

**Minutes of the
Special Session**

**of the
PRESBYTERY OF SHENANDOAH**

March 4, 2017

**Massanutten Presbyterian Church
Penn Laird, Virginia**

NEXT STATED SESSIONS

**Tuesday, May 9
Mt. Olive Presbyterian Church
Hinton, Virginia**

**Saturday, August 26
Mt. Horeb Presbyterian Church
Grottoes, Virginia**

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- » **congregations are empowered to be centers for mission,**
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- » **open communication and information are used constructively and creatively to keep us connected.**

**SHENANDOAH PRESBYTERY
DIRECTORY**

Ruling Elder Kate Lewis Brown..... Moderator 2017
johnkatebrown@comcast.net
Teaching Elder William Klein..... Vice-Moderator 2017
bklein@lexpres.org
Teaching Elder Roy Martin Transitional Presbyter
presbyter@shenpres.org Ext 108
Teaching Elder M. Kerry Foster Stated Clerk
statedclerk@shenpres.org Ext 110
Larry Holsinger Treasurer
treasurer@shenpres.org
Heather Carter Funds Administrator
bookkeeper@shenpres.org Ext 111
Kimberly T. Stroupe Administrative Assistant
kims@shenpres.org Ext 107
Ruling Elder Donna Lanaghan Communications Administrator
shenpres@shenpres.org Ext 100

EXECUTIVE EMERITUS: The Rev. Homer C. Phifer, Jr.
490 Burning Tree Road, Pinehurst, NC 28374

SHENANDOAH PRESBYTERY OFFICE
1111 North Main Street, Harrisonburg, VA 22802
Telephone: 540-433-2556 Fax: 540-433-6830 shenpres@shenpres.org

SHENANDOAH PRESBYTERY CORPORATION
1111 North Main Street, Harrisonburg, VA 22802

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Brown Edwards & Company, LLP,

CAMP PADDY RUN
Address: 221 Camp Lane, Star Tannery, VA 22654; Telephone: 540-436-3665

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Home Church – Bunker Hill

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Home Church – Woodstock

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**PRESBYTERY OF SHENANDOAH
MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING**

The Special Meeting of the Presbytery of Shenandoah was held at Massanutten Presbyterian Church in Penn Laird, Virginia, at 9:30 a.m. on Saturday, March 4, 2017. The purpose of the meeting was for the Search Committee to present their nominee for the position of Associate General Presbyterian to be examined, voted on, and installed. Additionally, to complete the transition of the staffing model, the timeline and process concerning the Stated Clerk was addressed. Moderator Kate Lewis Brown called the meeting to order with prayer.

QUORUM AND ENROLLMENT

The Stated Clerk reported that a quorum was present. The final enrollment was as follows:

Adm	Administrator	DYP	Director, Youth Program	Prof	Professor
AGP	Assoc General Presbyterian	ED	Educator	SS	Stated Supply
Asst	Assistant	HR	Honorably Retired	Stu	Student
Assoc	Associate	IA	Interim Associate	T	Teacher
Chap	Chaplain	IN	Inactive	TM	Tent Making
CM	Campus Minister	IP	Interim Pastor	TP	Transitional Presbyterian
COP	Co-Pastors	ML	Minister-at-Large	WC	Without Charge
Coun	Counselor	OM	Overseas Missionary		
DP	Designated Pastor	P	Pastor		

(Description code for attendance: P = present E = excused A = absent)

A	Allamon, Karen H.	P	Staunton First	Absent
A	Allen, Donald R., Jr.	HR		
E	Arnold, Timothy	Supply	Middletown	
A	Atwood, James E.	HR		
P	Atwood, Roxana M.	HR		
A	Barner, Ann Elizabeth	HR		
A	Barner, Fred Thomas	HR		
E	Baxter, John A.	HR		
P	Bethard, John T.	P	Charles Town	Absent
E	Boyer, Grace Jones	HR		
A	Brandon, Joseph C.	HR		
E	Bridgman, Stewart G.	HR		
E	Bromhead, Jonathan	ML		
A	Brownlee, J. Malcolm	HR		
E	Bucy, Ralph D.	HR		
P	Bunker, Jonathan W.	P	Berryville	Stephanie Lederhouse
P	Burton, Rufus T., III	P	Martinsburg First	James Sadler
A	Caperton, William G.	HR		
P	Cardot, Guy Richard	P	Petersburg	Absent
A	Carlsson, Charles M., Jr.	HR		
A	Carr, Gwendolyn B.	ML		
E	Cathcart, C. Stevens	HR		
A	Chapman, George W.	P	Waynesboro First	Absent
A	Clark, Casey R.	COP	New Monmouth	
P	Clark, Rachel F.	COP	New Monmouth	
E	Coffman, Donna B.	HR		
P	Coleman, Glenn M.	IP	Mossy Creek	
E	Condro, Joseph F.	HR		
E	Conrad, Scott A.	Supply	Hot Springs	
A	Corder, William "Lee"	ML		
E	Cornish, Homer T.	HR		
E	Cox, C. William	HR		
A	Craft, John K.	P	Bethany	Absent
A	Cranford, April H.	P	Westminster	Absent
A	Crannell, J. Scott	ML		

P	Crumley, Rachel	P	Tuscarora	Eric Hulett
E	Cushman, James E.	HR		
E	Cushwa, John W.	HR		
A	Dawkins, Edward C.	ML		
A	Dax, Betty G.	HR		
P	Dent, William H., Jr.	HR		
E	Dietrich, Richard S.	HR		
A	Dobyns, Sharyl A.	ML		
A	Donohoe, Patricia A.	HR		
A	Dorn, Constance A.	ML		
A	Douty, Horace D.	HR/IP	Oxford	
A	Evans, Caroline B.	ML		
A	Evans, George W.	HR		
P	Everhart, William G.	Supply	Sunnyside	
P	Farthing, Stanley H.	Supply	Zetta	
P	Fetterman, Amy	IP	Finley Memorial	
E	Field, Robert F.	HR		
E	Fisher, Merle L., Jr.	HR		
E	Forbes, Richard A., Jr.	HR		
P	Foster, M. Kerry	P	Bridgewater	Carroll Chewning
E	Franklin, John S.	HR		
E	Garrison, John D.	HR		
E	Garriss, K. Braxton	HR		
E	Goodman, William R., Jr.	HR		
E	Goshorn, Robert D.	HR		
P	Greenawalt, Karen J.	P	Gerrardstown	Harriet Kopp
A	Hand, Kevin L.	P	Franklin	Kimberly Kline
			Ruddle	Absent
E	Haney, John H.	P	Goshen	Absent
			Millboro	Absent
			Rocky Spring	Absent
P	Haney, M. Olivia Kincaid	Supply	Mt. Carmel	
E	Harmon, Melissa L.	ML		
E	Harrison, L. Randolph	HR		
P	Hay, Kevin W.	ML		
E	Hay, Thomas D.	Adm		
P	Held, Ann Reed	HR		
E	Hellmuth, Barton L.	HR		
E	Hendy, Susanna	ML		
E	Hill, Robert S., Jr.	HR		
A	Hill, Sarah L.	Assoc	Lexington	
P	Holden, Thomas J., III	HR		
P	Hopkins, E. Reed	P	Loch Willow	Merrily Kohler
P	Howard, Carl D.	HR		
P	Howard, David D.	P	Strasburg	Absent
A	Hunt, Patricia	HR		
A	Inglis, J. Leslie	HR		
E	Johnson, Barbara R.	HR		
A	Jones, Donald D. M.	HR		
A	Klein, Deborah H.	ML		
P	Klein, William M.	P	Lexington	Absent
				Absent
P	Lanaghan, Patrick R.	P	Timber Ridge	Absent
P	Langdon, J. Bradford	HR		
A	LaPrade, Lester N., Jr.	HR		
P	Leggett, John P.	P	Massanutten	Betsy Hay
				Gina Holden
E	Lewis, Elizabeth	Chap	Westminster-Canterbury	
E	Lewis, Herbert T.	HR		
E	Lowe, Emory G.	HR		

P	Lunde, James E., II	P	Warrenton	Susanne Taylor Absent
E	Macbeth, Bruce A.	HR		
P	Martin, Roy A	TP		
A	Mathison, John T.	HR		
A	McClintock, Lynn	ML		
P	McCoig, Dan M., Jr.	Assoc	Winchester First	
A	McCrary, Elizabeth L.	P	Augusta Stone	Absent
A	McDonald, John L.	IP	Buena Vista	
A	McKune, Debra Y.	P	Falling Waters	Kathleen Goodell
E	Miles, Larry C.	HR		
E	Moore, William L.	OM		
E	Muncy, Robert L.	HR		
E	Newman, Howard A.	HR		
A	Norville, Charles K.	HR		
A	O'Gorek, Paul A.	HR		
E	Osborne, Robert S.	P	Berkeley Springs	Absent
A	Owen, Jan G.	HR/IP	Waynesboro Second	
A	Painter, William L., Jr.	HR		
E	Pancake, Joseph S.	HR		
P	Peterson, John C.	P	Covenant	Ruth Arnold Troy Kurtz
P	Pettit, Ann R.	Assoc	Massanutten	
E	Pettit, Patrick S.	IP	Smyrna	
A	Poland, Ernest L. Jr.	ML		
E	Pollock, Richard	HR		
E	Price, Norman G.	HR		
E	Pyles, Elizabeth A.	P	McDowell	Absent
P	Rascoe, Clayton T.	ML		
P	Rascoe, Kathryn R.	ML		
A	Reed, Charles K.	P	Warm Springs	Absent
E	Reller, Charles K.	HR		
E	Rhyne, C. Thomas	HR		
P	Robertson, Helen	P	Fairfield	Bonny Wilson
P	Ross, Anne M.	HR		
A	Sale, M. Anderson	HR		
A	Shearer, J. David	ML		
P	Sherman, H. Wray	P	Hermitage	Hank Coffey
A	Sherrard, Robert L.	P	Windy Cove	Absent
P	Sieck, Philip L.	HR		
E	Slider, C. Richard II	HR		
E	Sloop, John F.	HR		
A	Smith, Evan R.	P	Staunton Second	Absent
A	Smith, Nancy A.	ML		
E	Snelson, Andrew L.	HR		
P	Sommer, Philip W.	HR/IP	Winchester First	
P	Sonstegard-Spray, Maren	Assoc	Winchester First	
E	Stanley, Arthur L.	HR		
E	Stephens, Millard M.	HR		
P	Stokes, Martin L.	HR		
P	Summers-Minette, Teresa L.	IP	Staunton Third	
E	Swezey, Charles M.	HR		
A	Symons, Charles D., Jr.	HR		
P	Thomas, Aaron Lee	P	Olivet	Absent
E	Thornton, Joel P.	DP	Ivanhoe	Absent
			Wardensville	Absent
P	Tongen, Harold M.	IP	Moorefield	
A	Tremba, Randall W.	P	Shepherdstown	Absent
A	Unger, Philip E.	ML		
E	Vernon, Joseph H. J.	HR		
A	von Oeyen, Jr., Robert	HR		

A	Watkins, John M.	HR		
A	Whiteley, Nancy S.	HR		
E	Wilkens, Jack B.	HR		
A	Willis, Steven W.	IP	Collierstown	
P	Wilson, Joan M.	Supply	Broadway	
P	Wilson, Lisa M.	P	Woodstock	Jane Runyon
E	Wilson, Stanton R.	HR		
P	Wing, Andrew P.	ML		
P	Wing, Stephanie S.	P	Trinity	Teresa Harris
P	Witt, David R.	P	Opequon	William Burslem Carole Witt
A	Woodworth, Robert B.	HR		
E	Wyche, Frank	P	Hebron	Hannah Bush
P	Yao, Nancy Meehan	AGP		
A	Young, Philip H.	HR		
A	Young, Richard O., Sr.	HR		
P	Ytterock, Jonathan A.	P	Mount Horeb	Peggy Wonderley

CHURCHES WITHOUT INSTALLED PASTORS

Ben Salem	Absent
Bethel	Rhonda Johnson
Bethesda	Ben Nicely
Beulah	Absent
Bloomery	Absent
Broadway	Philip Zirkle
Buckton	Absent
Buena Vista	Absent
Buffalo Gap	Absent
Bunker Hill	Absent
Burlington	Absent
Burnt	Absent
Circleville	Absent
Clear Brook	Absent
Collierstown	Absent
Cooks Creek	Mark Williams
Craigsville	Absent
Elk Branch	Absent
Elkton	Franci Edwards
Finley Memorial	Absent
Front Royal	Adrian Burt
Glen Kirk	Absent
Halltown	Absent
Hedgesville	Excused
Highland Memorial	Roberta Lake
Hot Springs	Absent
Immanuel	Absent
Kearneysville	Absent
Keyser	Absent
Little Falls	Absent
McCutchen	Abset
Middletown	Absent
Monterey	Absent
Moorefield	Don Baker
Mossy Creek	Pam Cline
Mount Carmel	Brooke Boyd
Mount Hope	Absent
Mount Joy	Absent
Mount Olive	Absent
Mount Storm	Absent
New Providence	Absent
Nineveh	Sandi Ey

Oxford	Absent
Piedmont	Absent
Pines Chapel	Absent
Romney	Absent
Second Opequon	Absent
Seneca Rocks	Absent
Sherando	Absent
Slanesville	Absent
Smyrna	Pay Gayhart
Springfield	Absent
Staunton Third	Absent
Sunnyside	Judy Symons
Tabler	Hank Hogmire
Tinkling Spring	Ann Gregory
	Absent
Tomahawk	Absent
Union	Excused
Waynesboro Second	Glenn Fields
Williamsville	Absent
Winchester First	John Fisher
	Fran Jeffries
	Gordon Stearns
Zetta	Larry Lawhorn

VOTING RULING ELDERS:

Commissioned Ruling Elders

A Deborah Barnett	A William Barnett	A Michele Elliott
A Tom Forbes	P Judy Hensley	A Isca Mitchell
A William Moore	A Linda Reece	A Alvin Russell
P Bobby Spurgeon	A Jean Steidel	

Voting Ruling Elders of Presbytery Staff or Coordinating and Planning Commission (CPC):

P Kate Lewis Brown, Moderator	P Mary Lou Cox, CPC
P Mary Lou McMillin, CPC	P Doug Sensabaugh, CPC
A Greg Trobaugh, CPC	

NON-VOTING VISITORS:

Visiting Ministers

Randall Webb

Presbytery Staff

Donna Lanaghan

Kim Stroupe

Visitors

Pat Armstrong

Rich Armstrong

Linda Fields

Isaac Haney

Cindy Wilkins

Teaching Elders = 49 Voting Ruling Elders = 47 Additional Guests = 8 TOTAL = 104

WELCOME

The Moderator welcomed all visitors and ruling elder commissioners were recognized for this being their first Presbytery meeting.

APPOINTMENTS

The Moderator appointed the following: Assistant Clerks – Ruling Elder Troy Kurtz of Covenant Church, Ruling

Elder Betsy Hay of Massanutten Church, Teaching Elder Bill Everhart of Sunnyside Church, and Teaching Elder David Witt of Opequon Church. Parliamentarian – Teaching Elder John Peterson of Covenant Church.

DOCKET

The docket was approved as distributed. (See page 63)

REPORT OF THE ASSOCIATE GENERAL PRESBYTER (AGP) SEARCH COMMITTEE

Teaching Elder Olivia Haney, Chair, briefed the Body on the workings and discernment process of the Search Committee. Teaching Elder Nancy Meehan Yao was introduced and a biographical pamphlet was circulated. (See pages 64-66 for full written report)

EXAMINATION OF NANCY MEEHAN YAO

Teaching Elder Jonathan Bunker, Chair of the Examinations Committee, lead the examination of Nancy Meehan Yao. Questions posed to the candidate began with concerning her Christian experience, followed by a question centered in her Statement of Faith and concluding with a question on her greatest challenge. All were answered by the candidate. Teaching Elder Yao then addressed the Body regarding her call to be the Associate General Presbyter in Shenandoah Presbytery. The Body was given the opportunity for questions, with each answered without any need for a follow-up.

Upon the conclusion of the examination, Teaching Elder Yao exited the sanctuary for the voting process.

Teaching Elder Olivia Haney moved the following recommendations, *which were approved*:

1. That Presbytery sustain the examination of Nancy Meehan Yao.
2. That Presbytery approve the following terms of call between Nancy Meehan Yao and Shenandoah Presbytery beginning April 10, 2017:

Annual Cash Salary	\$38,500.00
Housing Allowance	14,000.00
Dental	443.40
Automobile Expense	6,000.00
Continuing Education Allowance	1,500.00
Major Medical	13,993.00
Pension and Disability	6,353.28
Required SECA	4,016.25
Moving expenses to the field	
TOTAL COMPENSATION	\$84,805.93

3. That Presbytery enroll Nancy Meehan Yao as a member of Shenandoah Presbytery to be the Associate General Presbyter following the signing of the Book of Obligations.
4. That Presbytery approve the following commission to install Nancy Meehan Yao as Associate General Presbyter:

Teaching Elders

Olivia Kincaid Haney
Richard Cardot
Roy Martin

Ruling Elders

Kate Lewis Brown, Presbytery Moderator
Bobby Spurgeon, Hot Springs
Harriett Kopp, Gerrardstown
Bill Burslem, Opequon

SEARCH COMMITTEE DISMISSED

A motion was made from the floor, seconded and approved, to dismiss the Associate General Presbyter Search Committee with gratitude for their work.

COMMITTEE ON PRESBYTERY ADMINISTRATION

Honorably Retired Teaching Elder Ann Held presented the following recommendation, *which was approved*:

That Presbytery approve termination of the term of Kerry Foster as Stated Clerk on May 15, 2017, with gratitude for his service and elect Roy Martin, Transitional Presbyter, as Stated Clerk effective May 16, 2017 and continuing to the conclusion of his contract as Transitional Presbyter on October 14, 2017.

INSTALLATION OF NANCY MEEHAN YAO AS ASSOCIATE GENERAL PRESBYTER

Presbytery conducted a moving Service of Installation for the new Associate General Presbyter, The Rev. Nancy Meehan Yao. The Body was called to worship and Ruling Elder Harriet Kopp lead in prayer. Commissioned Ruling Elder Bobby Spurgeon preached the sermon on the subject "Blessings" from Jeremiah 3:15-18 and Ephesians 4:7-13. Presbytery Moderator Kate Lewis Brown asked the questions of Nancy Meehan Yao and Ruling Elder Bill Burslem asked the questions of the Body. These being answered in the affirmative and with prayer led by Ruling Elder Bill Burslem the commission installed Nancy Meehan Yao as Associate General Presbyter of Shenandoah Presbytery. Teaching Elder Roy Martin delivered the charge to the newly installed Associate General Presbyter and Teaching Elder Olivia Haney delivered the charge to the Body.

After the installation service, the members of the Presbytery welcomed Nancy Meehan Yao.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 11:42 a.m. with the Moderator leading in prayer. The Presbytery will meet in stated session on Tuesday, May 9, 2017, at 9:30 a.m. at the Mt. Olive Presbyterian Church in Hinton, Virginia.

Kate Lewis Brown, Moderator

Kerry Foster, Stated Clerk

Kim Stroupe, Recording Clerk

*Ruling Elder Kate Lewis Brown of Falling Waters Church
Serves as the Presbytery Moderator for 2017*

DOCKET

- 9:00 a.m. REGISTRATION BEGINS
- 9:30 a.m. Call to Order and Opening Prayer
- 9:40 a.m. Meeting is Convened, Purpose of the Meeting Stated
Determining a Quorum
Procedural Rules
Seating corresponding members
Adoption of the Docket
- 9:50 a.m. Report of the Associate General Presbyter Search Committee
- 10:15 a.m. Examination of Candidate
- 10:45 a.m. Vote to be Taken
- 11:00 a.m. Motion for Transfer of Stated Clerk Position
- 11:15 a.m. Installation Service
- 12:00 p.m. Anticipated Adjournment

Report from the Search Committee for the Associate General Presbyter

At the Presbytery May, 2016 meeting, the Presbytery authorized the Committee of Presbytery Administration (CPA) to form a search committee for an Associate General Presbyter. CPA elected TE Olivia Kincaid Haney, (Maury River MC) and RE Emerson Deitz, (Highland-Augusta MC) from within their committee, and then the committee proceeded to find the rest of the search committee; TE Rich Cardot (Potomac Highlands MC), RE Harriett Kopp (Eastern Panhandle MC), RE and CRE Bobby Spurgeon (Maury River MC), and TE Bill Burslem (Mountain Valley MC). RE Melissa Leecy (Central Valley MC) was appointed on the search committee, but needed to step down due to family commitments. The committee felt that we had begun working enough that to bring someone else on board and catch them up would be difficult and CPA agreed.

The committee began its work in May, working off the job description presented to them by the Presbytery Transitional Team report and CPA. The MIF (Ministerial Information Form) was posted in the Presbyterian Church (USA) Church Leadership Connection (CLC). Due to the search committee's summer schedule, PIF's (Personal Information Forms) were received, but the committee began reviewing the PIFs in September 2016. As of February 14, 2017, the MIF has received 884 hits and the committee received 26 PIFs.

The committee, in their work, discernment and prayer, focused on finding a person called to this position, which as directed by the job description, would resource Committee on Congregational Redevelopment (CCR), Committee on Educational Resources (CER), Committee on Mission and Outreach (CMO) and Coordinating and Planning Commission (CPC), would work with the churches of the presbytery, and in coordination with the General Presbyter/Stated Clerk, would provide pastoral care to Teaching Elders and churches. The person for this position would also be available to visit and preach when invited throughout the churches of Shenandoah Presbytery.

After reviewing all the PIF's, the committee felt led to interview 5 people whom we felt had the gifts for this particular call. From those 5, the committee has felt led to extend the call to the person whom we feel will not only serve well as the Associate General Presbyter for Shenandoah Presbytery, but will also walk with us as we move forward in ministry and mission, serving God.

Reverend Nancy Meehan Yao Biographical Sketch

I cannot remember a time when I was not aware of the presence of a loving and faithful God. I grew up in a family that was divided between Presbyterians and Roman Catholics, which was a source of conflict. Yet, I knew that the One God was present with all, and I took great comfort upon learning “In my Father’s house, there are many rooms”, and “Other sheep I have, that are not of this sheepfold” from the Gospel of John.

I attended Sunday School, and was active in youth group. I met my husband at church, and we were active in church activities, singing in the choir, teaching Sunday School, and raising our two boys. When my husband was asked to transfer to Florida for his work, I was at first, resistant, for most of my family was close by. But we moved to St Augustine, Florida, and before finalizing the move, made sure we found a church. We found our church home in Memorial Presbyterian Church.

There, we were warmly welcomed, and began to do what seemed natural and right to us: serve as Deacons and Elders, teach Sunday School, volunteer with youth group, VBS, and Habitat for Humanity. Church became a new family for us, and especially for our children, easing the transition to a new place and new schools. People in the church began to ask us why we were not in seminary. My answer was that we were doing what God had called us to do and be: elders, deacons, parents. But they were persistent, as was God, and we (after much discernment) went to Columbia Theological Seminary. At one time, all 4 of us were in higher education: Jim and I in seminary, and both boys in college. I don’t recommend it. But God who is faithful, sustained us, with support from our faithful home church as well. We graduated from seminary in 2009.

Jim and I were called to co-pastor two small yoked churches in the Finger Lakes region of New York State. I worked part-time as Direct Support Staff in a group home for adults with developmental disabilities as well. In 2013, I resigned my call to one of the yoked churches, and pastored another church 30 minutes away. I am currently serving as a Transitional Minister at a Presbyterian church in a nearby town.

Music has filled our lives, and is part of our faith life. Jim was a cantor/song leader in our congregation in St Augustine, sings with a local community chorus, and his mom was a church organist. Our sons are both musical, but it must be genetic on their father’s side: I just take credit for getting them to piano lessons and making them practice. The oldest, John, works at a nearby college and is a Ruling Elder in his congregation. James, the youngest, is a choral music teacher in a high school in Minnesota, and accompanist for local singing groups.

Throughout all of life, I have found God to be steady, present, and gracious. Even in times of grief and sorrow, I have leaned on “the everlasting arms” of Christ. In my ministry, I seek to be approachable and authentic, bearing the love and light of Christ to all. I also seek to be an agent of change where needed, a voice both of comfort and, perhaps, of challenge, even as God challenges us to live a life worthy of the calling to which we are being called. I pray that God will guide my steps, so that I might give Him glory and honor.

Reverend Nancy Meehan Yao
Statement of Faith

In life and in death, we belong to God.

I believe in the One God, maker of all that is, whom Jesus called “Abba”, Father. God loves us with the persistent, steadfast love of a Father; and like a Mother, God will not forget us or forsake us. I believe in God who is far above any limited understanding, any limited language or ideas about self-hood or time, any limited human attempt to grasp God. God is—and we are to “be still and know that [God] is God.” (Psalm 46) I believe that in the beginning, God created—and called it good. God is creating still. I believe that humans, made in God’s image, nevertheless, in sinfulness, turn away from God, deny God, and worship other things that are not God. God who showed mercy and action throughout history, is acting still. We are God’s children, called to live lives of gratitude for the gift God has given us in Jesus Christ.

In life and in death, we belong to God.

I believe in Jesus Christ, the Savior. Humanity rebelled against our Father and against God’s good gift of the law. In sovereign love, justice, and mercy, God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to be with us. Fully divine, Christ was fully present with God before the foundations of the world. (Ephesians 1:4) Fully human, Christ knows our weakness and sorrows, knows what it is like to lonely, to be cold and hungry, to feel abandoned and betrayed. Like us in every way except for sin, Christ proclaimed God’s amazing love and the expansive justice of the realm of God. In his death on the cross, Christ redeemed us once and for all. In his death and resurrection, Christ defeated death and sin, and brings new life to all who trust in Him. Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:39) In the totality of his life, death, resurrection and ascension, Christ is the firstborn of a new inbreaking kingdom of God. Christ lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, the Triune God.

In life and in death, we belong to God.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the One who enlivens our hearts, who makes us search for God, who empowers us and the Church to be the very body of Christ for the world. The Spirit binds us in the bond of love, breathes in us and on us, pushing us to do new things, to be a people renewed and transformed according to the word of God. In Trinity, God lives in loving and joyful community: three persons, diverse and distinct, united in love. As followers of this Triune God, we are called to do the same and behave in the same way. The Church is called to be the demonstration of God’s kingdom; a community of faith and hope, love and witness. Women and men, children of God, are called to live in obedience and radical love, witnessing to God’s goodness and forgiveness in both word and deed. The Church hears the word of God, the authoritative word for our lives, both personally and communally. (Romans 10:17) We understand Scripture best in community, where, by the action of the Holy Spirit, we discern, together, God’s word of grace, mercy, and challenge. In baptism we are claimed by God, dying to what separates us from God, and being raised to newness of life in Christ. In the waters of baptism we receive the Holy Spirit, to serve in ministry all our days. At the Table we are raised to the presence of Christ, fed with the bread of life, refreshed and strengthened to go out into the world. Given the gifts of God’s Word and Law, we are called to live a manner of life that commends the Gospel of Jesus Christ to others. Even as we work, we wait with eagerness, until that day when Christ will come again, and God’s kingdom will be here on earth as it is in heaven.

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