

Presbytery of Mid-Kentucky
Stated and Annual Meeting
February 22, 2025
Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary
AGENDA

Moderator: Ruling Elder Alicia Bloos

Vice-moderator: Teaching Elder Joel Weible

Stated Clerk: Teaching Elder Jerry Van Marter

Recording Clerk: Teaching Elder Andrew Hartmans

9:30 a.m. **Registration, refreshments, Open House** - Winn Center

10:00 a.m. **Session Minutes/Records Review** (Charlie Kendell, retired clerk of session, First-Frankfort, and Andrew Hartmans, recording clerk)

10:00 a.m. **Education Day Workshops**

- 1) Kim and Robyn Tribolet – Expressing Faith Through Pottery
- 2) Rev. Dr. Andrew Pomerville - Design Thinking for Congregations
- 3) Rev. Marie McCanless Ellis - Moral Injury Workshop
- 4) Rev. Susan Barnes & Rev. Marissa Galván-Valle – Anti-Racism Policies
- 5) Rev. Jerry Van Marter – Proposed Changes to the Book of Order

12:00 p.m. **Lunch** - Winn Center Cafeteria

12:45 p.m. **Gathering All Together** – Chapel - Moderator Alicia Bloos

- Opening prayer
- Welcome to our first time Members, Commissioners and Guests
- Welcome and seating of any Corresponding Members
- Welcome from Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary
- Declaration of a quorum and approval of the docket.

1:00 p.m. **Worship with Communion**

- Preaching: LPTS President Andrew Pomerville
- Sacrament of the Lord's Supper – Andrew Pomerville and Annica Gage officiating
- Offering recipient: Preston Highway Ministries Diaconal Fund

2:00 p.m. **Consent Agenda:** Jerry Van Marter

- Approve the minutes of the November 16, 2024 stated meeting.
-- from the Stated Clerk
- Elect Barbara Kuhn (Anchorage) to fill a vacancy on the Commission on Preparation for Ministry, Class of 2027. (If you have an alternative candidate you wish to nominate, first ask to have this item pulled from the consent agenda) – *from the Nominations and Representation Committee*
- Approve the following proposed amendments to the Constitution proposed by the 226th General Assembly: 24-A, 24-B, 24-D, 24-E, 24-F, 24-G, 24-H, 24-I, 24-L, 24-M – *from the Church Administration Committee*

2:10 p.m. **Interim General Presbyter's report:** Marian McClure Taylor

2:25 p.m. **Hispanic/Latino/a Ministries Committee:** Tom Vandergriff

- Addressing the mass deportation crisis

2:55 p.m. **Church Administration Committee:** Perry Chang

- **FOR ACTION:** Disapprove proposed constitutional amendment 24-J (changing the formula for General Assembly participation resulting in an increase in the number of General Assembly commissioners).
- **FOR ACTION:** Approve proposed constitutional amendment 24-C (adding affirmation of diversity and inclusion principles in *The Book of Order* to the standards for ordination).

3:15 p.m. **Commission on Preparation for Ministry:** Greg Cohen

- **FOR ACTION:** Move Inquirer Shannon Bostrom (Highland) to Candidate status.
- **FOR ACTION:** Move Inquirer Andrew Chapdelaine (Pewee Valley) to Candidate status.

3:45 p.m. **Coordinating Commission report:** Christine Coy Fohr

- **Annual meeting of the corporation**
- **Mission Committee/Self-Development of People report:**
Faye Fedlam
- **Finance Committee report:** Steve Makela

- **Church Growth/Transformation report:** Paul Seebeck
 - Report of the Goodness Grows New Worshiping Community (Angela Johnson)
- **Christian Education Committee:** John Kubar
 - Report of UKirk ministry: Nell Herring

4:15 p.m. **Announcements:** Announcements should be no more than one minute in length.

4:25 p.m. **Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program (PILP) report:** Clare Lewis

4:30 p.m. **Commission on Ministry report:** Marissa Galvan-Valle

- Summary of actions taken since last presbytery meeting
- Welcome new members; farewell to departing members
- Recognition of ordinations

4:45 p.m. **Cedar Ridge Camp report:** Andrew Hartmans

4:50 p.m. **New Business**

4:55 p.m. **Report from the Stated Clerk:** Jerry Van Marter

- Attendance and offering reports
- Session records review report
- Acknowledgements and thanks

5:00 p.m. **Adjournment with prayer**

Next stated meetings: Monday, May 12, 2024 at Goodness Grows NWC

Monday, September 15, 2024 at Cedar Ridge Camp

Saturday, November 8, 2024 at TBA

Feb. 22, 2025 Workshops

1) Robyn Tribolet and Rev. Kim Tribolet - Mold Us, Fill Us, Use Us

Using the Lectionary readings for Lent, Year C we will discuss and reflect on how God is transforming us and God's church as we transform clay into a cup and plate. Our clay creations will be hand crafted. All materials and tools will be provided. Your clay creations will be fired and returned to you. Special thanks to the Faith and Arts Studio at Trinity Presbyterian Church for their help getting our creations glazed and fired.

2) Rev. Dr. Andrew Pomerville - Design Thinking for Congregational Leaders: An Adaptive Approach to Challenges

How we ask questions may be as helpful for congregational decision making as the outcomes we think we are seeking. Design thinking is an effective strategy used in a variety of fields to redirect the way we think about challenges in our particular contexts. This workshop will be a hands on, high energy, enthusiastic time to try out new ways of strategic thinking for committees, sessions, and congregational leadership. All materials will be supplied at the event.

3) Rev. Marie McCanless Ellis - Moral Injury Workshop

Moral injury is a significant emotional, spiritual and psychological burden that comes when one's core values and beliefs clash with the realities encountered in complicated situations. The resulting feelings of guilt, anger, and loss of identity can cause symptoms of changes in beliefs, self-image, new isolating behavior, loss of faith in people or loss of faith in a just world. Importantly, this phenomenon is not isolated to a single individual; it is a widespread issue that affects many, particularly those in caring professions.

To begin to address this complex issue, we are pleased to offer an engaging workshop designed to foster insightful discussions, interactive activities, and valuable insights from experienced professionals. Whether you are a leader striving to enhance community well-being or an individual seeking clarity on your personal journey, this workshop offers a range of resources aimed at promoting both personal and collective growth. We invite you to join us in this essential dialogue, which aims to cultivate healing, resilience, and well-being, transforming challenges into opportunities for development. Your participation in this conversation will enhance understanding and equip you with the compassion and strength needed for the path ahead.

4) Rev. Susan Barnes & Rev. Marissa Galván-Valle – Anti-Racism Policies

Anti-Racism Policy for Churches

The Rev. Marissa Galván-Valle and the Rev. Susan Barnes will present a suggested outline for developing an Anti-Racism Policy for Churches (as required by G. 30106). This will include sample goals, action plans, and benchmarks. Each participant will receive a paper copy of the Guidelines Outline. Marissa and Susan were part of the writing group for the proposed Anti-Racism Policy for the Presbytery.

5) Rev. Jerry Van Marter – Changes to the Book of Order

Last summer's General Assembly sent out 13 proposed constitutional amendments and one ecumenical agreement for the presbyteries to ratify. Members of the Church Administration Committee will lead a discussion of all the amendments, with pros and cons for ratification and the Church Administration's recommendations. We will also have a special guest, Bishop Terry White of the Episcopal Church to comment on the ecumenical agreement between the PC(USA) and the Episcopal Church. The presbytery as a whole will vote on the amendments later in the day.

Mid-Kentucky Presbytery Opening Worship

Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary
February 22, 2025

Leaders in today's service include Rev. Dr. Andrew Pomerville, President and Professor of Practical Theology, Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, and Rev. Annica Gage, Campus Chaplain, Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary.

The offering from today's meeting supports the Preston Highway Ministry Diaconal Fund.

Opening Sentences

Take delight in the Lord,
who satisfies the desires of your heart.

from Psalm 37

**Commit your way to the Lord
and trust in God's actions.**

Be still before the Lord
and wait patiently for God.

**The Lord is our salvation
and our refuge in times of trouble.**

Hymn

Here, O Lord, Your Servants Gather

GTG 311

Confession and Pardon

Jesus promised us that God is kind
even to the ungrateful and wicked, even to us.

Trusting in God's kindness and love,
let us confess our sin.

**Merciful God, we confess
that we have not followed your ways
or trusted your promises.
We love only those who love us;
we show kindness only to those who are kind to us;
we give only when we expect to receive.**

**Forgive us, O Lord.
Fill our hearts with your selfless love.
Change our lives by your matchless grace.
These things we pray through Christ our Savior. Amen.**

Children of the Most High God,
through Jesus Christ our Lord
we have received grace in good measure—
spilling out and running over.

In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

Thanks be to God.

Worshipers may share signs of peace.

Prayer for Illumination

Saving God, source of our calling,
your Word is full of power and glory.
Pour out your Holy Spirit upon us
so that we may receive your grace
and live as your beloved children;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Scripture Genesis 45:3–15
Luke 6:27–31

After the readings:

The word of God for the people of God.

Thanks be to God.

Sermon “Asking the Wrong Questions, Getting the Wrong Answers”

Hymn Lord, I Want to Be a Christian GTG 729

Great Thanksgiving

Blessed are you, O Holy One our God:
You are faithful and just, loving and merciful.
Throughout the generations
you have preserved your people.
When we turn from your way,
you call us to be reconciled with you
and with one another.

Blessed is Jesus Christ, our Savior:
Jesus teaches us your way of love—
to love our enemies,
bless those who curse us,
and do for others
as we would have them do for us.

Remembering your goodness and grace,
we offer ourselves to you with gratitude
as we share this joyful feast.

Pour out your Holy Spirit upon us
and upon this bread and cup;
make us one in the body and blood
of Jesus Christ our Savior.

Send us forth in your Spirit
to share your great love for the world,
feeding and welcoming others
as you have fed and welcomed us here.

Prayers of intercession may be included here.

Through Jesus Christ,
in the unity of the Spirit,
we bless you, God of glory,
now and forever. **Amen.**

*Worshippers are invited to say the Lord's Prayer
using the words or language closest to their hearts.*

Breaking the Bread

The words of institution are spoken.

Communion of the People

*Worshippers come forward to receive communion;
servers will go to those who prefer to remain seated.*

*The bread is gluten-free and allergen-free;
the cups contain grape juice.*

Prayer after Communion

**We give you thanks and praise, O God,
that you have fed us with your mercy
and poured out your Spirit in this place.
Continue to nourish and fill us each day,
that we may live as your beloved people;
in the name of Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.**

Hymn

When the Poor Ones

GTG 762

Blessing and Charge

The liturgy for this service is adapted from the *Feasting on the Word Worship Companion, Year C, Volume 1* (WJKP, 2012) and *Call to Worship: Liturgy, Music, Preaching, and the Arts* 58.1 (2024), calltoworshipjournal.org.

Presbytery of Mid-Kentucky Church Administration Committee February 22, 2025

NOTE: The full text of each amendment plus comments on them from various General Assembly entities, including the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, can be found at:

<https://www.pcusa.org/resource/proposed-amendments-constitution>

The Church Administration Committee met three times in January and February to review the proposed constitutional amendments sent to the presbyteries by the 226th General Assembly (2024). The Church Administration Committee's recommendations (along with the committee's vote on each recommendation) can be found on the attached chart.

Because of the unanimous or near unanimous vote on them, 10 of the proposed overtures appear on the consent agenda: 24-A, 24-B, 24-D, 24-E, 24-F, 24-G, 24-H, 24-I, 24-L and the Episcopal-Presbyterian Agreement on Local Sharing of Ministries.

Two of the amendments are on the regular agenda: 24-C and 24-J. Please note that the committee is recommending a "no" vote on 24-J. (Any other amendment may be removed from the consent agenda at the request of any one commissioner to the meeting.)

Members of the Church Administration Committee:

*Rev. Mark Barnes
Elder Sue Wilder
Rev. Kathy Costanzo
Elder Brian Cabbage
Rev. Ben Stewart
Elder Perry Chang*

BOOK OF ORDER AMENDMENTS RECOMMENDED BY
THE 226TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
AND PRESENTED TO PRESBYTERIES FOR THEIR
AFFIRMATIVE OR NEGATIVE VOTE

SUMMARY

(Full text is available with meeting papers)



AMENDMENT NUMBER	BOO SECTION TO BE AMENDED	SUMMARY	CHURCH ADMIN. Recomm.
24-A	F-1.0403	The categories <i>gender identity, sexual orientation</i> , be included as protected classes in the Unity in Diversity section of Foundations of Presbyterian Polity	Yes (6-0)
24-B*	G-1.0104	Adds guidelines for other forms of corporate witness (New Worshiping Communities, Immigrant Fellowships etc.) within an adaptable framework rooted in Reformed polity.	Yes (6-0)
24-C	G-2.0104b	Adds Historic Principles of Church Order (F-3.01) and principles of participation and representation (F-1.0403) to required areas for examination for ordination.	Yes (5-1)
24-D	G-2.0504b	Lengthens maximum terms of service for temporary pastoral relationships from twelve months to 36 months	Yes (6-0)
24-E	G-2.0504b	Prohibits non-disclosure agreements at the end of a temporary pastoral relationship	Yes (6-0)
24-F	G-2.0601	Confidential details about a candidate for ministry should be omitted in communicating to the presbytery the need for the approval of alternate means to determine readiness for ministry in areas usually covered by ordination exams	Yes (6-0)
24-G	G-0901	Prohibits non-disclosure agreements when an installed pastoral relationship is dissolved	Yes (6-0)
24-H	G-3-0106	Adds <i>and adults with vulnerabilities</i> to the required child and youth protection policy	Yes (6-0)
24-I	G-3.0302d	Eliminates the need for a concurrence from another presbytery to have business brought before GA (concurrences are still allowed but not required)	Yes (5-1)
24-J	G-3.0501	Revises the formula for determining the number of commissioners presbyteries are to send to GA	No (3-2-1)
24-L	D-7.0902b	Mandates that administrative leave be paid	Yes (6-0)

Item 24-M

Episcopal-Presbyterian Agreement on Local Sharing of Ministries: Yes (6-0)



M Gaut 11/14/2024

Modified G Goodwiller 1/15/25

Responding to God's Word

Worship Liturgy for the Reception of an Inquirer as a Candidate

Gathering Words

Let the peoples praise you, O God;

Let all the peoples praise you.

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling,

One Lord one faith, one baptism, one God and Parent of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

Sentences of Scripture

Hear the promise of the Lord:

Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;

I have called you by name, you are mine.

When you pass through the waters,

I will be with you;

and through the rivers,

they shall not overwhelm you;

when you walk through the fire

you shall not be burned.

For I am the Lord your God,

the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. *(Isaiah 43:1-3)*

Presentation of Inquirer Shannon Bostrom

Report of the Commission on Preparation for Ministry

Statement by the Inquirer of Christian faith, service and motives for entering the ministry

Examination by the Presbytery in the above matters

Action regarding the CPM's recommendation

Presentation of Inquirer Andrew Chapdelaine

Report of the Commission on Preparation for Ministry

Statement by the Inquirer of Christian faith, service and motives for entering the ministry

Examination by the Presbytery in the above matters

Action regarding the CPM's recommendation

Questions

- Do you believe yourself to be called by God to the ordered ministry of Teaching Elder?
- Do you promise, in reliance upon the grace of God, to maintain a Christian character and conduct, to be diligent and faithful in making full preparation for this ministry?
- Do you accept the proper supervision of the presbytery in matters that concern your preparation for this ministry?
- Do you now desire to be received by this presbytery as a Candidate for the ordered ministry of Teaching Elder in the Presbyterian Church (USA)?

Questions to the Presbytery *(please stand in body or spirit)*

- Do you, the ministers and ruling elders of Mid-Kentucky Presbytery promise to support Shannon Bostrom and Andrew Chapdelaine through your prayers?
- Do you promise to be mentors, friends, and colleagues to them in their candidacy?
- Do you promise to speak truth to them, to show love to them, and to be the body of Christ with them in this process?

Declaration of Enrollment as Candidates

Declaration

Presentation to the Candidates

Brief Charges to the Candidates

Rev. Dr. Aimee Moiso to Shannon Bostrom

Emily Chapdelaine to Andrew Chapdelaine

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Blessing *(Unison)*

Members of the Candidates' congregations are invited forward to stand with the candidates for the time of prayer.

***God of prophets and apostles,
you have chosen leaders to train your people
in the way of Jesus Christ.***

***We thank you that in our day
you are still calling those among us for special work within the church.***

As Shannon and Andrew have dedicated themselves to you,

let us pledge ourselves to them,

so that, surrounded by affection and hope,

they may grow in wisdom,

mature in love,

and become faithful workers,

called by God, accompanied by Jesus Christ

and equipped by the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Response *(please stand in body or spirit)*

"Go Walk With God" *

TALLIS 'CANON

O may the grace of Christ our Lord,
The wondrous love that comes from God,
The Spirit's fellowship now be
God's gifts to you eternally.

*Hymn text copyright 2000 by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette. Used by permission.

Statement of Faith Shannon Bostrom

I believe in the holy God, one body in three persons: the Creator, whom Jesus addressed as Abba; Jesus, the redeemer; and the Spirit who sustains. This triune God is revealed through scripture and in our lived experiences. The church serves both as witness to these revelations and as community to foster relationships with God and with each other.

Creator

I believe God created the physical world with a desire to be in and among right relationship with all of humanity. This creator desires the liberation of all peoples from every form of oppression and bondage, and celebrates with us when our actions are rooted in justice. This creator rejects divisions we create, celebrating the rich diversity of expression that touches all aspects of human life.

Redeemer

I believe God encountered the world with us in the human form we know as Jesus while also remaining fully God. In this presence Jesus experienced the human condition, including all of the pain and hatred we direct toward each other. He taught of justice existing on earth as well as the hope of eternal rejoicing in union with God once the creaturely world we know has ceased to exist. We know Jesus's redemptive acts through his pleas on the cross to the Creator; pleas for forgiveness for the hateful divisions we sow. Through his defeat of death in his resurrection, we are justified by faith in Christ's grace.

Sustainer

I believe the Holy Spirit moves in us and through us to promote communion among humanity and with God. This same Spirit gives us a grace of sanctification that constantly urges us to live out a love for God and for each other which is characterized by equity and right relationship.

Scripture

Scripture offers an account of how people who went before us understood their encounters with God in the world. God is active in the mystery of this account, inviting us to observe and ponder the characteristics of God through the experience of both the named and the unnamed in the text. In this way, as opposed to being a mere rulebook that lacks nuance, through the specific written works of the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament, God actively provides humanity with a means of understanding God's desire for just and equitable relationships.

Humanity and Sin

Humanity, in this created order, is called to care for the earth and all who inhabit it, and to love our God and neighbor. Through our own vain conceit, however, we push, earth, God, and neighbor aside. This is the original sin which began with the first humans and encompasses the systems we are born into today. Sin, therefore, is both the cause and the effect of humanity turning against the earth, God, and our neighbor, and instead toward reverence of ourselves. We are liberated from this separation by sin through grace, demonstrated by the faith in and of Jesus Christ.

Sacraments

The sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion are means of grace which we experience by the presence of Christ in our midst as we worship. Through the water we recognize our sanctified place within the family of God, and through the eucharistic elements we recognize Christ's justifying empathy, example, passion, and resurrection.

The Church

The church is a worshipping body which, at its best, demonstrates a just community that reflects God's vision for humanity as revealed throughout scripture, notably in Christ's teaching and in the community described in the Acts of the Apostles. Being an institution made of humans, however, the church must deal with the effects of our vain conceit, both within itself and in the world with which the church interacts. The church is therefore called to reflect God's celebration of human expression as well as God's grace bestowed upon its members and leadership through Christ and the Spirit.

Faith Journey **Shannon Bostrom**

I grew up in the United Methodist Church, with parents who were both UMC pastors at the less evangelical end of the Wesleyan theological spectrum. While my parents were decidedly more universalist in their understanding of salvation than other perspectives I encountered, I did not immediately recognize the differences between the relational aspects of my parents' faith and the transactional aspects of the faith I heard from peers and church members. I knew I was taught to be Christian, and that meant respect and loving kindness for all of humanity.

I began to experience tension in high school. I started to notice that the relational ideals my parents stood for were opposed to the transactional divisions described to me by my Christian peers. What I understood to be God's beauty and good in the world: women's and LGBTQ+ (without that specific terminology) rights, racial equity, and other forms of liberation, were denounced as evil by my peers.

Also in high school, I began participating in an annual mission program that was part of the South Carolina United Methodist Conference. This was a home repair ministry, and functioned in the same way that many mission trips do: participants are given an opportunity to do something for the less fortunate. I, like many, understood this as a way of doing God's work in the world. To be sure, ensuring access to safe housing is good and necessary work, but the framing of this and similar programs focuses on what the participant gets from the experience, not on God's call to accompany.

After leaving home for college, I tried to find my place among the varied campus ministries, but most ministries I found focused on naming themselves as morally superior to our non-Christian classmates. This experience, combined with the tension that had been mounting through high school, led me to separate myself from the church and to claim what I experienced to be rising in popularity: an undefined spirituality that eschewed religion. However, as I worked in restaurants over the coming years, I found that late-night conversations at bars with coworkers often turned toward the topics of morality, philosophy, and religion (namely, Christianity). I found myself acting as an apologist, defending the more relational Christianity of my parents against peers who denounced Christianity for the same reasons I had separated from the church. This was my first sense of call: without using or fully knowing the terminology, demonstrating in these moments that the God of Christianity was a god of liberation, not of oppression.

I then spent four and a half years working with a youth outreach program in South Florida. This experience was my introduction to accompaniment. Our program hosted multiple mission teams each summer. I watched one summer as the same wall was painted seven different times, with each mission team leaving while discussing what a difference the experience had made in their own lives, not in the lives of the youth and children they had come to serve. I reflected on my high school mission program experience as well as the moral superiority that reflected so many of the campus ministries I had attended. Once again, this experience caused tension within my faith, as it did not feel to me like God working in the world.

During this time, I met my partner, and she eventually moved to Louisville to begin seminary. I watched (and eventually joined myself) as she found herself in community—in a local congregation, in seminary, and beyond—which sought to understand faith as seeking to understand and accompany experience in pursuit of the liberation of all of God's people. I began to see God at work redefining what we mean by the word mission through people carrying out actions of accompaniment. I found a renewal of my faith, and began to experience God in ways I had not seen or expected to that point.

The past few years for me have been especially grief laden. This is due to personal circumstance as well as professional experience in chaplaincy. More and more, and guided by my theological education, I find God to be both expansive in ways that are beyond my understanding, and active in accompanying each of us through all of life's experiences, seeking liberation. My faith tells me that the only response to this experience is to accompany each other, working toward liberation in the same way. We see this as the Israelites murmur to Moses in the wilderness, just as we see it in Jesus' teachings on the mount.

Statement of Faith

Andrew Chapdelaine

I believe in the living, loving, active Triune God, who enacts change and justice in the world through all people, whom God loves and has made in God's image.

I believe in God the Creator, our Holy Parent, who formed the cosmos, including the earth and all that dwells upon and within it.

I believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who came to earth not as a conqueror, nor as a man of great economic or political power, but as a child: a poor Palestinian Jew, an exceptionally vulnerable member of an oppressed people. As a creator of spaces where saints and sinners broke bread together, as an enactor of God's grace and mercy in the world around him, and as an advocate for those on the margins of the society in which he lived, Christ's life is one that all Christians are called to emulate in ways great and small. Christ died directly for his opposition to empire, executed by the government that oppressed him from birth—and yet, death was not the end of his story. Christ rose from the dead, breaking the power of death over humanity and proving that in the end, God is stronger than any power or principality in all of creation.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, which dwells in all that God has created, embodying the presence and light of God in all things great and small. I believe that the Spirit compels all to move inward toward that light, and outward toward each other, perfecting expressions of holy love and acts of mercy and justice in God's name.

I believe that Scripture is an account of humanity's encounters with God—Creator, Christ, and Holy Spirit—and that it teaches us about the ways in which humanity has changed and continues to change by being in relationship with one another and with God.

I believe that the sacraments of baptism and Communion are ways in which we publicly declare our identities as God's beloved children and members of one community in Christ. Through each of the sacraments, we joyfully celebrate and reaffirm our connections to God and to one other. Above all, we remember through them that we exist not in a vacuum, but in community with one another, and that God, by our cooperation with each other, works with and through us for the embetterment of the world in which we live.

I believe that salvation is freely given by God regardless of works, and that there isn't a single person whom God does not love and to whom God will not extend grace and mercy. Though we are far from perfect, each of us is a beloved child of God: as we were yesterday, as we are today, and as we will be tomorrow. Therefore, there is not a single person who is undeserving of our grace, mercy, and love as well. Even so, each of us is called to be more than we are.

I believe that we are all called to ever improve our lives and the lives of others, trusting that there will be grace when we fall short of the goals that we set for ourselves and each other. In order for us to succeed, we must live together: celebrating each others' successes, offering grace in failures, and holding each other accountable in all things.

Ultimately, just as the church confesses, I believe that in life and in death, we belong to God. There is no force on earth that can separate us from the light of God that exists in one another, and therefore, there is nothing greater than the bonds that all of us have to each other through God.

I was born to Catholic parents who had my older brother and I both baptized as infants, and for my whole life, I've known that I'm a Christian. In my childhood, I was familiar with stories in the Bible and I had a basic understanding of God as God related to me and my life. I first began attending church at around the age of five, when my brother and I asked my parents to take us to Sunday school. We ended up at a United Methodist Church, and after a while started to attend church services, as well, and we became a family that worshiped together. When I was eight years old, we moved from the Washington, DC area to southern Delaware, and although we stopped going to church as we adjusted to our new home, we started attending Mariner's Bethel UMC (now GMC). This church remained my home church until 2019.

Growing up in the UMC, I felt a sense of pride in my identity as a Methodist and as a Christian. I was active in the youth group and the praise band, as well as in the Boy Scout Troop that met on church property, and my whole family was well-known and liked. The church I grew up in, although progressive by local standards in some of its stances on queerness, was conservative in many other ways. Due in part to the conservative theological overtones in the church, I felt a sense of superiority, a feeling of being part of the "in" group in my community, as well as a fear for those in my life who weren't Christian. While I did grow out of this, it took me some time to unlearn some of the more insidious aspects of this upbringing.

In college, though I didn't lose my faith, I took much less pride in my identity as a Christian. In my junior year, after many ups and downs that came with being in college, I started attending a more progressive UMC. There, I fell in love with service: I became a chaplain intern the summer after my senior year at a local hospital, and I taught at a high school in my hometown for a school year. Though I enjoyed teaching, I realized that I wanted more time as a hospital chaplain, and so went back to the hospital as a chaplain resident. As a resident, I learned that although it aligns with some of my strengths, I don't feel particularly called to hospital ministry. Despite this, I was led to apply to seminary to develop my skills in ministry and to learn more about the church and my place in it. My sense of call was affirmed later in seminary after experiencing several other ministry contexts, including parish ministry, to which I do feel called.

After the announcement of the rift within the UMC and the founding of the Global Methodist Church, I decided to leave the UMC for fear of whether I would be accepted as a queer man. After a long period of discernment, during which I experienced Unitarian and Quaker worship, I landed in the PCUSA. The PCUSA's emphasis on living and serving together as a community, with a particular focus on "always Reforming" speaks deeply to my own theology, and I appreciate the PCUSA's polity and structure as an egalitarian, flexible-yet-firm foundation for all of its members. I feel affirmed in my choice to become Presbyterian due to the support that I have received in the PCUSA and the excitement that I feel when I think about my future with the church. While I do believe that there are many paths forward, I also strongly believe that this is the one that I am meant to be on.

Presbytery of Mid-Kentucky

Mission Committee

February 22, 2025



The Mission Committee, inspired by the interim moment we are in as a presbytery, held a half-day retreat to examine our purposes and goals. The retreat was facilitated by Ellen Sherby, and attended by Del Braaksma, Chelsea Benham, Mary Nebelsick, Jim Boswell, Faye Fedlam, Marian Taylor, and as a guest Brad Napier who chairs Transylvania's Mission Committee.

After a review of how we define mission, what our history has entailed, and the values we want to emphasize, we laid out four priorities to work on in 2025:

- Communication both to and from the committee
- Identification of the assets and the needs of the congregations
- Establishment of a committee vision, structure, focus, and budget, in conversation with the Coordinating Commission
- Pursuit of additional funding sources as may be appropriate to the opportunities we will discover.

One method we are considering for pursuing these priorities is to host several gatherings (some by Zoom, others in person) that would convene mission point persons or chairs from all the presbytery's congregations. We think this could be a good way to advance the four priorities above, because at such gatherings we should be able to:

- Map existing mission commitments
- Network congregations for mutual support
- Engage in education about Presbyterian mission, special offerings, available presbytery funds, and more
- Discover the stories that need to be told in newsletters, Lunch & Learn occasions, and Presbyterian News Service
- Gain insights about what the mission role of the presbytery needs to be
- Forge a collective vision and strategy that we can recommend to the Coordinating Commission and presbytery
- Discern what additional resources such as grants to pursue.

This work, we believe, needs to be our main focus in 2025. For that reason, we propose that we be given 2025 as a year when some of our historical involvements and partnerships might be “on hold” unless urgent or compelling situations arise. These include historical partnerships with Changhua Presbytery in Taiwan, Bellewood and Brooklawn, and the Presbyterian Homes and Services of Kentucky.

Our retreat began with a meditation on the vision of God's “gathering” and “filling” in Ephesians, and closed with prayer. These are available upon request.

Mid-Kentucky Presbytery Anti-Racism Policy

Goal: to satisfy *The Book of Order* (G-3.0106), to offer a path for educating churches/ministries and provide benchmarks, and to engage in an ongoing process for addressing the sin of racism.

Introduction:

The Mid-Kentucky Presbytery is committed to the radical, transformative work of anti-racism. Rooted in the Christian teachings of love, justice, and equality, we recognize the pervasive nature of racism—individual, institutional, and systemic—across our society and within the church itself. We understand racism as a sin that distorts the image of God in every human being and commits us to a lifelong journey of learning, unlearning, and action. This policy outlines our commitment to dismantling white supremacy, promoting racial equity, and building a racially just and inclusive church.¹

What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with your God?
Micah 6:8

1. Defining Racism:

Racism, as we understand it, encompasses both conscious and unconscious acts of bias, discrimination, and prejudice based on race. It exists on multiple levels—personally, interpersonally, and institutionally—and is rooted in historical systems of power and privilege, primarily benefitting white people while marginalizing People of Color. This policy also recognizes the intersectionality of race with other social identities, such as gender, class, and ability, acknowledging the compounded impact of racism on these groups.

2. Commitment to Racial Equity:

The Presbytery affirms its commitment to racial equity, recognizing that simply treating everyone equally does not address the disparities and historical disadvantages faced by communities of color. Racial equity involves acknowledging these systemic barriers and taking specific steps to ensure fair outcomes, which may require additional resources and support for marginalized groups.

3. Anti-Racism Training:

We will require all clergy (including retired clergy active in any organized ministry) along with other staff and members of the Presbytery, to participate in anti-racism training on a regular basis. Mandatory training will be held annually, covering topics such as the history of racism in the United States, the impact of implicit bias, white privilege, microaggressions, and how to actively dismantle white supremacy in our church and communities. These trainings will be facilitated by people with expertise in racial justice issues and will evolve based on current social contexts and feedback from participants.

¹ Genesis 1:27, Matthew 22:37-39, Acts 10:34-35, Gal. 3:27–28, James 2:1-4, 1 John 4:20, Revelation 7:9

4. Inclusive Leadership and Decision-Making:

The Presbytery will work to create racially diverse and inclusive leadership. This includes setting targets for representation of People of Color across committees, boards, and other decision-making bodies within the Presbytery. These targets are aimed at ensuring diverse voices have a meaningful role in shaping the future of the church. We will also develop leadership programs specifically designed to support clergy of color and lay leaders of color, providing mentorship and development opportunities.

5. Racial Justice Committee:

A Racial Justice Task Force under the Personnel Committee will be established until a Committee on Racial Justice is formed within the Presbytery. This committee will be tasked with monitoring the implementation of this Anti-Racism Policy, reviewing and suggesting amendments to the Presbytery Standing Rules and Manual of Operations as needed, and holding the Presbytery accountable for progress. Additionally, the committee will spearhead racial justice initiatives, engage in community outreach, and work with community organizations to advocate for racial justice beyond the church walls. The suggested composition of the Task Force/Racial Justice Committee is 6 people including 1 from Personnel Committee, 1 from Nominations and Representation Committee, and at least 2 People of Color who belong to Presbytery congregations/ministries made up mainly of People of Color.

6. Accountability and Reporting:

We are committed to building an environment where racial discrimination, bias, and harassment are not tolerated. To this end, the Personnel Committee in consultation with Racial Justice Task Force/Committee will establish clear, confidential procedures for reporting and investigating incidents of racism or racial bias within the church. Disciplinary actions are the purview of the Personnel Committee (as well as – potentially – the Presbytery’s Permanent Judicial Commission or civil authorities).

We will ensure that those who come forward are supported and protected from retaliation. A public annual report will be issued to outline the number of incidents reported, actions taken, and outcomes.

7. Support for Congregations Made Up Mainly of People of Color:

The Presbytery will prioritize supporting congregations made up mainly of People of Color through dedicated financial grants (including help with salaried positions), leadership development, mentorship programs, etc. We will ensure that the voices, experiences, and spiritual needs of communities of color are centered in church life and ministry. We also commit to identifying and removing any institutional barriers that have historically limited the full participation of People of Color in the life of the church.

8. Congregational Engagement with the Larger Community

Congregations will be encouraged to actively engage in racial justice work within their larger communities. This may include actions such as partnering with other congregations across racial/ethnic lines, cooperating with local racial justice organizations, advocating for legislative changes that promote equity, and providing educational forums on race and racism open to the wider community. The Presbytery will allocate funding and resources to support congregations in these efforts.

9. Historical Truth-Telling:

As part of our commitment to anti-racism, we will engage in truth-telling about the history of racism in our church and the broader community. This involves acknowledging the church's role in both perpetuating and resisting racism, and working toward reconciliation through educational events, memorials, and open dialogues about the past. Congregations will be encouraged to explore the racial history of their local communities and confront any complicit roles in perpetuating racial injustice.

10. Inclusive Worship Practices:

Worship planners are encouraged to reflect in worship services the diverse cultural expressions of faith found among the body of Christ. The Worshipful Work Committee, in publications, social media, and presbytery worship, will offer up resources and examples for churches to try. This includes incorporating hymns, prayers, and liturgies from various racial and ethnic traditions, so that worship can be a space where all people feel seen, heard, and valued.

11. Regular Policy Review:

This Anti-Racism Policy will be reviewed every two years by the Racial Justice Committee. During this review process, we will seek feedback from clergy, staff, and congregation members, to assess the policy's effectiveness and identify areas for improvement. We will check with our partners on our effectiveness in community engagement. Updates and amendments will be made as necessary to respond to evolving challenges and contexts.

12. Measurable Outcomes:

The Racial Justice Committee will review the Presbytery's progress on these measurable policy goals including but not limited to:

- Increase the percentage of People of Color in leadership roles by a specified amount over the next five years
- Host a minimum of two anti-racist educational events per year
- Provide financial support and fund-raising assistance to the Presbytery congregations/ministries made up mainly by People of Color
- Provide financial support to at least three community-based racial justice initiatives per year
- Increase the percentage of congregations/ministries that have developed and adopted their anti-racism policy and implemented anti-racism initiatives.

Conclusion: This policy is a living document, one that evolves as we continue to learn and grow in our understanding of racism and racial justice. We, as the Mid-Kentucky Presbytery, commit to this journey with humility, dedication, and the conviction that true discipleship requires the dismantling of all forms of oppression, including racism. Guided by the gospel's call to love and justice, we pledge to be a body of believers that not only denounces racism but actively works to eradicate it from our lives, our church, and our world.

Find resources at <https://facing-racism.pcusa.org/>

**Report to Mid-Kentucky Presbytery
Commission on Ministry (COM) – Mid-Kentucky Presbytery
Reporting Period: November 16, 2024 – February 22, 2025**

1. Pastoral Care and Support

- **Pastoral Prayer Partners Assigned:**
 - The COM revised the list of **Pastoral Leader Support Partners**, where each COM member is assigned up to four pastoral leaders for ongoing support.
 - Responsibilities include contact, connecting pastors with Presbytery resources, and sharing concerns/celebrations with informed consent.

2. Pastoral Transitions and Approvals

- **December 2, 2024:**
 - Approved a **Temporary Pastor job description** for **Beulah Presbyterian Church** (20-30 hours/week).
 - Approved the position pending receipt of **terms of call/financial package**.
- **January 6, 2025:**
 - We received Rev. Dr. Perzavia Praylow as a member of Mid-Kentucky Presbytery by transfer from the Presbytery of National Capital Presbytery
 - Approved the ordination/installation commission for Marissa Carver.
- **February 3, 2025:**
 - Approved **Peace Presbyterian Church's call** for **Rev. Aletha Fields-Leonard** to serve as **part-time temporary pastor**.
 - Authorized **Rev. Shanea Fields-Leonard** or another minister to conduct sacraments until Aletha receives authorization.

4. COM Leadership

- **January 6, 2025:**
 - Approved Marissa Galván-Valle as chair and Dave Bush as co-chair of the COM. Rick Fletcher is the leader of the Care of Church Professionals committee.

Ordivesaries for the first quarter:

15 years

Kim Cabrera in March

20 years

Ellen Marie Kratch in January

Tara Reck in January

30 years

Wayne A. Steele, Sr. in January

35 years

Candi Cabbage in January

45 years

Rick Roderick in January

Rev. Perzavia T. Praylow, Ph.D

Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary

1044 Alta Vista Rd, Louisville, KY 40205

ppraylow@lpts.edu

Office:

Cell: 217-714-4321

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PhD)

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

PhD in History

May 2012

Major Field: African American History

Minor Fields: America Since 1830, Comparative Women's and Gender History

Dissertation Title: "Re-Making Men and Women for the Race: Coeducation, Respectability and Black Student Leadership at Fisk University, 1924-1970"

MASTER'S EDUCATION

Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary/ Lenoir-Rhyne University

December 2020

Master of Sacred Theology (STM)

(Area of concentration: History & Theology of Mission and Leadership)

(Focus: Practical Theology/Church History, Mission Studies and Congregational Leadership)

Thesis Title: Carrying the Load: Black Women Ruling Elders and the Missional Development of Rural African American Presbyterian Churches

Columbia Theological Seminary (A Seminary of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.)

May 2016

Master of Divinity (M.Div.)

Ordination Date: June 12, 2016, Minister of Word and Sacrament, PC(USA)

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Master of Arts in History (MA)--Concentration in American/African American History

December 2009

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Master of Arts in Education Policy Studies (MA)

May 2005

Department of Education Policy Studies Concentration: History of Education

Thesis Title: "Desegregating Duke: Black Women's Reflections, Integration and the Black Student Experience at Duke University, 1963-2004"

BACHELOR OF ARTS EDUCATION

Drew University (Madison, New Jersey)

Bachelor of Arts in History

May 2002

CURRENT EMPLOYMENT

July 1, 2024

Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary

Assistant Professor of Historical Theology and Black Church Studies

Director of Black Church Studies

Grant Director, LPTS Black Church Rural Initiative

PREVIOUS TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Howard University School of Divinity

Director of Contextual Theology & Instructor of Field Education

September 2022 - June 31, 2024

Bowie State University, Department of History and Government

Adjunct History Professor

Fall 2019 - May 2022

Benedict College, Department of History

Adjunct History Professor

Fall 2015- Fall 2017

**Augusta University, (formerly Augusta State University),
Department of History, Anthropology and Philosophy
Assistant Professor of History (tenure track)**

August 2012-July 15, 2015

**The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Department of African American Studies
Graduate Instructor, Teaching Assistant**

Fall 2007-Spring 2012

**Parkland College
Adjunct Professor**

Spring 2010

ACADEMIC FELLOWSHIPS & APPOINTMENTS

Harvard University

NEH Fellow, National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)/

July 1-26, 2013

W.E.B. DuBois Institute of African American Studies

Institute Theme: “African American Struggles for Freedom and Civil Rights”

COURSES TAUGHT

Howard University School of Divinity

Fall 2022-Present

- Field Education I
- Field Education II
- Field Education Summer Intensive

Bowie State University

Fall 2019-Spring 2022

- African American History to 1865 (*Adjunct Instructor*)
- African American History Since 1865 (*Adjunct Instructor*)

Benedict College

Fall 2015- Fall 2017

- African American History from 1619-Present (*Adjunct Instructor*)

Augusta University (Tenure Track Assistant Professor of History)

August 2012-July 15, 2015

- History 3441 African American History Since 1877 (multiple sections taught in person and online)
- History 2112—U.S. Since 1877 (multiple sections taught in person and online)
- History 4900—Black Freedom Movement
- History 4960: Black Women’s Activism

The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Fall 2007-Spring 2012

- Afro/Afst/Gws 103: Black Women in the Diaspora (*Lead Instructor*)
- Afro 101/HST 174: Black America 1619-Present (*Lead Instructor*)
- Afro 100: Introduction to African American Studies (*Lead Instructor*)
- Afro/HST 383: History of Black Women’s 20th Century Activism (*Lead Instructor*)
Facilitated weekly lectures for classes that averaged 75 to 125 students each semester; Moderated online learning & assessed curriculum for each course via Blackboard/Moodle; Trained and supervised 1-2 teaching assistants each semester
- Afro 287: Black Women’s History (*Teaching Assistant*)
- Afro 472: History of the Black Freedom Movement (*Teaching Assistant*)
- History 172: American History Since 1877(*Teaching Assistant*)
- History 171: American History to 1877 (*Teaching Assistant*)
Led 3 small group discussion of 25 students each for each course; Taught basic writing and reading comprehension skills to all students

Parkland College

Spring 2010

- History 105: American History Since 1877 (*Instructor*)
Designed, implemented and assessed course curriculum; Developed assignments for students based on different learning abilities; Completed the online faculty certification program at Parkland College; Trained students to use Blackboard

HIGHER EDUCATION ADMINISTRATIVE & SERVICE EXPERIENCE

Howard University School of Divinity

September 2022-Present

- Director of Field Education
- Program Administrator, Clinical Pastoral Education Program
- Director of Continuing Education
- Committee Member, Field Education Committee
- Committee Member, Continuing Education Committee

University Administration, Augusta University

- Member, Professional Education Committee *December 2013-May 2015*
**Evaluated and helped to improve the professional educational standards for Education majors.*

- Member, Research/Small Grants Committee *December 2013-May 2015*
**Evaluated faculty research grant proposals*

- Member, Academic Diversity Alignment Committee *February 2013-May 2015*
**Assisted with the coordination of campus diversity programs*

- Member, Black History Committee *December 2012- May 2015*
**Assisted with the coordination of campus wide programming related to Black History Month in every February*

Department of History, Philosophy and Anthropology, Augusta University

- Lead Organizer, Teaching Assessment and Evaluation Work Group *August 2013-May 2015*
**Coordinated evaluation of teaching and curriculum efforts*

Office of Equality Opportunity and Access at The University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

Graduate Intern June 2009-August 2010

- Conducted research on diversity in higher education
- Helped to plan and implement the Illinois Celebrates Women Project

Center on Democracy in a Multiracial Society at The University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

Research Assistant/Reading Group Coordinator for Dr. Dave Roediger August 2005-May 2006

- Coordinated events sponsored by the Whiteness Studies reading group
- Coordinated speaking engagements sponsored by the CDMS
- Provided outreach to faculty and staff related to CDMS programming

Women’s Resource Center at Michigan State University

August 2002-June 2003

Special Project Coordinator for Graduate Women Students

- Developed targeted programming for graduate women students

PREVIOUS PASTORAL LEADERSHIP AND MINISTRY WORK EXPERIENCE**Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ***Part-time Interim Pastor**April 2023-July 15, 2024*

(Administration, Preaching, Pastoral/Congregational Care, Stewardship, Facilities Management, Community Outreach, Ecumenical-Interfaith Ministry)

Fifteenth Street Presbyterian Church (Washington D.C./National Capital Presbytery)*Part-Time Installed Pastor**April 2018-April 2023*

(Administration, Preaching, Pastoral/Congregational Care, Stewardship, Facilities Management, Community Outreach, Ecumenical-Interfaith Ministry)

Calvary Presbyterian Church (Winnsboro, SC/Trinity Presbytery)*Designated Supply Pastor (Ordained June 12, 2016)**January 2016-March 2018*

(Administration, Preaching, Pastoral/Congregational Care, Stewardship, Facilities Management, Community Outreach, Ecumenical-Interfaith Ministry)

Presbyterian Church (USA) 1001 New Worshiping Community Intern (Columbia, SC)*New Worshiping Community Intern (Columbia, SC)**August 2015 – May 2016***Mattoon Presbyterian Church (Greenville, SC/Foothills Presbytery)***Supply Preacher**January 2015-August 2015***Decatur Presbyterian Church (Decatur, GA/Presbytery of Atlanta)***Supervised Ministry Mission & Outreach Intern**August 2014 – May 2015***Tabernacle Baptist Church (Augusta, GA)***Associate Minister (Non-Salaried)**August 2012-May 2013*

(Administration, Preaching, Pastoral/Congregational Care, Stewardship, Facilities Management, Community Outreach, Ecumenical-Interfaith Ministry)

The Church of The Living God (Champaign, IL)*Elder/Associate Minister (Non-Salaried)**August 2005-May 2012*

(Administration, Preaching, Pastoral/Congregational Care, Stewardship, Facilities Management, Community Outreach, Ecumenical-Interfaith Ministry)

OTHER NON-PROFIT ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCE**Y.W.C.A. at The University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign***Program Coordinator**Spring 2007*

- Coordinated all programming for the Y.W.C.A.
- Advised/supervised programming by the Y.W.C.A. undergraduate leadership committee
- Implemented strategic programming for the Y.W.C.A. (i.e. 5K Race Against Racism, Arts Festival)

EDUCATION POLICY RESEARCH EXPERIENCE**The National Council for Teachers of English, Urbana, IL***Diversity Policy Analyst Intern**May- August 2007*

- Evaluated diversity policies at NCTE
- Presented workshops on diversity initiatives at NCTE

U.S. Department of Education, Center for Faith Based Community Initiatives, Washington D.C.*Martin Luther King Education Policy Intern**June 2003-August 2003*

- Coordinated and implemented workshops for churches and community programs on how to complete U.S. Department of Education grant applications
- Evaluated DOE faith based/community based programming initiatives
- Assisted with the national outreach campaign to church and community organizations

CLINICAL PASTORAL EDUCATION WORK EXPERIENCE**Palmetto Health Hospital System, Columbia, SC***Behavioral Health Chaplain Resident**August 2016-August 2017*

Chaplaincy Spiritual Care Clinical Health Rotations: Behavioral Health (Facilitated Grief Support and Spirituality Process Groups); Senior Acute Care; Crisis Care; Physical Rehabilitation; Heart Health; Gynecology/Women's Health

OTHER GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH EXPERIENCE**Department of Gender and Women's Studies***Research Assistant to Dr. Erik McDuffie**May 2005-August 2006*

- Organized Dr. McDuffie's personal scholarly library
- Researched articles and books for Dr. McDuffie
- Assisted with the editing of Dr. McDuffie's book manuscript - *Sojourners for Freedom: Black Women, American Communism and the Left*

Department of Education Policy Studies*Research Assistant to Dr. James D. Anderson**August 2003-May 2005*

- Researched articles and books for Dr. Anderson on the history of African American education

ACADEMIC RESEARCH CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Presenter (February 2021). "Resilient Faith: Reverend Francis Grimke and the Black Grimke Family: Negotiating Joy and Justice in the Midst of Uncertainty." 2021 History Research Symposium, Tuskegee University.

Presenter (January 2020). "Carrying the Load: Black Women Ruling Elders and the Enduring Mission and Sustainability of African American Presbyterian Churches in Rural South Carolina." American Academy of Religion, San Diego, California.

Presenter (November 2019). "Faith and Freedom: Fifteenth Street Presbyterian Church, Racial Justice and African American Uplift, 1841-1928." American Association for Church History/American Historical Association, New York/NY

Presenter (October 2016). "Reading, Writing, Arithmetic and Religion: Black Presbyterian Schools and Churches as Sites and Sanctuaries of Resistance and Resilience in the Carolinas." Association for The Study of African American Life and History, Richmond, VA

Presenter (October 2013). "'Not Standing On Our Knees': Student Activism and the Politics of Race Leadership at Fisk University During the Civil Rights Black Power Movement, 1957-1970." Annual Meeting of the History of Education Society, Nashville, TN

Chair & Discussant (February 2013). "Remembering the Civil Rights Movement: The Role of the Press in Collective Memory." Media & Civil Rights History Symposium, University of S.C., Columbia, SC.

Presenter (February 2013). "The Campaign for a Greater Fisk: W.E.B. Du Bois, Black Alumni and the Legacy of Student Dissent at Fisk University." W.E.B. Du Bois and the Wings of Atlanta: A Commemorative Conference at Clark Atlanta University. Atlanta, GA

Presenter (September 2012). "Socializing Respectable Men and Women for the Race: Black Power, Self-Determination, and Student Affairs at Fisk, 1924-1967." The Fire Every Time: Reframing Black Power Across The Twentieth Century and Beyond: A Public History Conference, Symposium and Community Gathering Hosted By The College of Charleston's Avery Research Center For African American History and Culture and African American Studies. Charleston, South Carolina.

Presenter (October 2012). “‘To Educate My Race and To Glorify My God’: Christian Missions and the Social Purpose of Education for Black Women in the South, 1860-1930.” Conference On Faith and History, Gordon College, Wenham, Massachusetts

Presenter (October 2012). “Building Colleges and Seminaries for Black Women, 1860-1930.” Association for the Study of African American Life and History.” Pittsburg, Pennsylvania.

Presenter (April 2012). “Socializing Respectable Men and Women for the Race: Rebellion and Student Affairs at Fisk, 1924-1967.” American Educational Research Association, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

Presenter (October 2011). “Modeling Interracial and Diasporic Leadership: Juliette Derricotte’s Interracial Work and the Socialization of Fisk Women, 1928–1931.” Association for the Study of the Worldwide African Diaspora 6th Biennial Meeting. Pittsburgh, Maryland.

Presenter. (October 2009) “Behaviors Unbecoming A Fisk Woman”: Unruly Black Women, Disrespect and the Threat to Respectable Leadership, 1924-1940.” Association for the Study of African American Life And History. Cincinnati, Ohio

Presenter. (September 2009). “Disciplining the Female Fiskite: Gender, Rules and Respectability at Fisk, 1924-1940.” History of Education Society. Philadelphia, PA.

Presenter. (March 2009). “Striking Back: Black Women, Coeducation and the Women’s Sphere at Fisk 1924-1940.” 33rd Annual National Council of Black Studies Conference. Atlanta, GA

Session Chair. (April 2006). “Why Do We Need History.” American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting. San Francisco, California.

Presenter. (November 2005). “Educating Black Women in the South: Christian Missions and The Black Women’s College Movement, 1860-1900.” Women and Gender Studies Feminist Scholarship Series. University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

SELECTED INVITED SOCIAL JUSTICE & DIVERSITY KEYNOTES & GUEST LECTURES

Friday, November, 11, 2023, Panelist, Presidential Inauguration Symposium, "Forming Christian Leaders for an Endemic Era," Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, GA

September 17, 2022. Presenter, Howard University School of Divinity. Equipping the Saints: A New Ecclesia in the Post Pandemic Age. Washington, D.C.

October 11, 2021, Plenary Speaker. The Freedom Forum, “Religious Resolve: Stories From our Past, For Our Future: Presbyterian Rev. Francis Grimke and His Quaker Half-Sisters Speak Out on Faith, Race and Civil Rights.” Washington, D.C.

January 23, 2021, Convocation Speaker, The Reformed Institute of Metropolitan Washington, D.C. “Black Presbyterians, and Racial Justice: Reshaping the Reformed Tradition in the U.S.” Washington, D.C.

Keynote Speaker (January 25, 2016), Savanna River Sight/Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, Annual Martin Luther King Celebration. “Remember! Celebrate! Act! A Day On, Not A Day Off.” Aiken, SC

THEOLOGICAL/SEMINARY INVITED & GUEST PREACHING

September 15, 2021, Howard University School of Divinity, Chapel Preacher, “Tangled Hearts and Tingling Ears: Heeding the Call of God,” Washington, DC.

December 5, 2016, Union Presbyterian Seminary-Charlotte, Worship Leader and Chapel Preacher, “Abounding Hope.” Charlotte, NC

SELECTED PROFESSIONAL WORKSHOPS

Presenter. (April 2005) “Training for the Head, Heart and Hand: Higher Education Curriculum Design and the Socialization of African American women Students in the South, 1860-1935. American Educational Research Association. Montreal, Canada

Presenter. (April 2005) “Desegregating Duke: Black Women’s Reflections, Integration and the Black Student Experience, 1963-2004.” American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting. Montreal, Canada.

Roundtable Presenter. (April 2006) “Feminist, Critical Race, and Intersectional Approaches to Pedagogy.” Women and Gender Studies Feminist Scholarship Series. University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

Panel Co-Chair & Moderator. (March 2005). “Intersecting the Academy.” Women and Gender Graduate History Symposium. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign., Champaign, IL

Panel Chair & Presenter. (March 2004). “Crossing Boundaries.” Women and Gender Graduate History Symposium. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign., Champaign, IL

RESEARCH & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GRANTS/AWARDS

Georgia Regents University/Pamplin College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Faculty Research Grant (\$600.00 Grant awarded to cover travel expenses associated with participation in the NEH Institute (Civil Rights and African American History hosted by the W.E.B. Du Bois Institute at Harvard University) *July 2013*

RESEARCH & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GRANTS/AWARDS, Continued

NEH Summer Institute for College and University Teachers/W.E.B. Du Bois Institute “African American Struggles for Freedom and Civil Rights (\$3,300 Program Stipend to offset living and research expenses while in residence at Harvard University, Cambridge, MA). *July 2013*

Georgia Regents University/Center for Undergraduate Research (CURS) Grant (\$17,500 Grant awarded to support primary, archival and oral history research on book project, *Living Free: African American Social and Civic Equality in Augusta, GA 1876-2013*. This grant covered expenses associated with my faculty stipend and the hiring of three undergraduate students to complete research-related the public of *Living Free* and the creating of a special collections/vertical file related to the preservation of African American history in Augusta, GA. *May-July 2013*

National Center for Faculty Diversity and Development (\$3,500 grant awarded to cover program fee associated with participation in the Summer Faculty Development Program sponsored by the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity) *May-July 2013*

- Augusta State University Faculty Research Grant
 (\$560 Grant awarded to support a paper presentation at the annual meeting of
 The Association for the Student of African American Life and History) *November 2012*
- Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Scholar Educational Advancement Foundation, Inc.
 (\$1,000 Grant awarded to support research on black women). *January 2010*
- University of Illinois, History Department, Conference Travel Grant
 (\$800 Grant awarded from the History department to offset expenses incurred from
 presenting a paper at the annual National Council For Black Studies conference.) *February 2009*
- Diversifying Faculty in Illinois Professional Development Grant, State of Illinois
 (\$3000 Grant awarded from the State of Illinois to support professional development
 of graduate students of color aspiring to post-doctoral faculty careers.) *May 2008*
- United Methodist Church Racial/Ethnic History Research Grant
 (\$1,500 Grant awarded by the United Methodist Church to fund research
 on the relationship between the United Methodist Church and racial
 and ethnic minority populations.) *April 2005*
- UIUC Women and Gender Studies Graduate Student Feminist Research Grant
 (\$300 Grant awarded from the Gender & Women’s Studies program to
 encourage professional development activities for graduate minors.) *December 2003*

HIGHER EDUCATION/ UNIVERSITY FELLOWSHIPS & SCHOLARSHIPS

- Diversity Faculty in Illinois Fellowship (\$56,000 Grant, \$14,000/year for four years)
 (Grant awarded from the State of Illinois cover tuition and living
 expenses of students of color enrolled in Ph.D programs and interested
 in the pursuit and obtainment of post-doctoral faculty careers.) *August 2007-
 May 2011*
- Wanda Taeshner Babcock Fellowship, College of Education, University of Illinois
 (\$16,000 Grant, \$8,000 per year for two years awarded from the family of
 Wanda Tashener Babcock to cover tuition and professional development
 expenses of a high achieving graduate students of color who show evidence of
 contributing to the field of education.) *August 2003-
 May 2005*

SERVICE TO THE CHURCH

- DC Mayor’s Interfaith Council** *December 2018-July 2024*
- National Capital Presbytery**
 Member & Minister of Word and Sacrament *March 2018-Present*
 Black Presbyterians United
 NCP Mission Resource Committee
- The Presbyterian Historical Society**
 Member of the Board *October 2018-June 2024*
Vice Chair 2020-2022
- Central Atlantic Conference, United Church of Christ**
 New Church Development Committee *November 2023-July 2024*

The Presbyterian Mission Agency, Presbyterian Church (USA)

Chairperson
Member, Mission Development Resource Committee

April 2023-October 2024
January 2017-October 2024

Columbia Theological Seminary, Alumnae Council

Member of the Alumnae Board

October 2018-October 2022

NEXT Church

Member of the Board
Friends of Next

March 2017-April 2020
November 2021-Present

Trinity Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church (USA) in Columbia, SC

Member, Presbytery Coordinating Committee
1001 New Worshiping Communities Committee
Racial Ethnic Concerns/African American Concerns Committee

January 2017-May 2018
August 2015-May 2018
June 2013-May 2018

National Black Presbyterian Caucus

National Conference Planning Team (Detroit, Michigan)
Youth Conference Director, Southeast Regional Meeting (Jacksonville, FL)

July 2016-July 2017
July 2016

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE AS A HISTORIAN

Presbyterian Historical Society

Board Member
Vice Chair

October 2018-Present
October 2018-June 2021

Lucy Craft Laney Museum of African American History

Executive Board Member

August 2013-August 2016

- Provide consultation and insight on museum management and related activities

National Association of Black Women Historians (ABWH)

Coordinator Graduate Student Engagement

January 2011-January 2014

- List-serve manager
- Coordinated national participation of black graduate historians in ABWH

American Education Research Association

Graduate Student Representative

- Programming Committee, Division F (History and Historiography)
*Assisted in the review and selection of paper proposals

April 2004-April 2006

- Graduate Representative, Division F (History and Historiography)
*Coordinated national outreach to graduate students
*Facilitated graduate student professional development workshops

April 2004-April 2006

SELECTED BOARD & COMMUNITY SERVICE

Board of Directors of the Brookland Baptist Church Foundation (Columbia, SC)

Board Chair and Board Member

2016-2018

Board of Directors of the Lucy Craft Laney Museum for African American History (Augusta, GA)

Board Member

August 2012-Present

Y.W.C.A. of The University of Illinois (Champaign, IL)
Board Member

May 2011-July 2012

Total Praise After School Liturgical Dance Group, Champaign, IL

Founder & Executive Director

August 2007-July 2012

- Designed and implemented the overall mission and direction of the Dance Program
- Managed a staff of 8 volunteers
- Coordinated the fundraising campaign for the Total Praise Dance Group
- Coordinated outreach campaigns to parents and potential youth dancers

SELECTED HONORS/AWARDS

Howard Divinity School Nannie Helen Burroughs Award in Pastoral Leadership *March 30, 2019*

Columbia Theological Seminary Honors Scholarship Fellow *August 2013-May 2016*

University of Illinois Black Champaign Urbana History Maker *October 2010*

Honorable Mention 2008 Ford Diversity Dissertation Fellowship *April 2009*

Inducted into the Phi Kappa Phi National Honor Society *September 2008*

James D. Anderson AERA Mentorship Award *January 2004*
 College of Education, University of Illinois, Champaign

Drew University Martin Luther King, Fanny Lou Hamer and
 Abraham Joshua Heschel Awards in Spirituality and Social Justice *April 2002*

Inducted into Alpha Kappa Delta Honor Society *April 2001*

Inducted into Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society *2000-2001*

Drew University Martin Luther King, Fanny Lou Hamer and
 Abraham Joshua Heschel Awards in Spirituality and Social Justice *April 2002*

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

- Academy of Religious Leadership
- American Academy of Religion
- The Network for Ecclesiology & Ethnography
- Organization of American Historians
- American Historical Association
- Association for the Study of African American Life and History
- Association of Black Women Historians

CONTINUING EDUCATION, TRAINING, CERTIFICATES & OTHER CERTIFICATIONS

Princeton Theological Seminary (Princeton, NJ), Certificate *July 10-16, 2022*
 Fellow, Black Theology Leadership Institute
 Institute Theme: “Fire in My Bones: Womanist Leadership, Activism, and Preaching”

Intercultural Development Inventory Training, Certification *January 27-29, 2021*

Healthy Congregations Facilitator Training *January-February, 2021*

Coach Approach Leadership Coach Training, Certificate *October 2019-December 2020*

Holmes Coach Approach Skills Training

PC(USA) Transitional Ministry Training, Week 1, Certificate	<i>October 2020</i>
PC(USA) Executive Presbytery Transitional Ministry Training, Certificate Certificate & Training for Current & Discerning Executive Presbyters	<i>October 2020</i>
Lutheran Southern Theological Seminary (Columbia, SC), Certificate Student Participant, Certificate in Spirituality and Spiritual Direction	<i>June 2018</i>
Princeton Theological Seminary (Princeton, NJ), Certificate Fellow, Black Theology Leadership Institute Institute Theme: "African American Biblical Interpretation in a Protest Era"	<i>July 17-23, 2016</i>
Palmetto Health Hospital System (Columbia, SC) Four Units of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE)	<i>August 2016-August 2017</i>
Women Preach! Jarena Lee Preaching Academy Virginia Union University, Richmond, VA, Certificate	<i>June 2016</i>
United Way of the Midlands (Columbia, SC) Blueprint for Board Leadership, Certificate	<i>January 2016-June 2016</i>
Columbia Women's College (Columbia, SC) Fast Track/Women and Entrepreneurship, Certificate	<i>August-October 2016</i>
PC(USA) 1001 NWC Discerning Missional Leadership	<i>October 2014</i>

REFERENCES

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Dr. Perzavia T. Praylow
Journey of Faith
Updated, January 3, 2025

My roots stretch from the Sea Islands of South, Carolina to the skyline of Jersey City, New Jersey where I was born and where I grew up. Both my maternal and paternal grandparents were born in the Carolinas. My maternal grandmother migrated to New Jersey in the late 1950's where she married and gave birth to her children, including my Mother Gertrude Linda Praylow. My faith journey is a journey in which I have experienced God in community, first in my family of origin growing up in New Jersey and within every phase and place along my life's journey.

Because of my early familiar experiences and my experiences living in Jersey City, I have a passion for serving and supporting people of diverse racial and economic backgrounds. In particular, I have a heart for those who find themselves on the fringes of society.

Both my faith journey and my education journey have been and continue to be two sides of the same coin. My faith journey matured in my early years as an undergraduate at Drew University—a small United Methodist college in Madison, NJ. I accepted Jesus Christ as my personal savior during the spring of my freshman year of college. My years as a student at Drew shaped my faith. Through campus ministry activities, mission trips to Honduras, study abroad trips to Ireland and Ghana and through Christian fellowship with faculty and students from Drew's Theological School in the "Seminary Café," I experienced God's presence in my educational community at Drew. At Drew, I asked God what I should do with my life. An early answer to my questions came in the form of my desire to transform social injustice through teaching, research and scholarship. Through my Ph.D. studies in history at the University of Illinois, I began a long journey towards becoming a college professor and a historian. Sankofa is a Ghanaian term which means to understand our present and in order to understand our future, we must look back and learn from our past. The concept of Sankofa has been an important part of my faith journey. By studying and learning about the past, I came to know about the faith of the heroes and heroines within my cultural heritage. As a result, as I have also taught history, I have been able to understand and claim for myself that God is the same God who was with those who have gone on before me and who is with me today and who will be with me all the days of my life. I have also realized that I can use my teaching of history to partner in Christ's mission to promote unity in the world by teaching about cross cultural difference to others.

In all these ways, my journey as a historian has been an important part of my faith journey. Historical training has allowed me to both understand and participate in the corporate faith culture of faith communities and to understand and then respond to injustice in our society through compassionate acts of Christian service that show forth the love of Christ. More specifically, it is my teaching, research and service that have become expressions of my faith lived out in the world.

My faith journey has also been nurtured and shaped in church community with God's people. From the moment that I formerly accepted Christ as my savior I have always been a member of a faith community. During my college years, my first church home was Calvary Baptist Church. I was baptized at Calvary, a weekly participant of Sunday school and Wednesday Bible study and an organizer of our church's campus ministry. Calvary was the church that nurtured me in the foundations of my faith. During my graduate doctoral study at the University of Illinois, I was a member of The Church of the Living God. During my nine years as a member at this church, my faith was lived out by "doing" as I came to understand the gifts that God has given me for Christian service. I also accepted my call into the ministry. As a result, I was licensed and ordained as a minister and elder in The Church of The Living God. I served as an associate minister at The Church of the Living God for seven years. I came to believe strongly in the church and the transformation of people through the love of Christ and participation in the gathered community of the Christian church.

In August of 2012 after graduating from The University of Illinois, I began teaching at Georgia Regents University in Augusta, GA. I have come to see teaching with college students and young adults as an important way that I live out my call. Outside of the classroom, my time in the South was driven by a desire to serve God through the ministries of the local church. During my first year in Augusta, I was an associate minister at a historic Baptist church, Tabernacle Baptist Church in Augusta, GA. During my short time in that faith community, I began to discern a calling from God to pursue theological higher education.

As a result, I sought out seminaries in the greater Atlanta area. I began seminary at Columbia Seminary in the fall of 2013. I was a member of New Faith Presbyterian Church since the start of my seminary journey in the Fall of 2013. While a new member at New Faith Presbyterian Church and during the first few months of my

seminary journey, I discerned a call to ordained ministry in the PC(USA) and began the process of becoming an inquirer. I became an inquirer in May of 2014 and was received as a candidate under care of Trinity Presbytery in February of 2015.

Throughout my candidacy process my formation for ministry has been shaped by service to the church. I served as a 1001 New Worshipping Community intern for two years. I was a supervised ministry intern at Decatur Presbyterian Church in Decatur, GA. I also served as the supply preacher at Mattoon Presbyterian Church in Greenville, SC in addition to preaching occasionally as a supply preacher throughout my seminary journey at small churches in rural South Carolina and Georgia. Between February 2016 and 2018, I was employed as the Designated Supply Pastor at Calvary Presbyterian Church located in Winnsboro, SC and as a Chaplain Resident, specializing in behavioral health spiritual/chaplaincy care at Palmetto Health Hospital located in Columbia, SC.

After my ministry in South Carolina, I was called to become the installed pastor of Fifteenth Street Presbyterian Church – the oldest and first predominantly African American Presbyterian Church in Washington, DC. I served as the installed pastor of this beloved congregation until April 2023. During my time as the senior pastor at Fifteenth Street Presbyterian Church I nurtured and shepherded this faith community through the years of the COVID 19 pandemic. During this time, I grew deeply as a pastor, theologian and pastoral care provider. I learned to care for an older congregation who experienced much death and bereavement.

While pastoring at Fifteenth Street Presbyterian Church, in August of 2022 I was called to become the Director of Field Education and Contextual Theology at Howard University School of Divinity, an ecumenical School of Divinity also located in Washington, DC. Answering a call to leadership in theological higher education as a fulltime faculty administrator and faculty member was an opportunity through which God deepened my call to theological higher education as I endeavored to equip, empower and encourage faith leaders for service to God in church and society as a theological educator.

Ultimately, because of my ministry at Howard University School of Divinity, I transitioned out of ministry as an installed pastor and became the part-time interim pastor, in April of 2023, of a historic and predominantly African American church in covenant relationship with the United Church of Christ. My call to Howard University School of Divinity and Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ aligned well. Both Howard Divinity School and Plymouth Church have historic roots tied to Congregationalists and the American Missionary Association. Presently, both are Black faith institutions in covenant union with the United Church of Christ. Because the United Church of Christ is in fully communion with the Presbyterian Church, USA, my ministry at Plymouth Church and Howard Divinity School were affirmed as validated ministry as I continued to serve in recognized ministry as an ordained Presbyterian teaching elder and minister of Word and Sacrament.

My journey with God and my ministry and personal life experiences have taken me on an amazing faith and growth journey marked by trust in God, openness to the movement of the Holy Spirit and an assuring faith in God in Christ Jesus that has given me the resiliency and fortitude to say yes to God time and time again even when my doubts, at times, seemed to prevail over my faith.

Overall, my journey into ordained ministry within the Presbyterian Church (USA) has been an amazing journey. Last year in early January of 2023, I discerned a call to serve as a faculty member and administrator at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary in response the seminary's search for a new director of their Black Church Studies Program. I applied for and was offered the opportunity to serve as an Assistant Professor of Historical theology and Director of the Black Church Studies program at LPTS. While I am still discovering more fully the shape of my call as a theological educator, I love the blending of teaching, mentoring, administrative service and research and scholarly writing in my current ministry call. In addition, as the Director of Black Church Studies at a historic Presbyterian and currently ecumenical Christian faith seminary, I feel that my ministry in the PC(USA) is deeply aligned with my call to advance and equip faith leaders in the Black Church, the Presbyterian Church (USA), diverse ecumenical spaces and the Church universal.

I'm excited about the future unfolding of my ministry at Louisville Seminary. While the ministry load for me as a faith leader within and beyond the seminary is expansive, I find comfort in the words of an African American gospel song sung by the Mississippi Mass Choir, "I've been working for Jesus a long time, but I'm not tired yet!" I look forward to continuing in my pastoral journey by serving God's people and God's church.

Rev. Dr. Perzavia Praylow
Assistant Professor of Historical Theology and Black Church Studies
Director, Black Church Studies Program
Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary
January 3, 2025

Mid-Kentucky Presbytery

The Eight Questions

1. What events or persons have significantly affected your ministry?

My faith journey and Christian witness has been deeply shaped through relationship with each pastor in the congregations where I held membership, college/graduate school advisors and spiritual mentors who have accompanied me along my journey. Before becoming ordained as a minister and teaching elder in the Presbyterian Church (USA), my faith journey was nurtured by my grandmother Gertrude Ford, my mother Gertrude Praylow and numerous pastors. My pastor, Rev. Dr. Jerry Carter at Calvary Baptist Church (NJ), Bishop Lloyd Gwin at the Church of the Living God (IL), and Rev. Dr. Alice Ridgill (SC) at New Faith Presbyterian Church. Each of these pastors have journeyed with me as I have embodied my calling as a pastor.

Related to my formation as a college and theological educator, I have been blessed by spiritual and academic mentoring from key faculty members along my educational journey. Dr. Lillie J. Edwards, a history professor at Drew University, helped me to see that I could pursue a career as a historian. Dr. Darlene Clark Hine, historian of African American history challenged me to research and write about the history of Black women's faith based/mission work. Lastly, Dr. Tribble, a professor of practical theology at Columbia Theological Seminary and Dr. Dean Ware, a professor of Theology, at Howard Divinity School, each helped me to see that I've been equipped and prepared for a vocation as a theological educator. Also, my recent call to Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary as the Director of Black Church Studies has deeply affirmed my belief that God had preordained a purpose and call for my life and ministry.

All that aside, my pastoral journey with parishioners in the joys and crisis of their individual and congregational living has affirmed for me the importance living life with and through faith in God and with the assuring presence of Jesus Christ and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

2. What theological beliefs have emerged as critical to your practice of ministry?

There are core theological beliefs that have emerged as critical to my practice of ministry. Critical. In my ministry leadership and in my personal life, I believe that "to serve is to love." For me love is more than verbal expressions, feelings or beliefs, but are actions lived out in word and in deed. Through prayer, I endeavor to seek the will of God in my ministry of service as I embody the love of Christ through ministry that is guided by the Holy Spirit and in the will of God. For me, to "serve the people" means loving the people of God in the ways that Jesus Christ modeled love. Through an ethic of love, care and compassion, I seek to further peace, unity and justice in the contexts of ministry to which I have been called. Jesus Christ's ministry of love, both in word and deed, modeled patience, long suffering, compassion, forgiveness, faithfulness, gentleness and care of the least, the left out and the lonely. Jesus Christ's service to God's people as an expression of God's love, is the mission of God manifested through Christ in God's church and throughout the world. I endeavor to use compassion and love rooted in Christ to model how care and concern for others can keep us connected in relationship and service to God, even when we disagree.

In this way, I believe that for my life, leadership, and service to bear witness to the transforming justice that Jesus represents, I must love like Jesus Christ loved in thought, action and deed. It is my love for my neighbor and for all people that motivates me to seek peace, unity and justice. Doing so requires actions of love that are patient, compassionate, forgiving, hospitable and selfless.

4. What is your view of the sacraments in practice of your ministry?

As shared in my “Statement of Faith,” I believe that the sacraments of Baptism and Communion are outward signs of God’s grace. Through Baptism, we affirm our incorporation in Christ as we have been adopted into the family of God. Through the sacrament of communion, we affirm God’s grace in our lives sealed through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. More specifically, the practice of Baptism in my ministry praxis is a symbolic representation of my belonging in the family of God as expressed within and beyond my connectional presence in the Presbyterian Church (USA) and beyond. Through my observance and practice of Communion, in my personal faith journey and in my broader ministry, I am reminded both of my redemption from sin through the sacrifice of Christ and of my calling to be the embodiment of Christ through my individual living and service in community extending the same love and grace that God in Christ Jesus has extended to me.

5. What is your view of the government of the Presbyterian Church (USA) in light of your practice of ministry?

There are three aspects of our Presbyterian polity and government that I find to be most valuable in my practice of ministry. First, I find it very valuable that one of the core principles of Presbyterian government is that both ruling elders and teaching elders as ministers of Word and Sacrament are called together in shared governance that is exercised jointly by Presbyters in council. Together Ruling Elders and Ministers work in councils to seek and represent the will of Christ among the people of God discerning collaboratively led by the Holy Spirit.

Second, I find it valuable that we are a constitutional church. For me our Book of Order is more than a prescription of rules ordering the life and work of our church at all levels. On the other hand, I believe that to be effective stewards of the work and ministry of God’s church, as an outgrowth of our participation in the mission of God, we are required to order the life of the church. I appreciate that Part I of our Presbyterian Constitution is represented by our confessional statements which affirm what we believe about God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit and what it means to be God’s called church.

Third, I also find it valuable that we are a deliberative body meaning that we make decisions by voting through the guidance of the Holy Spirit and freedom of conscience. I believe that the will of God in Christ Jesus is revealed through the discernment and wisdom of God’s called people. Related, I find it valuable that we are a connectional church and that all congregations and all councils of our church at all levels are accountable and related to each other. It is through relationship that we affirm who we are as a body of believers and work to together to express what it is that we believe about God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

These aside, I also believe that there is one essential aspect of our polity and governance that we need to develop continuously, even as we endeavor to be the body of Christ, which is to keep reforming as the Church of Jesus Christ. In this regard, while we may make amendments and changes to our Presbyterian Constitution from time to time, I believe that we must work to make sure that we strive to live up to the reality that the Church indeed is the body of Christ.

How the Presbyterian Church is organized and what the Presbyterian Church is called to do may differ in different times and places throughout our national and local church. However, regardless of what changes may come, rooted in Christ, we must always strive to be the church as a community of faith, hope, love and a community that bears witness to the transforming presence of God revealed through Jesus Christ. Even while we develop and reform our ordered life together, we must always develop what it means to be called as the body of Christ as we strive to demonstrate what it means to be like Christ.

6. How do you envision your ministry advancing the mission of God’s people and sharing the good news to the world?

In this season, my ministry advances the mission of God’s people and I share the good news of Jesus Christ near and far, as embodied through my ministry as a theological educator, preacher and teacher. Serving as a theological educator is my God given vocation. In my ministry at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary I encourage, equip and empower degreed and non-degreed students to answer the call of God upon their lives and to be an incarnational witness to the good news of Jesus Christ.

7. How do you anticipate becoming involved actively with the work of Presbytery and in one of its congregations?

Currently, I serve as an Assistant Professor of Historical Theology and Black Church Studies and the Director of Black Church Studies at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. First, I anticipate becoming involved in the work of this Presbytery by supporting and engaging efforts to resource and strengthen the development of historically and predominantly African American Presbyterian congregations within the bound of the Presbytery.

Second, I anticipate supporting and resourcing efforts within the Presbytery to promote inclusion, welcome and hospitality so that the broader Presbytery and congregations within the bounds of Mid – Kentucky Presbytery can continue to grow as places of worship and communities of faith where all God’s children are welcomed and affirmed. In this regard, I hope to bring my experiences in navigating intercultural ministry to bear in helping to resource, equip and encourage Presbyterian congregations in their capacity to engage intercultural ministry. I endeavor to accomplish this by serving on an aligned committee of the Presbytery and through my teaching and preaching ministry embodied and lived out at Louisville Seminary.

Also, given my experiences in church planting, congregational development and supporting the establishment of New Worshipping Communities nationally across the PC(USA), I have interest in possibly serving on a committee of the Presbytery charged with church development, congregational revitalization and/or supporting and resourcing New Worshipping Communities. I also have interest in starting an African American or multicultural New Worshipping Community. Of interest to note, for the last eight years, I served on the Mission Development Resource Committee, a committee of the Presbyterian Mission Agency and a committee that approved denominational grants for the launching of New Worshipping Committees. For the last two years, I served as the chairperson of this committee.

Fourth, I am also interested in supporting works of justice in the ministries of the Presbytery aligned with my teaching and ministry at Louisville Seminary. Fifth and lastly, I welcome opportunities to preach and teach at congregations within this Presbytery.

8. Do you understand and agree that your ministry is to be carried on in accountability for its character and conduct to the Presbytery and is to be reviewed annually (unless you are honorably retired)?

Yes, I do understand and affirm accountability and connectional relationship within my ministry as a continuing ordained elder serving within the bounds of Mid-Kentucky Presbytery. I believe that ordered ministry within the Presbyterian Church (USA) including accountability, connectional relationship and the resourcing and equipping of ordained leaders and their ministry rendered unto God within the bounds of Mid-Kentucky Presbytery, is a faithful expression of our shared witness rendered unto Christ.

Rev. Aletha Fields

1. What events or persons have significantly affected your ministry?

My beautiful, faith-filled family has profoundly affected my ministry. Among us, seven are ministers—three with Doctor of Divinity degrees—and three are pastors. For years, we have worshiped together by phone, with my uncle and I alternating preaching duties each month. Faith is our tribal language.

Since childhood, I have learned to serve with excellence and joy. My family has modeled service in every ecclesiastical role—from usher to deacon, choir director to pastor, treasurer to trustee, and president of both the district denominational council and the choir.

As the child of a U.S. Armed Forces member, I grew up worshiping in military chapels, where the denomination of the chaplain shaped each service. This ecumenical experience taught me to embrace diverse expressions of faith. It enriched me spiritually, broadened my understanding of worship, and deepened my appreciation for the many ways God reveals Godself in different traditions.

2. What theological beliefs have emerged as critical to your practice of Ministry?

The most critical theological belief shaping my ministry is Black Liberation Theology. God takes sides in history, favoring the poor and marginalized. James Cone declared that *God is Black*—meaning God identifies with Black suffering and is actively working for Black liberation.

This theology centers on Jesus as Liberator, salvation as liberation, the Black church's role in freedom, and the Black experience as a theological source. It calls for divine resistance to racial injustice, freedom from oppression, and a church that empowers rather than pacifies. Faith must be rooted in the lived experiences of Black people—demanding not just belief, but bold action to confront and dismantle racial injustice.

I believe in an inclusion theology, which affirms that God's love and grace extend to all people—regardless of race, gender, sexuality, gender expression, ability, or social status. John 3:16 declares that *whoever* believes in God will not perish but have everlasting life. When the church embraces this truth, it becomes a true reflection of God's kingdom, drawing more people into the transformative power of divine love.

3. What experiences have challenged or affirmed your faith?

When my first child, a neurosurgical student, was killed by gun violence in San Diego, my faith felt insufficient to meet the moment. God seemed distant, and I was inconsolable. Where was the comfort of the Holy Spirit in the hollowed-out existence that followed? Where was the perfect peace promised in Isaiah 26:3? Why did *my* child take his last breath alone on the street? My friend Mary Jo, a Methodist pastor, answered my last question perfectly: “**God was there.**” Her words brought healing, though the other two questions remain.

Yet my faith is continually affirmed—through God orchestrating my meeting my spouse, a relative’s miraculous release from a 60–80 year sentence, the healing of my mind after my child’s death, and my path to Peace Presbyterian. None of these, or the countless other moments of grace, were in my control. Only God could make such miracles possible.

4. What is your view of the sacraments in light of your practice of ministry?

My view of the sacraments is simple: baptism should be available to anyone in the form they choose, and the communion table should be open to all who wish to partake.

5. What is your view of the government of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in light of your practice of ministry?

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has a representational government that is thoughtfully designed to support its local churches. Through the local congregation, presbyteries, and synods, decisions are made to best address the needs and interests of individual churches and the regions they serve. For Peace Presbyterian, I see this structure as a platform to “further good order in the church,” allowing us to fully realize our purpose and potential. The church’s governance reflects both its commitment to justice and its need for continual reform. Its inclusive framework ensures that the voices of the marginalized, especially within BIPOC communities, are heard. It also positions the church to challenge practices or policies that perpetuate injustice, including advocating for leadership that is diverse, accessible, and accountable. This governance embodies the church’s role in liberation, not complicity, and ultimately aligns with the radical inclusivity and justice that God calls all people toward, especially those who have been historically oppressed.

Hispanic/Latino Ministries

Standing Committee of Mid-Kentucky Presbytery

Our Mission

At the Mid-Kentucky Presbytery meeting on November 19, 2007, a Commission was charged with a special mission: to serve and support all immigrant groups in the Presbytery, with a focus on the Hispanic/Latino communities. The Commission was empowered to help these communities develop, organize, and provide leadership as needed, ensuring that they have the resources and support to thrive.

Building Communities of Welcome

On behalf of the Presbytery, the Committee works to build congregations and communities that embody welcome, hospitality, inclusion, and equality. We strive to create spaces where all feel accepted and valued, regardless of background or culture.

Our Goals

- **Strengthening Existing Hispanic/Latino Ministries:** We work closely with the existing Hispanic/Latino ministries in the Presbytery, providing support, resources, and leadership development to help them grow and flourish.
- **Developing New Ministries:** We are committed to creating new ministries that meet the needs of Hispanic/Latino communities and other immigrants across the Mid-Kentucky Presbytery.

Our Commitment

Through this initiative, we aim to reflect the inclusive love of Christ by reaching out to immigrant communities, especially the Hispanic/Latino population. Our work is grounded in the belief that every person is created in God's image and deserves to be welcomed and embraced in the church and broader community.

Diaconal Fund: Ministerio Presbiteriano Hispano/Latino de Preston Highway

The Diaconal Fund is dedicated to providing emergency assistance to individuals and families in the Hispanic/Latino community. This fund supports those facing urgent needs by offering aid for rent, utilities, food, medical expenses, and other critical services. Rooted in the love and care of Christ, the fund strives to bring relief and hope to those navigating difficult times, ensuring that no one faces hardship alone.



Hispanic/Latino Ministries are a significant part of the presbytery's Matthew 25 initiative to build congregational vitality, dismantle structural racism, and eradicate systemic poverty.

If you would like to contribute to the Diaconal Fund, please scan this QR code to visit the ePayments page on the Presbyterian Church.





Keenan Rodgers
Church Consultant

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January/February 2025

We at the Board of Pensions are working hard to serve our churches, ministers, and employees of the Presbyterian Church (USA). I am here to support you and your congregation should you have any questions about the Board's benefits and programs. I look forward to our continued partnership in the new year.

The Board of Pensions is a national agency of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), offering a broad range of benefits to PC(USA) churches, agencies, and mid councils, as well as affiliated employers.

Member/Employer Services: 800-773-7752, M-F 8:30 am to 6:00 pm ET

Shared Ministry Program

The new Shared Ministry Program encourages two or more Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) congregations to covenant to create sustainable pastoral positions for ordained ministers. Participating congregations enter into a five-year dues subsidy program with the Board to receive a subsidy of the cost of benefits for pastors. Shared Ministry is not a merger of churches; rather, it is multiple, individual congregations sharing a minister with a living wage and benefits that helps ministry flourish and be sustained for the long term. [Learn more about the program](#), including key considerations and how to get started.

Assistance Program Updates

As part of our commitment to mutual care and wholeness, the Board of Pensions continues to expand access to grants through the Assistance Program to serve more ministers, employees, retirees, and surviving spouses who have financial need. In 2024, the Assistance Program distributed over 2,500 grants for a total of approximately \$8.5 million in funds. [Read about potential grant opportunities.](#)

Other important information:

Employee Assistance Plan (EAP): Effective Jan. 1, 2025, Spring Health replaced Cigna as the provider for the EAP. Spring Health offers mental health care navigation with a broader network of providers in addition to the EAP services with which members are familiar. [Learn more about Spring Health.](#)

Remember to update Effective Salaries for the new year: Any changes to effective salaries must be reported to the Board of Pensions via Benefits Connect within 30 days of the effective date. Details about forms of compensation included in effective salary are found in [Understanding Effective Salary.](#)

Call to Health well-being program begins a new year: Call to Health is a well-being program that focuses on self-care in all areas: spiritual, health, financial, and vocational. It offers members in the medical plan the opportunity to reduce their medical deductible(s) and earn Tango cards, which can be redeemed for gift cards or used to make charitable donations. [Learn more](#) and start today.

