches who have questions about effectively using technology. This is what is needed to embody the Gospel in our time. This work has been demonstrated in the past through Education and Equipping Ministry Team and these former teams will be within the Community.

2. Hope

The Administration of Providence Presbytery.

This Community of Care will envelop the nuts and bolts of the presbytery. One of the goals will be to assist churches as they plan their legacy. This Community is responsible for the fiduciary areas of property, stewardship, personnel, and finance. This includes financial stability and assistance with technology upgrades. A Stated Clerk and Moderator, along with the Nominations Committee, and Committee on Representation are mandated in the Book of Order for PCUSA churches. They are responsible for creating a budget, providing minutes of presbytery meetings, nominations, personnel, and representation. The former Administrative Ministry Team duties and the Permanent Judicial Committee would be assigned to this Community.

3. Love

The Birds Eye View/ Council of Providence Presbytery.

This Community of Care will oversee and implement the adaptive/generative work of the presbytery. This Community will be the 5 chairs of the Communities of Care, the current Moderator, current Vice-Moderator of the Presbytery, and the elected Synod and General Assembly Commissioners. The Birds Eye View/Council must act and dream at the same time. It may invite others to meet and consult with them.

4. Witness

The ministries and missions of Providence Presbytery.

This Community of Care has two concentrations: Ministerial Services and Mission and Advocacy. These two concentrations are the hands and feet of Providence Presbytery.

Ministerial Services: This concentration focuses on pastoral leadership. A Committee on Preparation/Committee on Ministry would be elected by the Presbytery to meet the Book of Order responsibilities of these two Committees, including processes. A Certified Ruling Elder Subcommittee within the Committee on Ministry would address lay pastor school opportunities.

Mission and Advocacy: This concentration focuses on congregational leadership in our mission to the world. Historically, the congregations of Providence Presbytery have been a strong advocacy on the part of the Presbytery with South Carolina Communities, Thornwell, the Mother's Day Offering, Dimes for Hunger and the PCUSA Special offerings. Also, international partnerships, advocated by the Presbytery, have been supported. Mission starts either at home with the initiative of the local session or expands to larger boundaries, directed by the larger PCUSA.

In the context of today's world, mission has a large definition; book-studies, seminars, podcasts, active cooperation and shared events between racial and culturally different people. These areas along with any other reasonable means of service should be explored. In this area, we acknowledge that racism is both historic and systemic and advocate for dismantling any oppressive system.

5. Mission Neighbors

To this end, the Mission and Advocacy Community of Care would simply be the place of coordination for Mission Neighbors who gather around their Christian Passion. Mission Neighbors are volunteer groups created by individuals, or congregations, as each discern new mission and ministry by the leading of the Spirit. Mission Neighbors groups will be formed by congregational members from more than one church. Mission Neighbors groups exist as connections are established and will continue as long as there are people interested in actively participating.

These could include, but are not limited to:

- Anti-racism ministry team
- Dimes For Hunger Program
- International ministry opportunities
- Presbyterian Women
- Stewardship of Creation

A Presbytery staff leader will sit as an ex-officio member of each Community of Care.

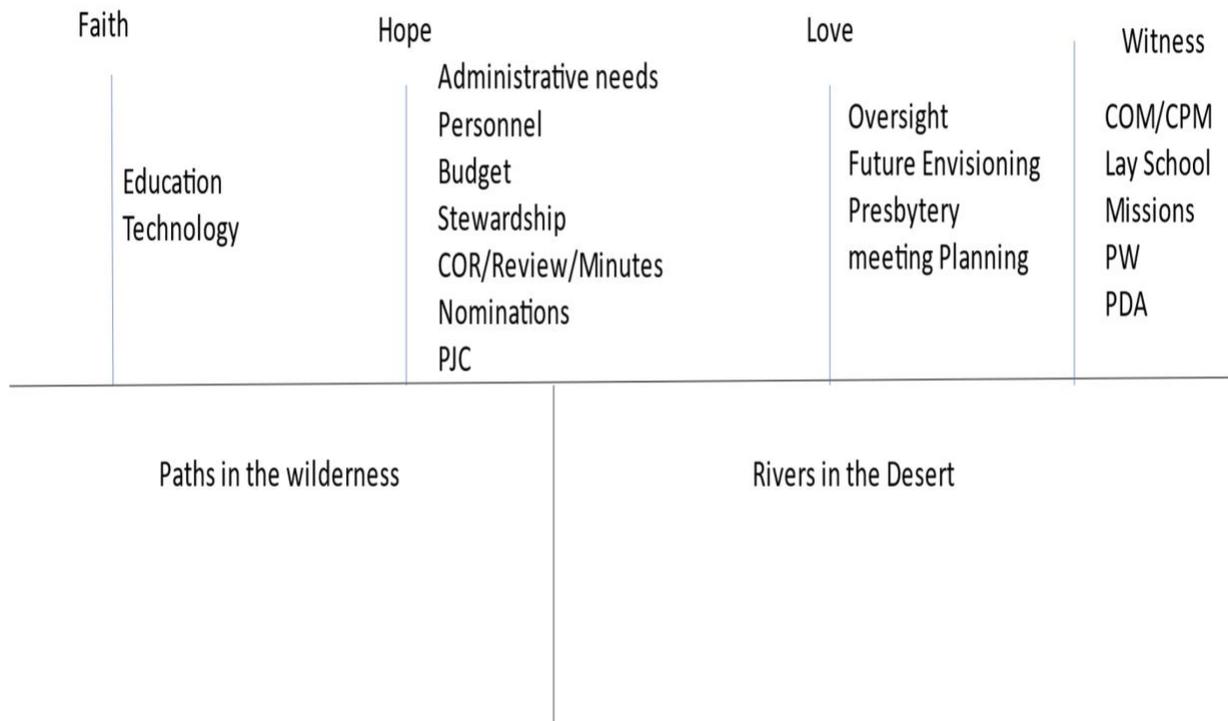
A moderator and vice moderator of the Presbytery are elected for one-year terms. They, along with those required by the Book of Order committees, will be the only people elected by the Presbytery. The Mission Neighbor Groups are open to any congregation member who wants to serve.

The Transition Team fully supports the study of the Task Force for Bethelwoods regarding its future.

A plan for implementing Mission Neighbors will be developed before the implementation of Committees of Care, so that those with shared interest for mission and ministry across the Presbytery are able to connect and their mission and ministry are accomplished according to the policies and guidelines of Providence Presbytery

***“Behold I am doing a new thing; Now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?
I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.”***

Isaiah 43:19



Providence Presbytery Communities of Care

Section 4: Office location:

As the presbytery is in transition, the Transition Team realizes the need to explore options that technology offers us in creating a new thing. Technology allows us to do our Christian work beyond the limits of one location. The current office at 515 Oakland Ave. is not in compliance with the American Disabilities Act. The Transition Team will have a feasibility exploration on the current office property to explore the cost to retrofit the building to be American Disabilities Act compliant, which could be VERY costly and limited by the historic building designation. Also, through what we have experienced during the pandemic, the meeting space is inadequate and dictates long drives for many to meetings.

The Transition Team envisions a new ministry with a different type of facility; a virtual office. This vision puts into practice what we have learned in the past year, the presbytery's work is not inside a building; it is in the 5 counties in which we live.

In exploring options, the team recommends the following

Sell office and move to a virtual office model. If physical space is needed, location would be determined

Some meetings will continue on Zoom, others can meet in churches.

This Team will work with the Presbyterian Historic Foundation to digitize our documents for future storage. This Team will also find a place to host the Resource Center.

Transition Team will plan for implementation of either of these options and needs to be completed by March 31, 2023.

Section 5: Staffing

The Transition Team recognizes that staffing the presbytery will face challenges as membership and financial resources decline. The team recommends the following staffing model:

Full time General Presbyter-- needs skills beyond theology (technology, business, facilitation of communities of care, community organizer).

Part Time Stated Clerk-- could be volunteer from a church or financed minimally.

Full Time Administrator/Treasurer --w/caveats: a) up-date technology systems, b) presbyter(s), as head of staff, to set boundaries of time and duties: days off and self-care, c) assure records can be accessed by people from Communities of Care, Mission Neighbors or Congregations d) Bethelwoods removed from administrator's duties and to Bethelwoods staff

Part Time Technology/Communication personnel--hourly help as needed

Part Time Mission and Outreach Coordinator—hours to be at a level deemed appropriate by the Implementation Team

Section 6: Propose a way forward in re: Bethelwoods, other properties, financial transparency, and congregational vitality

Providence Presbytery must address the reality that the Presbytery is decreasingly popular with many people and that the Presbytery is now considered an “add-on” in many congregations. A financially solid financial plan for the future must be developed.

Trusting that current financial giving will continue, (if Bethelwoods becomes separated) there will be revenue to redirect to other ministry options: legacy property/cemeteries, New Worship Communities, etc.; Capital Campaign; Endowment policy. Without a plan, the result is likely to be spotty and direct resources away from PCUSA.

The reality that some churches will die must be considered. The Presbytery will develop guides for local congregations in planning for the future of the property and the assets.

The Coordinating Team moves the following Items for Action:

- A. Move to adopt the report of the Transition Team.**
- ~~B. Move to approve the new structure Communities of Care, to begin January 2022.~~**
- C. Move to facilitate the process of digitizing the Presbytery Records for the Presbyterian Historical Society.**
- D. Move to have the Presbytery Office located at 515 Oakland Avenue on the real estate market by March 31, 2023.**
- E. Move the proposed staffing model, effective date TBD.**
- F. That the Transition Team be thanked with a round of applause.**
- G. That the Coordinating Team be empowered to form an Implementation Team at their earliest convenience.**

Addendums

Addendum 1: Transition Team Time Line

Transition Team: Bill Ligon, Bethesda (K)*, Shirenta Belk, First Lancaster, Michele McCollough, Pleasant Ridge, Jason Myers, Purity, Max Russell CRE, Union First, member Bowling Green, Stephen Lemons, Stated Supply, Carl Ratliff, Hermon, Chip Hutchson, Rock Hill First, Cole Kessell, Grace (Y)*, Sarah Childers, Bethesda (Y), Employed by Grace (Y), Joanne Sizoo, Grace (Y), Alex Jones, Oakland Ave, Winthrop student, De. Patton, Bowling Green, Winthrop student, Hoover and Olivia, staff
**Bill Ligon resigned from the team as he left Bethesda and Cole Kessell resigned from the team after the birth of their second child, but remained on the LUCKY Team. Hoover and Olivia reached out to the Kershaw County churches to seeking someone to represent the Kershaw County churches on Transition Team, not getting any responses. With the representation from York County on the Transition Team, and where the team was in their work, they saw no reason to replace Cole on the team.*

Before we met, Hoover and Olivia sent questions to the presbytery's team moderators. They dealt with what each team does, their goals and what future plans they have. During the transition, Hoover and Olivia also conducted interviews with all the staff.

September 16, 2019: First Team meeting

Plans: Read Sailboat Church, and recorded Devotions NOW from the book for the Providence Presbytery website; make plans for a LUCKY Team, a sub group to offer educational and fun events to build relationships between churches; 2 members to read the Vision 2020, written in 2015 to report back to the team; voiced the needs to look at the churches, especially the smaller ones who are continuing but not growing and to review the history of Providence Presbytery.

November 14, 2019

Plans: Demographic work; developed questions for the team to contact county and community leaders to ask about future trends for the area

January 27, 2020:

Plans: Heard the demographic report, began to put together the common messages of the 5 counties, planned for the first presbytery report (Venn diagram of demographics)

March 31, 2020: The beginning of virtual meetings

Plans: The LUCKY team moved from an in-person music festival to a virtual music festival, discussed how to we harness the virtual connection that has been placed upon us, began looking at contacting the individual churches for 2 reasons: 1) see how they are managing through COVID, 2) ask the church leaders their opinions and ideas about the future of the presbytery.

May 21, 2020

Plans: Discussed what the churches said to us during the interview, (Venn diagram of the presbytery), discussed what risks are we willing to take in this transition, looked to the team members talking to other presbyteries about their structure and transition, if applicable, discussed talking to the team moderators in Providence Presbytery; as Hoover and Olivia had done that earlier, it was decided not to talk with them again.

June 10, Prayer Vigil for the recent racial murders and protesting. The beginning of the Anti-Racism Task Force.

June 29, 2020

Plan: continued the discussion around virtual ways to reach out to the presbytery and build relationships, will talk to Von Clemmens about a webinar on Zoom, planned presbytery report and the August 29 Providence Presbytery Presents!, introduced the booklet, *Effective Organizing for Congregational Renewal*, to see if this model of leadership would benefit the transition.

August 17, 2020

Plan: Planned the August 26 Providence Presbytery Presents!

September 14, 2020

November 14, 2020, In-person Retreat

Plan: Define and name our Neutral Zone and get settled into it, name our problems and look for ways to address/attack them, tell our story, review staffing and property. Four areas: Metaphors, Story, Connectional ties and Future plans

January 26, 2021

Did not meet

February 16, 2021

Plan: Reviewed where our reports are and our time line, began seriously talking about what to do with the office from the 2020 Vision to now, staffing and financial transparency and the time line to go to presbytery

March 4, 2021 Personnel and Transition meeting

Plan: Realized that Personnel needs to take care of immediate needs and Transition needs to look at future staffing needs

April 6, 2021

Plan: Hearing the updates from the 4 teams, next time in-person to put it all together.

May 4, 2021

Plan: Begin to shape the report for Presbytery.

May 11, 2021

Plan: First read of report. From this point on, editing will happen through emails.

Accomplishments during Transition

Formation of the LUCKY Team to create and execute events, both social and educational that help reconnect the congregations in Providence Presbytery. The team members are: Nate Mallard, Matt Horne, Jason Myers, Jill Wilson, Hoover and Olivia. The team met before the pandemic began, and were planning a Presbytery-wide Music Festival, inviting the church choirs and groups to sing. As COVID restrictions began, LUCKY alter the plans for the Music Festival to be virtual. Below are all the Providence Presbytery Presents! events. All events can be found on the presbytery's website.

June 2020, PPP! Virtual Music Festival

August 26, 2020 PPP! The Transition Team introduced themselves and what transition for the Presbytery might mean.

September 23, 2020 PPP! EEMT presented "How to teach in an online world"

October 28, PPP! All Saints Day Service

December, PPP! Virtual Christmas Music Festival

January 27, PPP! Introduction to [So You Want to Talk About Race](#)

March 24, PPP! Human Trafficking

May 26, 2021, PPP! Introduction to Matthew 25

As the presbytery moved to an online format, there were other groups offered online resources. There have been 2 webinars posted in the COVID-19 link: COVID-19 and Mental Health, Children and Youth Mental Health and COVID-19.

The Committee on Religious and Racial Reconciliation held two webinars: book study on [So You Want to Talk About Race](#), and Dr. Julia Robinson Moore, "What We Have Left Undone in the Body of Christ". As these were not organized by the Transition or LUCKY Teams, these events have been new and transformational.

Addendum 2: Tell stories, celebrate successes

The Presbyterian Church over the centuries has made many positive contributions to our country and the world. Among those contributions are the inclusion of the Separation of Church and State in our constitution, the building of fine educational institutions that include colleges, universities, and seminaries. Presbyterians have emphasized an educated clergy and laity and education for all people. We have built hospitals and other places of healing in our country and world. Presbyterians were

active in the American Revolution with twelve Presbyterians (11 laity and one clergy) signing the Declaration of Independence.

Today, the Presbyterian Church is working to become a place of inclusion welcoming Euro Americans, African Americans, LatinX Americans, and Asian Americans into the church. We are becoming more culturally and theologically diverse. We have accomplished much as a denomination, but we have much more to do. There is a need for more cultural and racial diversity as well as a need for more cultural, racial, and theological humility.

While we have accomplished much, we also have made mistakes along the way.

The Presbyterian Church has at times taken a courageous and prophetic stand concerning racial reconciliation that has encouraged African Americans to believe a hopeful allegiance was possible. On other occasions, the church experienced a failure of courage that induced alienation.

The overall effect has been ambivalence, which is reinforced by the failure of the church to incorporate into its program and work the insights, elements of decision making, and worship style that Black Presbyterians have brought or developed through decades of hardship. Integration of structures, to the extent that it was attempted, have generally left our African American brothers and sisters feeling powerless, too scattered to exert weight upon the wheels of power.¹

These sentiments have been felt in Providence Presbytery as well. Providence Presbytery (1987-present) was formed upon the reunion of the northern and southern branches of the Presbyterian churches. Providence Presbytery is the result of a merger of the former Bethel Presbytery (1824-1987) and Fairfield-McClelland Presbytery (1865-1987). Bethel Presbytery was a part of the PCUS. Fairfield-McClelland Presbytery (UPCUSA) was a result of missionaries from the north who came to form churches and schools among freed slaves in 1865. Providence Presbytery continues to be impacted by our failures to embrace one another completely.

¹ _____, All-Black Governing Bodies: The History and Contributions of All-Black Governing Bodies in the Predecessor Denominations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Published with the Approval of the 205th General Assembly (1993) Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Page 12.

While there were strong advocates in the Presbyterian Church for the abolition of slavery, there were also advocates. Many Southern Presbyterians supported the institution of slavery. Robert Dabney argued that the Bible supported slavery. James Henley Thornwell and Benjamin Morgan Palmer argued that slavery was a positive good. Southern Presbyterians support of slavery led to a split in the denomination in 1837 and another split in 1861 when Presbyterians in the south formed the Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States.

While working in the 1930s - 1950s toward reconciliation of the Northern and Southern Presbyterian Churches the escalating of racial tension in the late 1950's led to the continued separation of the two denominations. It was not until 1983 that the Southern Presbyterian Church in the US and the Northern Presbyterian Church in the USA merged to form the Presbyterian Church U.S.A.

The reunion of the Southern and Northern Presbyterian Churches was not without contention in the Bethel Presbytery (precursor to Providence Presbytery). In the 1970's all the churches in the Presbytery were predominantly white. In fact, only 2 churches had one or two black members. Blatant racism existed in our churches. Six or seven churches left the denomination for the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) with some churches split forming a PCA Congregation.

The merger of the Fairfield-McClelland Presbytery into the Providence Presbytery brought several African American churches and pastors into the Presbytery. The African American churches were not represented on committees of the presbytery or integrated into the presbytery's administrative structure. This brought about suspicion and mistrust within the African American congregations. We acknowledge our sin of not showing the hospitality and affirming spirit that these congregations deserved.

We neglected to realize how central the Church is in the Black Community and we neglected to offer the resources and the encouragement that was needed during this time. In the future it is our hope that Providence Presbytery will seek to honor the voices of the Black Presbyterian community and will seek to nurture these vital Presbyterian communities of faith.

The Presbyterian Church has made progress in becoming a place where there is shared power between clergy and laity. We are growing in our understanding of gender

equality. We were one of the first to ordain women as elders (1930s) and pastors (1956). At the same time, female clergy are still not treated equally today.

Women make up only 38% of active ordained ministers in the PC(USA), even while the denomination is majority female (58%). Women are also more likely to hold part-time and temporary ministry positions or to be called to serve struggling churches. The gender pay gap among ministers is wider than the national average, due in part to these discrepancies in the type of work women receive.²

Presbyterians were early settlers to America. And our treatment of Native Americans who occupied this territory before white settlers arrived is not a history to be celebrated. We acknowledge the land in which our congregations gathered are the ancestral homes of the Catawba and Cherokee. We acknowledge that our presence in this land has been detrimental to their very existence.

The focus of our future mission hinges on acknowledging our past. In looking back, we see how God has bestowed many blessings upon us. We also acknowledge the sins we have committed against God and our Neighbors. As we move forward, we desire to embrace our mission and ministry together as the full body of Christ.

² _____, Gender and Leadership in the PC(USA). PCUSA Research Services, pcusa.org/research, Summer, 2016.