

Foothills Presbytery Stated Meeting #125
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)



Fountain Inn Presbyterian Church
307 N. Main Street
Fountain Inn, SC 29644

COMMISSIONER HANDBOOK
February 20, 2024 10:00 a.m.

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Fountain Inn Presbyterian Church

Shortly after the city of Fountain Inn was founded in 1866, Fountain Inn Presbyterian Church was the hope and vision of fourteen men and women who in 1889 made a local Presbyterian church a reality. The original session held meetings at the schoolhouse and at homes of members until a frame building was built in 1891. At the turn of the century, due in part to the addition of the Laurens and Greenville Railroad, which included a depot downtown, Fountain Inn was booming with twenty businesses: including two hotels, a bank, a pharmacy, a cotton gin and thriving mills. To accommodate the growing congregation, a brick building with a bell tower was erected in 1911 at our current location on Main Street for the cost of six thousand dollars, making Fountain Inn Presbyterian the oldest church in town serving from the same location.

In 1947, following World War II, a growing congregation again prompted major changes including the renovation of the sanctuary, installation of carillon bells in the church tower, and the addition of beautiful stained-glass windows. In 1958, the educational building was built to house a fellowship hall, church offices and Sunday school classrooms, and would later be enlarged in years to come. In 1969, the bell tower was removed to increase seating capacity in the sanctuary, and the exterior received major changes including the addition of the portico with large columns. As the congregation continued to grow in membership and outreach, work on the Christian Fellowship Center began in 2001.

In November 2022, the congregation celebrated 133 years of mission and ministry with the dedication of a new South Carolina Historical Marker. For almost 135 years, Fountain Inn Presbyterian has remained rooted in God's mission and ministry, striving to serve as a church home for all, glorifying God through worship, fellowship and service.





Foothills Presbytery

Caring, Empowering and Celebrating the Churches in Foothills Presbytery

- Faith:** COM - Care and discipline of our Teaching Elders, Ruling Elders and Sessions
- Hope:** CPM - Guidance for those seeking ordination as a Teaching Elder in the PCUSA
- Love:** CSM - Empowering, connecting and celebrating the shared ministry of Foothill's Churches

MISSION

The identity, mission and ministry of Foothills Presbytery is rooted in the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA):

1. G-3.03 “The presbytery is responsible for the government of the church throughout its district, and for assisting and supporting the witness of the congregations to the sovereign activity of God in the world, so that all congregations become communities of faith, hope, love and witness. As it leads and guides the witness of its congregations, the presbytery shall keep before it the marks of the Church (F-1.0302), the notes by which Presbyterian and Reformed communities have identified themselves through history (F-1.0303) and the six Great Ends of the Church (F-10304).

In light of this charge, the presbytery has responsibility over **Ecclesial ministry** and the power to:

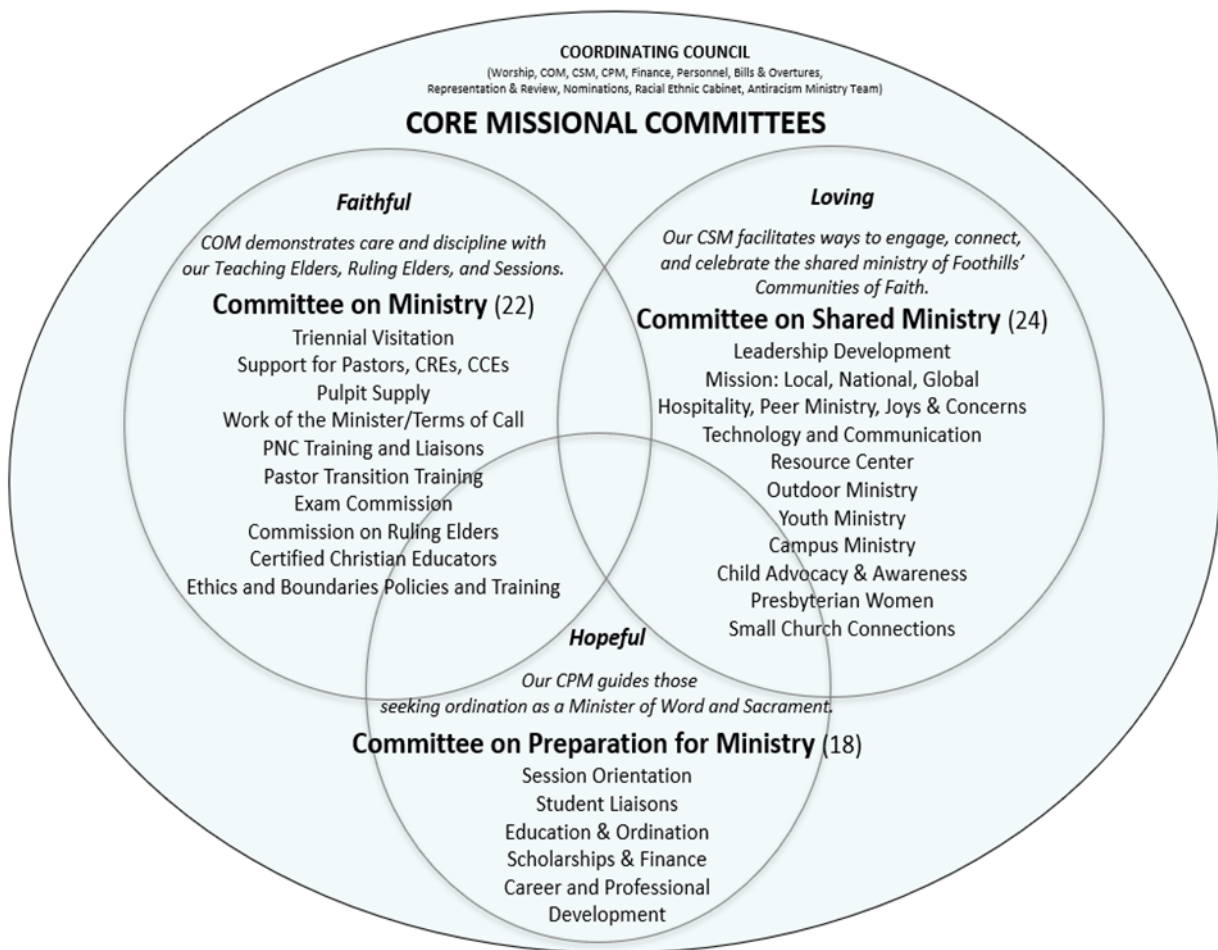
- a. Provide that the Word of God may be truly preached and heard;
 - b. Nurture the covenant community of disciples of Christ;
 - c. Provide that the Sacraments may be rightly administered and received.
2. G-2.0201 **Diaconal ministry** “as set forth in Scripture is one of compassion, witness, and service sharing the redeeming love of Jesus Christ for the poor, the hungry, the sick, the lost, the friendless, the oppressed, those burdened by unjust policies or structures or anyone in distress.”

As the Council of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America for the congregations in the six upstate counties in South Carolina, by the Grace of God we gather to joyfully celebrate this Calling.



Foothills Presbytery

“Caring, Empowering, and Celebrating the churches
in Foothills through shared ministry.”



Foothills Presbytery
125th Stated Meeting
Tuesday, February 20, 2024, 10:00 am
Fountain Inn Church, Fountain Inn

Commissioner Orientation – February 15 at 5:30 via Zoom

Special Orders of the Day

Antiracism Ministry Team Report	11:30
Lunch and Fellowship	12:30

Opening and Worship

A. Call to Order, Establish a Quorum, Opening Prayer and Land Acknowledgement	Trish Gwinn, Moderator	10:00
B. Welcome from Host	Whitney Moss	10:05
C. Worship: Rev. Shavon Starling-Louis, Preacher Theme: Unbound We Thrive		10:10

Break 11:00

Business

D. Presentation and Approval of the Docket	Trish Gwinn	11:10
E. Presbytery Leader & Stated Clerk Report	Debbie Foster	11:15
F. Special Order: Antiracism Ministry Team	Lerone Wilder	11:30
G. Ecclesial and Diaconal Committees		
1. Committee on Shared Ministry	Audrey Reese	11:50
2. <i>Committee on Preparation for Ministry</i>	David Howell	
3. Committee on Ministry	Whitney Moss	11:55
a. Examinations Commission	Amos Workman	12:05
H. Report of Coordinating Council	Julie Schaaf	12:15
2. Antiracism Ministry Team	Lerone Wilder	
3. <i>Bills and Overtures</i>	Amos Workman	
4. <i>Finance and Stewardship</i>	Dennis Latham	
5. <i>Nominations</i>	Elizabeth Clayton	
6. <i>Personnel</i>	Lud Weaver	
7. <i>Racial Ethnic Cabinet</i>	Michael Sullivan	
8. Representation and Review	Ansley Page	12:15
9. <i>Worship</i>	Allyson Helvie	

10. Other Business	Julie Schaaf	12:20
I. New Business		
J. Adjournment and Closing Prayer		12:25
K. Lunch and Fellowship		12:30

*Italics indicates *Consent Agenda*

Action on the Minutes: That the Stated Clerk, the Associate Stated Clerk, the Parliamentarian, and the Moderator be empowered to read and approve the Minutes.

Upcoming Presbytery Meetings:

- Saturday, May 18, 2024, Limestone Church, Gaffney

Stated Clerk and Presbytery Leader Report January 16, 2024

The Presbytery Leader and Stated Clerk **reports:**

1. On behalf of Coordinating Council, extending an invitation to the Co-Moderator of the General Assembly (PCUSA), the Reverend Shavon Starling-Louis to join us for our 125th Stated meeting and to preach based on the theme “Unbound We Thrive.” The Rev. Starling-Louis accepted our invitation.
2. Receiving a request from Sy Hughes ([Presbyterian Mission Agency's Ministry Engagement Advisor](#) for the Southeast region), and the Rev. Wilson Kennedy ([Associate Director for Special Offerings](#) with the Presbyterian Mission Agency) to introduce themselves and to bring greetings at our 125th Stated Meeting on February 20, 2024.
3. Attending, along with Warren Templeton (Office Manager and Bookkeeper) the [Presbyterian Foundation's](#) Mid-Council Conference, November 15 – 17, in Charlotte NC. It was an excellent conference and provided a time of learning and sharing of best practices and identifying emerging opportunities and challenges. Presentations included: church law and tax updates, cybersecurity, investment management in mid-councils, insurance issues and risk management, property management and disposition, borrowing issues in a changing interest-rate environment, and congregation sustainability assessment.
4. Accepting the invitation to serve on the Advisory Board for Union Theological Seminary's new [Center for Excellence in Christian Education](#) and attending the inaugural symposium in early December.
5. The McCarter Administration Commission (AC) continues to discern with the McCarter Session, their next steps. The Commission is chaired by the Rev. Tandy Taylor.
6. That the West Georgia Road property is close to closing. We continue to work with Anderson Ridge Developers who have adjusted their development plan.
7. Preparing (along with Associate Stated Clerk, Robin Morris) for the Spring [SC5 School of Theology](#) at Presbyterian College March 8 & 9.
8. Sending announcement to all Pastors, Clerks and Church Leaders with important reminders: 1. Foothills Presbytery's change in terms of call for Pastors, 2. Changes in the Board of Pensions benefits for retirees (2024) and Pastors Plan (2025) and 3. The new amendments/changes to the PCUSA Book of Order ([summary found here](#)).

The Presbytery Leader and Stated Clerk **recommends:**

1. After requests for excused absences from the February 20, 2024 Stated Meeting of Foothills Presbytery, are found to be in order, I move for their approval.
2. Granting the request from Sy Hughes and Wilson Kennedy to bring greetings from the Presbyterian Mission Agency during our Stated meeting February 20.

Respectfully Submitted,
Debbie G. Foster, Stated Clerk and Presbytery Leader

Antiracism Ministry Team Report for January 2024

The Antiracism Ministry Team **reports the following activity since our last report April 18, 2023:**

April 24, 2023:

- We welcomed new team member, Susan McLarty, and shared introductions.
- We moved into Contemporary Connections which included:
 - The Autism Action Event at Mattoon on May 6th
 - Juneteenth Event and Celebration at Mattoon on June 19th.
 - CSM contributed \$1000 for the Juneteenth event.
- We heard an informative and inspiring report from Debbie about the Mid-Council Pilgrimage to Montgomery. The trip included stops at the [Legacy Museum](#), [National Memorial for Peace and Justice](#), and [The Rosa Parks Museum](#). The group used William Yoo's Book, What Kind of Christianity, which we are currently studying in their discussion sessions. Debbie is available to speak with Sessions and groups about the trip.
- We discussed who we can, in solidarity (as a Presbytery) come alongside [GOAL](#)-faith in action
- Members of AMT will be making a video of the [Presbytery's Statement on Racial Justice](#) (published in 2020) on May 2nd at the Mattoon Church. The second round of interviews will also be conducted on the same day.
- Our book discussion was in-depth, informative, and emotional. All of us were disturbed to have to consider unity as a negative; a detractor. From [What Kind of Christianity](#), "...they connected the images of a burning house and an imperiled wife to the crisis of church disunity instead of the calamity of Black enslavement."
- Our discussion will continued at the May meeting.

May 22, 2023:

- Some of the reflections noted were:
 - The PCUSA's [Matthew 25 initiative](#)
 - Recovery of sight to the blind (as a metaphor). Often what is right in front of us that we cannot, or will not see
 - Jesus pulled from the prophet(s). Wondered what it would look like to pull from what is already written and known and accepted?
 - The [Confession of 1967](#) is quoted in our current Antiracism statement.
 - Noticed the shift and the "good news" – restoring creation to how we were meant to be.
 - Relevant and meaningful for the work before us.
- Juneteenth – We highlighted the celebration being planned at the Mattoon Church for June 19th. Foothills shared the details about the Juneteenth event in this newsletter.
- Courageous Conversations – Debbie shared that the second round of interviews went well with:
 - Karen B. Rogers (Westminster Saxon)
 - Frank Clark (Fourth)
 - Lerone Wilder (Mattoon)
 - Kim Smith (Bethesda)

- We committed to review the interviews and provide our feedback for the final production.
- Ed Yokley will be leading worship and a follow-up discussion at North Anderson Community Church on June 11th.
- Antiracism Policy –The 225th General Assembly produced a new requirement for the Book of Order. All councils must develop an Antiracism Policy. The AMT will add this item to our work. We discussed briefly how to manage the development of this policy, awareness, benchmarks, recognition, and engagement.
- The continued our discussion of, *What Kind of Christianity?* We talked about the following concepts:
 - Private devotion
 - Public discipleship
 - How to use our “private devotion” to inform our “public discipleship.” That this is a both/and not an either/or.
- We discussed Charlotte Presbytery’s Antiracism work, particularly a recent decision to move some of their investments to a [Mechanics and Farmers](#), the second oldest minority owned bank in the US.
- Updates from [GOAL](#) (and others) on the work they are doing.

June 2023:

- We continued conversation about writing the Antiracism Policy and heard an update about Courageous Conversations.
- Ed gave a report about his presentation at NAACP His presentation was titled “The Myth of White Safety.” Ed is made the recording available and manuscript available.
 - Reminder that with the questions asked and conversation that day, we are all entering the conversation at different places.
 - Conversation about NAACP being where we premiere the Courageous Conversations.
- Juneteenth celebration at Mattoon Summary: Thanksgiving and gratitude to the Mattoon Church for hosting the “faith-based” celebration on June 19th.
 - The evening included Courageous Conversations facilitated by [Speaking Down Barriers](#).
 - At the end of the evening, participants were charged to think about how faith and justice inform change.
 - Lerone reminded us that SC is one of two states in the country (Wyoming is the other) that do not have hate crime laws. The law (named after the Rev. Clementa C. Pinckney) passed in the House and failed in the Senate. Lerone asked us to think about what it would look like for a “faith coalition” to come together and discuss how we can partner in this work and get this policy back in front of the legislature. https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess125_2023-2024/bills/3014.htm.
- Book Study continues with *What Kind of Christianity: A History of Slavery and Anti-Black Racism in the Presbyterian Church* by William Yoo.

August 2023:

- Contemporary Connections:
 - We discussed several articles the group had read individually.
 - We discussed the rise of Christian Nationalism and the disturbing aspects of this trend
 - We discussed the recent hate crime murders in Jacksonville.

- We heard updates on the Courageous Conversations interviews and continued our book discussion on *What Kind of Christianity*. Confronting the sins of the past is always difficult, but realizing the culpability of our denomination is particularly hard for all of us and this enters our conversations often.
- Lerone again emphasized the need for a Hate Crime Law in South Carolina. He has proposed we investigate how to unite with other denominations in the state to promote the passage of the law. Though this likely would present many challenges, all of us agreed it is long overdue and our willingness to support such an endeavor. Debbie expressed the willingness to brooch the subject with the leaders of the other Presbyteries in South Carolina.

September 2023:

- Contemporary Connections: Pressley graciously shared her experiences on the recent mission trip to [Ferncliff](#), which featured trips to destinations with significant historical ties to the [Civil Rights Movement](#) in nearby Little Rock and Memphis. Included were the [16th Street Baptist Church](#) and the Civil Rights Museum. Pressley gave moving descriptions of the emotional impact of visiting these sights.
- The committee approved the Rev. Mike Hoyt to serve on the writing team for the Antiracism Policy for Foothills Presbytery.
- The committee voted to recommend to Council that a Land Acknowledgement relating to Native History be offered at the opening of Presbytery meetings (begin in February).
- Our book discussion on *What Kind of Christianity* continued. Our discussion was intense. Team members continue to be dismayed by how our denomination used Christianity to support and defend slavery in America. Our discussion of the book will continue in October where we left off.
- There has been a suggestion to explore a field trip to the African American Museum that opened recently in Charleston in 2024. More to come...
- [The Anderson Area Remembrance and Reconciliation Initiative](#) will be unveiling the Historical Marker dedicated to the five men in Anderson County who were the victims of racial terror lynching on Oct. 3rd. A team member will be attending.

October 2023:

- After hearing from a Session in our presbytery, we heard a presentation to about [Baby Bonds](#). What they are and the idea behind using them to embrace reparations. The Bonds would provide funds for use by any marginalized child in the state for education or possibly housing. The discussion was lengthy, but productive and all present members agreed this would be something worth further investigation and possible implementation.
- A motion was made, seconded, and unanimously passed to go forward with exploring the idea of Baby Bonds for marginalized children in S.C.
 - Debbie and Ed were chosen to begin this work and bring their findings back to the committee. Ed will begin by researching the financial piece.
 - Debbie will contact Grace Covenant about being participation and she will discuss the proposal with SC5 Presbytery leaders.
- William Yoo's book has pointed out and substantiated how the Presbyterian Church has benefited from slavery throughout its history. "The baby bond is one step to right the wrongs of our history."
- We revisited: Juneteenth, Hate Crime Law for South Carolina, Our proposed trip to Charleston (possible visits to [The African American Museum](#), and [Penn Center at St.](#)

[Helena Island](#)), Re-naming Thornwell, Africa-town, Alabama, and [The Last Slave Ship Standing](#)

- There was a short discussion of Chapter 4 in *What Kind of Christianity* that posed the question, “Is Jesus Christ in favor of American Slavery?”

December 4, 2023:

- We continued our book discussion with a review of Chapter 4 in *What Kind of Christianity*... beginning with the Chapter title, which asked the question, “But what do we see when we look at the American church?”
 - The answers were unfortunate, but predictable as we continue to be presented with facts that show how rooted in economics and “the love” of money the church was and still is. Lerone reminded us of a statistic that shows it will take 224 years for Black Americans to catch up economically with white Americans.
- There was a mention of the need to better support our African American churches in the upkeep and maintenance of their properties because they are so important, precious, and vital to our Presbytery.
- We heard several updates and reminders: Presbytery meeting at Ft. Inn on the 20th of February with a presentation by ARMT. The meeting will open with our first Land Acknowledgment in recognition of Native American history in the area. We will also lift up February as [Black History month](#), The status of the development of Foothills Antiracism Policy is forthcoming.
- A quote worth remembering: *“Our work is a challenge. It’s not easy and there is pain and hurt in it for me. There are things that have happened that I just don’t understand. I’ve lived this stuff! But I can let it make me better or bitter and I’m striving to be better!”* - Rev. Bessie Black

Respectfully submitted,
Reverend Lerone Jonathan Wilder

Committee Members: Rev. Bessie Black; Rev. Joseph Gaston; Rev. Dr. Mike Hoyt; Elizabeth Jones, CRE, (Secretary); Rev. Leslie Lang; Susan McLarty; Ed Yokley; and Rev. Lerone Wilder, Ph.D. (Co-Chair) Presbytery Staff: Rev. Pressley Cox, Rev. Debbie Foster, and Robin Morris

Committee on Shared Ministry Report for January 2024

CSM Mission and Core Values from Foothills Presbytery Handbook:

Mission: To equip, connect, and nurture the churches of Foothills Presbytery.

Core Values: We will celebrate an adaptive environment where grace abounds while striving to strengthen our connectional church and share mission in a spirit of experimentation.

How: We will explore our mission by offering opportunities for faith formation, gatherings, fellowship, service, encouragement, resources, and support.

The Committee on Shared Ministry continues to adapt to the needs of leaders and congregations. The committee is divided into three teams 1) Leadership Development, 2) Mission and Outreach, and 2) Youth, Camp, and Campus. In January 2024, CSM will welcome members Nath Briley, Amy Couch, Joanna Griese, Ann Margaret McClary, and Julie Schaaf.

CSM Leadership	Leadership Development	Mission & Outreach	Youth, Camp & Campus
Jackie Putnam Audrey Reese (Chair) Pressley Cox (ex-officio staff)	Natalie Arnold Beth Burris John Dubose Susan Felton Pat Fuller Joseph Gaston Noelle Read Minnie Thomas Ex-officio: Pat Shufeldt	Ralph May Debbie Shealy April Swanson Renee Wiseman	John Daniel DeBevoise (Vice-Chair) Jacob Kennedy Jennifer Poag Andrea Storie Shannon Wienel Buz Wilcoxon

Leadership Development:

Focus: To equip congregations to connect and nurture members and leaders.

- The Committee on Shared Ministry will offer another Mental Health First Aid training for Pastors, Educators, Youth Leaders, and Volunteers on Thursday, February 29, 2024, at First Greer. **Mental Health First Aid for Adults** teaches people how to recognize signs of mental health or substance use challenges in adults ages 18 and older, how to offer and provide initial help, and how to guide a person toward appropriate care if necessary. Topics covered include anxiety, depression, psychosis, and addictions.
- New resources are available in the Presbytery's resource center:
 - A is for Alabaster: 52 Reflections on the Stories of Scripture by Anna Carter Florence
 - Psalms of Wonder: Poems from the Book of Songs by Carey Wallace
 - The Kingdom of Children: A Liberation Theology by R.L. Stollar

- Taking Root in the Heart: a collection of thirty-four poets from the Christian Century
- When Church Stops Working: a future for your congregation beyond more money, programs, and innovation by Andrew Root
- CSM approved four scholarships for the 2024 Association of Partners in Christian Education Annual Event (APCE). The theme for the annual event is “Come All Who are Thirsty” based on Revelation 22:17. The event will be held on January 24-27, 2024 in St. Louis Missouri. There are seven from Foothills attending.
- The committee is working with the Committee on Ministry to offer boundary training for pastors, educators, and youth leaders to comply with the new Book of Order requirements.
- A steering committee is being created to develop opportunities for Presbyterian Women throughout Foothills Presbytery to gather for fellowship, programs, and worship. Moving forward, the Foothills PW financials will be held in a fund at the Presbytery. This committee will monitor individual and church contributions. They will also advertise and oversee scholarships for Synod and National PW events.
- The Leadership Development team continues to explore ways to support and offer resources for leaders throughout the Presbytery. Ideas for 2024 include:
 - Active Shooter training offered by Presbyterian Disaster Assistance.
 - Hosting an event in partnership with Julie Valentine Center.

Mission & Outreach:

Focus: To initiate, incubate, implement connectional mission opportunities locally, nationally, and globally to share God's love.

- Congregations of Foothills Presbytery have contributed \$8,906.29 to the Cents-ability offering as of November 10, 2024. A recommendation from the Mission team was approved to add money from the Shared Mission and Ministry Fund to bring the total to a \$9,600.
- A recommendation was approved to distribute \$600.00 to 16 ministries throughout the presbytery with a note that the funds were to be used specifically for food assistance since some of the organizations assist people in many and varied ways. The 16 ministries receiving funds are:
 - Anderson Emergency Soup Kitchen- Anderson
 - Anderson Interfaith Ministries- Anderson
 - Carpenter's Table- Moore
 - Clemson Community Care- Clemson
 - Daily Bread Ministries/Greer Soup Kitchen- Greer
 - Dot's Kitchen- Westminster
 - Faith Presbyterian Church Food Pantry- Williamston
 - Harvest Hope Food Bank
 - Operation Hope- Landrum
 - Project Host- Greenville
 - Salvation Army of Cherokee County- Gaffney
 - SHINE Soup Kitchen- Easley

- o South Main Chapel and Mercy Center- Anderson
- o Spartanburg Soup Kitchen- Spartanburg
- o Triune Mercy Center- Greenville
- o Woodruff Area Soup Kitchen- Woodruff
- The Mission Team is considering information about Living Learning Communities ministry presented by Jackie Putnam from Fourth Church. This ministry, based in Nairobi, encourages and support education of women through small, intentional, learning communities. The nature of this ministry lends itself to long term relationship in a variety of ways and may be another way the churches of Foothills Presbytery may partner in international mission.

Youth, Camp, and Campus:

Focus: To equip and connect the ministries of our Presbytery that provide faith formation for children, youth, and young adults.

- The Middle School PYC Retreat was held November 10-12, 2023 at Asbury Hills. Fifteen churches were represented with a total of 195 participants. The theme was “Called to The Table,” based on Philippians 4:4-14. Keynote leader was Rev. Lindsey Wells Peery. Music was led by Trey Duncan from Trinity in Travelers Rest. Participants engaged in a mission project and packed over 90 Thanksgiving Bags for the Mount Zion Presbyterian Church Food Pantry. An offering of over \$1000 was collected and sent to Mt Zion to purchase turkeys and other perishables for the food pantry. The next Middle School retreat will be November 8-10, 2024.
- The High School PYC Retreat was held January 5-7, 2024, in Montreat, NC. Thirteen churches were represented with a total of 196 participants. The theme was “A Brand New Thing” based on Isaiah 43:18-19. The keynote speaker was Rev. Dr. Buz Wilcoxon. The music leader was Trey Duncan. The offering for the weekend went to support the GRACE fund at Presbyterian College. Standing for Giving Resources and Achieving Community Equity, the GRACE fund is an emergency response initiative for students facing acute financial insecurity. Over \$800 was collected. Tentative dates for the next High School retreat are January 10-12, 2025.
- A Presbytery wide Children’s event lead by the Presbytery Youth Council will be held at Westminster in Greenville on April 13, 2024. Plans are being developed and more information will be shared with churches in early February.
- Applications for Presbyterian Youth Council will be open in April. Interviews will be conducted in early May, and we hope commissioning will take place during the May Presbytery meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Audrey Reese, Chair

**Committee on Preparation for Ministry
Report for January 2024**

The Committee on Preparation for Ministry reports:

1. On November 9, 2023, we:
 - a. Received reports and updates on students under care of CPM
 - b. The Finance Subcommittee received scholarship requests from students under care of the presbytery. The following were approved:
 - Langley Hoyt - \$1,000 for Spring term 2024
 - Cyndi Banks - \$1,000 for books and tuition
 - Sarah Cornell - \$2,100 for costs over two terms of seminary
 - Amanda Taylor - \$1,900 for seminary costs
 - c. Met with Candidate Landon Hammett and unanimously approved his Final Assessment. He is now Certified Ready for a call to ordained ministry.
 - d. Met with Candidate Martin Pruitt and approved his Annual Consultation
 - e. CPM Chair, Lauren Slingerland, expressed thanks and appreciation for outgoing members of the CPM: Jean Mahaffey, John Byce, Dottie Metropol, Jan Ellis, Lauren Slingerland, and Cherie Setzler
2. On January 25, 2024, we:
 - a. Welcomed all new members to CPM.
 - b. Reviewed the roles and responsibilities of each subcommittee.
 - c. Received reports and updates on students under care of CPM.
 - d. Met with Candidate Ashley Brown and unanimously approved her Final Assessment. She is Certified Ready for a call to ordained ministry.

Respectfully Submitted,

David Howell, CPM Chair

Peggy Swann, CPM Vice-Chair

Current Members of the Foothills CPM

Class of 2024	Class of 2025	Class of 2026
RE Elliott Grow (1)	RE Jennifer Biber (1)	TE Mel Davis (2)
RE Josh Pannell (1)	RE Richard Dorn (2)	TE Collin Pettigrew (1)
TE Will Shelburne (1)	TE David Howell (2)	RE Harriett Williams (1)
TE Michael York (1)	TE Terri Price (1)	
	TE- Peggy Swann (1)	
Staff members: LeAnne White, Debbie Foster (ex. officio)		

Students Currently Under Care of Foothills Presbytery

Student	Seminary	Liaison	Church
Cyndi Banks (I)	Union, CLT		Pickens
Ashley Brown (CR)	Austin	Mel Davis	Westminster, Greenville
Sarah Cornell (C)	Dubuque	Elliott Grow	Fair Play
Will Delaney (CR)	Duke		Second
Landon Hammett (CR)	Union, CLT		First, Spartanburg
Langley Hoyt (C)	Austin		Fourth
Martin Pruitt (C)	Union, CLT	Jennifer Biber	First, Anderson
Amanda Taylor (I)	Lutheran Theological Southern	Will Shelborne	Grace Covenant

I = Inquirer, C = Candidate; CR = Certified Ready for a Call

Committee on Ministry Report Report for January 2024

The Committee on Ministry **reports:**

Ministerial Relationships:

1. Met with Rev. Marlon Irrarragorry (Reformed Church of Cuba). He shared his life and faith stories and about the journey that brought him to Anderson, SC. After discussion, COM approved Marlon for the Pulpit Supply list. (See Appendix A for his bio and statement of faith.)
2. Acknowledged with gratitude the retirement of Joanne Hull (First Spartanburg, Associate Pastor)
3. Acknowledged with gratitude the retirement of Deborah Broadwell (Honea Path, Pastor)
4. Acknowledged with gratitude the retirement of Jeff Gilstrap (St. Andrews, CRE)
5. Received a report from Associate Stated Clerk, Robin Morris, on 2023 Pastoral Transitions. (See Appendix B.)

Congregational Relationships:

1. Discussed temporary pastoral leadership needs of the following congregations: Covenant, Florence Moore, Honea Path, Midway, Piedmont, and Unity.
2. Approved the following temporary pastoral agreements were approved: Landrum and Beth Hoskins Stated Supply; and Townville and Denny Read Stated Supply.
3. Mattoon submitted an application to the Synod's 2023 Mary Hemphill Fund in the amount of \$10,000 for repairs, renovations, and treatment of mold damage.

Respectfully submitted,
Whitney Moss, 2024 Chair

Committee Members

Class of 2024: Scott Berry, Patrick Jinks, Barbara Moran-Faile, Ted Morlok, Whitney Moss (Chair), Eliza Smith DeBevoise, Sandy Thrasher, and Art Williams

Class of 2025: Phil Beckwith, Deborah Broadwell, Ben Dorr, Elizabeth Jones, Preston Shealy (Vice-Chair), Dennis Tedder, Beth Templeton, Mary Anne Welch

Class of 2026: Anna Johnson, Dottie Metropol, Beth Meyer, Susan Oldham, Rudy Painter, and Mark Taylor

Staff: Debbie Foster (Presbytery Leader/Stated Clerk) and Robin Morris (Associate Stated Clerk)

**Marlon Irrarragorry
Brief Bio**

I was born in Cuba in 1983. At that time attending a church or professing the Christian faith was not allowed in our country. However, that changed in the 1990s, because with the fall of socialism, a deep economic crisis pushed the economy back to a very severe degree. People turned to God seeking relief from their life situation in spirituality. The government then allowed the religious revival for fear that the people would turn against them. That's how at the age of 8 my family started going to church. There were still few people and in Sunday school there were only 6 children. The 2 grandchildren of the pastor, the 2 children of a seminarian who was doing his internship in the church and my younger brother and me. From the beginning I really liked the church, a few months later they gave me a Bible and I began to read it with enthusiasm until I finished it from cover to cover several years later when I was already in high school. By then everyone in the church was saying that I was going to be a pastor and I was excited about the idea, but at the same time due to my parents' divorce I was having self-esteem problems, and I became a very introverted person. In the year 2000 I confirmed my baptismal vows and finished high school. So, I applied to go to seminary and prepare to be a pastor. Due to my shyness and introversion, my pastor recommended that I study another university degree and thus seek maturity in my character in a secular environment. That was a bit frustrating because my desire was to serve God through the pastorate, and I thought I was walking away from that possibility. I earned a bachelor's degree in economics with emphasis in business administration at Matanzas's University. By then, my desire was to continue my career as a university professor. However, due to my religious affiliation, the university chose other classmates, despite my being the top student in my course and having significant experience as a student assistant since the second year. This setback made me reflect on how to move forward and made me realize how my psychological issues had been resolved through various university experiences and processes. I understood then that it was all part of God's plan to prepare me for His mission, so I decided to reapply to enter the Seminary. In June 2007, I graduated from university, and by September of that same year, I enrolled in the Evangelical Theological Seminary of Matanzas in the Bachelor of Theology program. The study model was a complex 24/7 system. Due to a shortage of pastors at that time, we attended classes in person at the seminary from Monday to Friday. On Friday afternoons, we traveled to an assigned local church, engaging in pastoral work over the weekend. This way, I had the opportunity to work in nearly every church in the Presbytery of Matanzas. After completing the Bachelor of Theology in June 2010, the church sent me for a year of full-time practical experience in the local church of Camajuaní. In 2011, I returned to the Seminary to finish the "Licenciatura" of Theology degree, a two-year program. (The translation of the term "licenciatura" unfortunately corresponds to "bachelor's degree" in English, but in this case, it should be understood as equivalent to a Master of Divinity, as otherwise, I would have completed two bachelor's degrees in theology.) All this experience of study and practice was a process

of discernment and maturation of God's call to serve as a pastor. Hence, on October 5, 2013, I was ordained to the Pastorate in the Presbyterian Church in Cabaiguán and served there until August of 2022. On that date I came to reside in the United States as a refugee, since the Cuban government after massive protests. What has been happening since July 11, 2021 has become aggressive and reactionary against anyone who questions its authority and way of governing. As a pastor, I fulfilled my duty to take care of my congregation and denounce the injustice around me, which got me into political problems and given the pressure and persecution and the danger to my family, I had to leave the country. I am with my wife and daughter starting a new life and looking for ways to follow the call that I still feel from God to serve him and his people.

Marlon Irrarragorry **Brief Statement of Faith**

I believe in God, in the God who reveals Himself in my life and in the lives of countless believers who have gone before me in their faith journey. God, who becomes incarnate in history and bears witness through the experiences of humans and all of His creation.

I believe in Jesus the Christ and in His divinity, and therefore, in the communion that He shares with those who live as His disciples. I believe in the forgiveness of sins and in the new and abundant life that flows from His own existence, from His triumph over death.

I believe in the Spirit of God, the very breath of God bestowed as a gift to all of creation. God dwelling within us.

I believe in the Holy Scripture, the guide for faith, a source of reflection, and a means to review our encounters with God throughout history.

I believe in the divine promise of a fresh heaven and a renewed earth, the rule of God, the fullness of creation, and the fulfillment of humanity. Therefore, I believe in the renewal of our present order of things, the regeneration of creation and humanity.

I believe in the Church, the communion of humans with God, serving as a mediator in the establishment of His Kingdom.

I believe in a life of purpose, one lived from and in alignment with God's will, for a specific mission or calling. It's a life that embodies a vibrant culture in contrast to a culture of sin.

**Foothills Presbytery
2023 Pastoral Transitions**

New to Foothills/Position

Pastor Name	Church	Date/Activity
Rev. David Lytle	Roberts	Started 1/1/2023
Rev. Dr. Maren Sonstegard-Spray	Fair Play	Started 1/1/2023
Rev. Dr. Chris Jones	Trinity	Installation 3/19/2023
Rev. David Howell	Seneca	Start 4/10/2023; installation 6/25/23
Rev. Ginger Shuler	Second	Start 3/1; Ordination 2/26/2023
Rev. Joe Hill	HR	Received by COM 2/2/2023
Rev. Steve Rhodes	HR	Received by COM in April 2023
Susan Oldham	CRE	Commissioned to Presbytery (April 2023)
Elliott Grow	CRE	Providence Church 6/1/2023, Installation 6/11/23
Rev. Ally Pexa	First, Greer	Ordination at First Greer, 6/11/23
Rev. Dr. Maren Sonstegard-Spray	First, Anderson	Transitional Associate Pastor, 7/1
Rev. Stephen Graves	HR	Received by COM 6/1/2023
Rev. Joanne Cox	HR	Received by COM 10/5/2023

David Lytle – laboring within the bounds at Roberts

Scott Crane – laboring within the bounds at Belton

Retirements, Dissolutions, Transfers

Pastor Name	Church	Date/Activity
Rev. David Taylor	HR	Retirement as of 2/1/2023
Rev. Jim Caprell	HR	Retirement as of 4/1/2023
Rev. Chad Wright-Pittman	Lake Forest, Knoxville, TN	Last day April 9, 2023
Rev. Julia Watkins	Davidson	Last day 7/16/2023
Rev. Elizabeth Morse	Transfer	Tampa Bay as hospital chaplain 11/29/2023
Rev. Deborah Broadwell	Honea Path	Retiring as of 12/31/2023
Rev. Joanne Hull	First Spartanburg	Retiring as of 12/31/2023

Representation and Review Committee Report for January 2024

The Representation and Review Committee **reports**:

1. That we met in November to plan the review of 2023 Session Minutes.
2. Because of the success of regional gatherings in 2023, we decided to schedule regional gatherings for the purpose of reviewing 2023 Session minutes again in 2024.
3. We have scheduled three regional gatherings for Clerks of Session to bring their minutes, review the minutes from another church, and learn from one another. The three regional gatherings will be:
 - a. April 9th at noon at First Spartanburg
 - b. April 11th at 6:00 pm at Central Church
 - c. April 23rd at noon at Foothills Presbytery
4. In addition to the three regional gatherings, we will review 2023 minutes after the May 18th Presbytery Meeting at Limestone in Gaffney.
5. The Clerk's Session Minutes Review form has been updated and is available [here](#).

Respectfully submitted,
Ansley Page, Chair

Committee Members

Class of 2024: Morton White

Class of 2025: Carolyn Brice and Ansley Page

Class of 2026: Jeff Motes and Belton Lane

Presbytery Staff: Debbie Foster and Robin Morris