

Warrant
for an
Administrative Commission
of The Presbytery Of Northeast New Jersey
concerning
the Community Presbyterian Church
Mountainside, NJ

August 4, 2021

The Presbytery is given authority, in our polity, to:

Nurture the covenant community of Christ... promoting the peace and harmony of the congregations, and inquiring into sources of congregational discord; supporting congregations in developing the graces of generosity, stewardship, and service; assisting congregations in developing mission and participating in the mission of the whole church;... warning and bearing witness against error in doctrine and immortality in practice within its bounds; and serving in judicial matters in accordance with the rules of discipline (G-3.0303d.)

In exercising this authority, the Commission on Ministry has made a deliberate inquiry into the situation at the Community Presbyterian Church, in Mountainside. This inquiry consisted of sending a team of COM members and Presbytery staff to meetings of the session, meetings of the personnel team and conferring with the pastor, as well as the consultant hired by the session. In addition the COM and other representatives of the presbytery have received various communications, written and/or informal, from members of the Community Presbyterian Church, in Mountainside, and others who have observed the situation there. Most recently representatives attended a meeting of the session on 7/21/21 at which the session unanimously requested that an administrative commission be impaneled to work with the session and its committees.

In our connectional polity we are well suited to provide support for one another in times of trouble. We often form response or support teams to help in various situations. In order for a response or support team to be able to act on behalf of the presbytery and with the presbytery's full authority it requires technical language of a warrant for an Administrative Commission. The warrant describes the ways in which the commission will support, protect, and encourage the Community Presbyterian Church in Mountianside's "Ministry under the Word." COM, and the Presbyteries Co-Leaders remain committed to the long term viability and growth of this congregation and find this means of official support to be the best suited to ensure the strongest future of this ministry. While the Church is currently experiencing difficulties, we have great hope for its future life and ministry and have been encouraged by the commitment to ministry we have seen during our visits.

Therefore, the Commission on Ministry meeting electronically, has determined, that significant disorder is reported to exist in the Community Presbyterian Church, in Mountainside such that its

ministry under the Word is placed in jeopardy. The Commission on Ministry requests the Presbytery of Northeast New Jersey, at its Special Called Meeting, on August 4, 2021, to create and empower an Administrative Commission.

Among the responsibilities given to an Administrative Commission in our polity are the following:

visiting particular councils, congregations or agencies over which they have immediate jurisdiction reported to be affected with disorder, and to inquire into and settle the difficulties therein, except that no commission shall have the power to dissolve a pastoral relationship unless such power has been specifically delegated to it by the appointing body. (G-3.0109b(5))

The Administrative Commission will have the following powers and responsibilities:

1. To visit the Community Presbyterian Church, in Mountainside.
2. To inquire into the difficulties occurring in the Community Presbyterian Church, affording to all persons in interest fair notice and an opportunity to be heard on the matters at issue, in accordance with G-3.0109b.
 - a. The Administrative Commission shall have access to all records and documents which pertain to the life and mission of the Community Presbyterian Church, without limitation. This shall include access to all financial documents and accounts as well as all personnel records.
 - b. The Administrative Commission shall seek to hear from all concerned parties, including members, former members, former pastors, families of members, friends of the church, visitors, the pastor and her family, current and former employees and staff people, building users, neighbors, and community figures. The Commission shall use its discretion in ensuring that all concerned parties have all pertinent documents communicated to them. The Commission shall conduct its business in the open, without undue secrecy. At the same time, the Commission shall take seriously any evidence or allegations of wrongdoing in the life of this church by any party.
3. To settle whatever difficulties may be discovered, acting on behalf of the presbytery, which is “responsible for the mission and government of the church throughout its geographical district.” In carrying out this responsibility, the Administrative Commission, acting on behalf of presbytery, is hereby empowered:
 - a. To provide coordination and guidance for the Community Presbyterian Church, assisting the church in mobilizing its strength for making the most effective witness to Jesus Christ. (G-3.0303a) This will include at a minimum helping the session develop and implement appropriate staffing policies, job descriptions and

review procedures. It will also include helping the session examine the budget and helping to implementing appropriate financial procedures and controls if those in place are found to be lacking. It must include a full financial review or Audit of the church's finances. It will also include helping the session to plan in the short and longer term for sustainable pastoral leadership and programming staffing models for the congregation. Any other such guidance and coordination as becomes necessary during the course of the Commissions work shall be included in the scope of this warrant.

- b. To determine whether there are constituencies in the Community Presbyterian Church which are unrepresented on Session and to counsel with the church if necessary.
- c. To "take appropriate action to correct any irregularity or delinquency it may discover." (G-3.0303d(3))
- d. To provide pastoral care for the First Presbyterian Church in a time of crisis, conflict, and uncertainty. This shall include praying with and for the congregation, Session, Pastor, and her family; encouraging communication among the participants in the church's life; seeking opportunities to recommend services of confession, healing, and reconciliation; and directing all participants in the church's life to a renewed encounter with the demands of God's Word.
- e. To assume original jurisdiction of the session for matters of personnel and discipline.
- f. To order if it determines, after a thorough investigation, and after full opportunity to be heard has been accorded to the session, that the session is unable or unwilling to manage wisely the affairs of its church, that the presbytery assume original jurisdiction over Community Presbyterian Church.
- g. To order if it determines, after a thorough investigation, and after full opportunity to be heard has been accorded to the pastor, that the pastoral relationship between the Community Presbyterian Church and Rev. Anastasia Sharpe Cooper be dissolved.

The Commission shall be empowered to perform all administrative and other tasks necessary to fulfill its charge and to carry out the responsibilities delegated to it.

This Administrative Commission shall assist the Session of the Community Presbyterian Church in the fulfillment of its responsibilities listed in G-3.0201. The presbytery respectfully requests the Moderator of the Session of the Community Presbyterian Church assist the Administrative Commission by inviting those recommended by the Commission to moderate the session in her

stead.

This Administrative Commission shall report to presbytery in September 2022, when it will cease to function unless its mandate is specifically extended by the presbytery at that time. The presbytery may choose to extend the mandate of this Administrative Commission in six month increments, with the Commission reporting to presbytery at the close of each such period.

Membership in this Administrative Commission shall be by appointment of the Moderator of the Commission on Ministry, in consultation with the presbytery Co-Leaders.

If requested by the Administrative Commission, Northeast Presbytery shall secure Counsel for their work.

Pastor Madelynne Lindsey, Chair of the Commission on Ministry
Rev. Jeremy T. Campbell, Co-Leader\Stated Clerk of Presbytery
Rev. Steve Huston, Co-Leader\Resource Presbyter of Presbytery