

**Minutes of the Stated Meeting of Newton Presbytery**  
*The Final Meeting of the Presbytery of Newton*  
*1817-2021*  
 Online ZOOM Meeting  
 Saturday, February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021  
 (to be approved at the February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2021 Presbytery Coordinating  
 Team meeting)

**The Body of Christ, A Call to Gather**

The Presbytery of Newton of the Presbyterian Church (USA) held its Stated Meeting on February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021 on the ZOOM platform.

The Moderator, Rev. David Young, called the meeting to order at 10 am and led the opening prayer.

Intro to Zoom Voting – *Rev. David Young, Moderator*

**FORMATION OF THE ROLL**

The roll was formed as Commissioners signed the registration forms. Stated Clerk, Teaching Elder Carl Wilton, certified that a quorum was present.

**REPORT OF THE ATTENDANCE CLERK**

<u>Congregation</u>	<u>Teaching Elder</u>		<u>Ruling Elder</u>	
Allamuchy, Panther Valley	Rev. Ninabeth Metcalf	A		A
Alpha	Rev. Tex Culton (HR)	E		A
Andover	Vacant	V		A
Belvidere	Rev. Dr. Pamela Szurek	A		A
Blairstown (2)	Rev. David Harvey	P	Deb Albrecht	P A
Boonton	Rev. Jennifer Van Zandt	P	Ken Nickel	P
Branchville (2)	Rev. Dr. Jefferson Hatch	P	Buzz Alden Debbie Gardner	P P
Califon, Fairmount	Rev. Scott Foster	A	Pete Peterson	P
Califon, Lower Valley	Rev. Chad Rodgers	P		A
Cedar Knolls, Hildale Park	Rev. Ross Lang	A		A
Chatham Township (3)	Rev. Ellen Clemot	P	Carolyn Smith	P
	Rev. Thomas Brown	P	Doug Zehner	P A
Chatham, Ogden Memorial	Rev. Kathi Heath	P	Marcia Casais	P

<b>Chester</b>	Rev. Christopher Scrivens	A	Jeanne Perry	P
<b>Delaware</b>	Vacant	V		A
<b>Denville, Union Hill</b>	Rev. Tim Clarkson	P	John Ware	P
<b>Dover, First Memorial</b>	Rev. Alan Schaefer (HR)	E		A
<b>East Hanover</b>	Vacant	V		A
<b>East Hanover, Kitchell (2)</b>	Rev. Dan Schroeder	P	Lilly Kwong Carol Williams	P P
<b>Flanders (2)</b>	Rev. Heather Morrison-Yaden	P	Lois Steward	P A
<b>Florham Park, Calvary</b>	Rev. Ronald de Groot	A	Nancy Lack	P
<b>Franklin</b>	Rev. Julie Raffety	P	Elizabeth Westerfield	P
<b>Gillette, Meyersville</b>	Rev. Barbara Aspinall	E	Rosanne McGraw	P
<b>Hackettstown (2)</b>	Rev. Brian Merritt	P	Sandra Archer Jami Arcilla	P P
<b>Hampton, Musconetcong Valley</b>	Stephanie Farley, CRE	A		A
<b>Hazen, Oxford 1<sup>st</sup></b>	Vacant	V		A
<b>Long Valley (2)</b>	Rev. Robin Curras	P	Sally Strusz	P A
<b>Long Valley, Highlands</b>	Rev. Claire Pula	P	Ruth Babula	P
<b>Madison (2)</b>	Rev. Jacquelyn Van Vliet	A	Becky Moody	P A
<b>Mendham</b>	Vacant Rev. Alison Paden	V P	Jeff Betz	P
<b>Mine Hill</b>	Rev. Charles Thompson	E	Debbie Hooper	P
<b>Morris Plains (2)</b>	Rev. Donald Brown	P	Hildy Benjamin Susan Vigilante	P P
<b>Morristown (3)</b>	Rev. Leslie Dobbs-Allsopp Rev. Sarah Green	A P	Dianne Grenz Janet Foster Lisa Fraebel	P P P
<b>New Vernon</b>	Rev. William Stone	A		A
<b>Newton (2)</b>	Rev. David Young	P	Sue Shake Alice Sharick	P P
<b>Newton, Yellow Frame</b>	Rev. Michael Nelms	P		A
<b>Oak Ridge</b>	Rev. Christopher Doyle	P		A
<b>Ogdensburg</b>	Rev. Alden Johnson	A		A
<b>Oxford 2<sup>nd</sup></b>	Rev. Joicy Becker-Richards	A		A
<b>Parsippany</b>	Rev. Donald Bragg	P		A
<b>Phillipsburg, Harmony</b>	Rev. Scott Bohr	A		A

<b>Phillipsburg, Pilgrim</b>	Rev. Richard Gelson	P	Barbara Jones	P
<b>Phillipsburg, Westminster</b>	Rev. Scott DeCaro	P		A
<b>Port Murray, Rockport</b>	Rev. Bronc Radak	P		A
<b>Rockaway (2)</b>	Rev. Dr. Nancy Young	P	Joe Martinoni Laurie Morse	P P
<b>Sparta</b>	Rev. Dr. Patrick Sileo	P		A
<b>Stanhope</b>	Rev. Peter Magnan	P		A
<b>Stewartsville</b>	Rev. Stephen Choi	P		A
<b>Stewartsville, Old Greenwich (2)</b>	Rev. Mary Beth Mardis-Lecroy	A	Lisa Gray	P A
<b>Stirling</b>	Rev. Barbara Aspinall	E	Joyce Koenig	P
<b>Succasunna</b>	Rev. Carie Morgan	P	Daylce Boyer	P
<b>Sussex</b>	Rev. Katherine Scott-Kirschner	P	Michael Kosco	P
<b>Wantage, Beemerville</b>	Rev. Barry Young	P		A
<b>Washington</b>	Rev. James Scovell	P	Stuart Ours	P
<b>Wharton</b>	Rev. Kathleen Stone	A	Ericka Berg	P
<b>Wharton, Berkshire Valley</b>	Rev. Christopher Doyle	P	Fred Wawra	P
<b>Wharton, Hungarian</b>	Rev. Csilla Lucskay	A		A
<b>Whippany (2)</b>	Rev. Sarah Cairatti	A		A A

**Teaching Elders Engaged in a Validated Ministry**

Rev. Dr. Robert Gamble ( <i>This Child Here Inc.</i> )	E
Rev. Jeanne Radak ( <i>Presbytery Leader – Newton Presbytery</i> )	P
Rev. Salvatore Seirmarco ( <i>Chaplain – United Methodist Communities</i> )	A
Rev. Angella Son ( <i>Professor – Drew University</i> )	E

**Members at Large**

Rev. Liz Blythe	E
Rev. Joanne Miller	A
Rev. Elizabeth Morrison	E
Rev. Hayley O'Connor	A
Rev. Gail Pendleton	A
Rev. Amy Sandlin	A

**Honorably Retired**

Rev. Peter Amerman	E
Rev. Jeff Archer	P
Rev. John Arnedt	E
Rev. Arthur Benjamin	P

Rev. Clifford Bergdahl	E
Rev. George Blank	E
Rev. Karen Brostrom	E
Rev. Robert Colman	E
Rev. Cindy Crouner	E
Rev. William Culton <i>(serving Alpha)</i>	E
Rev. James D'Angelo	E
Rev. William Davis	E
Rev. Richard Dole	E
Rev. Birda Ferguson	E
Rev. Guy Ferguson	E
Rev. Janet Fishburn	E
Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Hall	E
Rev. Dr. Edward Halldorson	E
Rev. Jean Holmes	P
Rev. Herbert Huffmon	E
Rev. Harold Johnson	P
Rev. Eugenia Johnston	E
Rev. Heup Young Kim	E
Rev. Dr. David Lawrence	P
Rev. Unzu Lee	E
Rev. William Lehr	E
Rev. Tony MacNaughton	P
Rev. Chet Penza	E
Rev. Barbara Peters	E
Rev. Dr. Thomas Peters	E
Rev. Donald Prytherch	P
Rev. Bronc Radak <i>(serving Rockport)</i>	P
Rev. Jack Roan	E
Rev. Stephen Ross	E
Rev. Alan Schaefer <i>(serving Dover)</i>	E
Rev. Donald Scott	E
Rev. Lorrie Skinner	P
Rev. Sherman Skinner	P
Rev. Sarah Taylor	E
Rev. Charles Thompson <i>(serving Mine Hill)</i>	E

**Ruling Elders by Virtue of Office**

Elder Paula Benson, <i>Highlands Presbyterian Church, PCT Co-Moderator</i>	P
Elder John Crozier, <i>First Presbyterian Church, Boonton, COM Co-Moderator</i>	P
Elder John Hellriegel, <i>Community Presbyterian Church, Chester, PCT Member</i>	P
Elder Donna Rahmann, <i>Fairmount Presbyterian Church, Califon, Presbyterian Women</i>	P

Elder Scott Riker, <i>Highlands Presbyterian Church, PCT Member</i>	P
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***Others in Attendance***

Sonja Gaertner, Office Manager & Attendance Clerk ( <i>Newton Presbytery</i> )	P
Rev. Stephen Huston, Transitional Support & Resourcing Coordinator ( <i>Newton Presbytery</i> )	P
Lizabeth Hutchinson, Financial Administrator ( <i>Newton Presbytery</i> )	P
Rev. Dr. Carl Wilton, Acting Stated Clerk ( <i>Newton Presbytery</i> )	P
<i>Rev. Susan Andrews, Member Giddings-Lovejoy Presbytery, Guest Preacher</i>	P
<i>Elder Sue Arnell, Ringwood Presbyterian Church, Palisades Presbytery</i>	P
<i>Rev. Nancy Asbury, HR, New Brunswick Presbytery</i>	P
<i>Elder Craig Barth, Presbyterian Church of Morristown</i>	P
<i>Elder Wendy Doidge, Presbyterian Church of Morristown</i>	P
Rev. Roberto Fois, Trinity United Church, Warren, Elizabeth Presbytery	P
Rev. Linda Gaden, Bethlehem Presbyterian Church, Pittstown, Elizabeth Presbytery	P
Elder Doris Haring, Pilgrim Presbyterian Church, Phillipsburg	P
Elder Cliff Lee, First Presbyterian Church, Mendham	P
Rev. Amy Lincoln, Flemington Presbyterian Church, New Brunswick Presbytery	P
Elder Heather Nemeth, Ringwood Presbyterian Church, Palisades Presbytery	P
Elder Betty Shuman, First Presbyterian Church, Rockaway	P
Elder Sue Quimby, Pluckemin Presbyterian Church, Elizabeth Presbytery	P

**Total in Attendance – 103**

~ Sonja Gaertner, Attendance Clerk – Newton Presbytery

**Introductory Items**

Quorum was present

**INTRODUCTION OF NEW RULING ELDERS**

RE Carolyn Smith, Presbyterian Church of Chatham Township

RE Doug Zehner, Presbyterian Church of Chatham Township

RE Rosanne McGraw, Meyersville Presbyterian Church

**ENROLLMENT OF CORRESPONDING MEMBERS**

RE Nancy Asbury, Presbytery of New Brunswick

TE Roberto Fois, Presbytery of Elizabeth

TE Linda Gaden, Presbytery of Elizabeth

RE Amy Lincoln, Presbytery of New Brunswick

Heather Nemeth, Palisades Presbytery

Sue Quimby, Presbytery of Elizabeth

Rev Susan Andrews, Giddings-Lovejoy Presbytery

## **ADOPTION OF THE DOCKET**

The Presbytery **VOTED** to adopt the docket

## **REPORT ON ARRANGEMENTS:**

Moderator David reviewed the methods of participation using Zoom for a Stated Meeting.

## **STATED CLERKS REPORT**

MOTION: To request the Presbytery of Monmouth to examine Christopher Small, a candidate under care of that presbytery, for ordination on our behalf, and to request the Presbytery for Southern New Jersey to conduct his service of ordination, if the way be clear pending our Committee on Ministry's validation of his call as chaplain of Hunterdon Medical Center and their examination of him as a new member of this presbytery.

**MOTION APPROVED**

## **Consent Agenda**

### **SC-1**

Approve the minutes of the Presbytery meetings held January 23, 2021.

### **SC-2**

Approve excuses for the Presbytery meeting of February 20, 2021.

### **SC-3**

Approve that the Presbytery Coordinating Team approve the minutes of this meeting as this is the last Stated Meeting of the Newton Presbytery.

### **SC-4**

Approve that the Presbytery Coordinating Team approve the session minutes of churches.

### **SC-5**

Receive the Annual Reports of the Presbytery of Newton.

### **SC-6**

Receive the report of the Committee on Ministry.

### **SC-7**

Receive the report of the Presbytery Coordinating Team.

## **NEWTON STORIES**

### **COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY Part 1**

Introduction of New Pastors

Rev Jeanne Holmes HR

Katherine Scott-Kirshner, Sussex First Presbyterian Church

## **NEWTON STORIES**

### **COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY Part 2**

Administrative Commission – First Presbyterian Church, East Hanover

COM Recommends:

MOTION: The Presbytery approve the recommendations listed in the Administrative Commission Position Description. See attached.

**MOTION APPROVED**

### **PRESBYTERY COORDINATING TEAM**

Northwest New Jersey Transition Report of the progress of the Transition to a new Presbytery targeted for March 1, 2021.

Report of the Finance Team of the Presbytery Coordinating Team

### **NEWTON STORIES**

#### **COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS**

Robin Curras led the community in discussions using breakout rooms.

#### **WORSHIP**

The congregation gathered in worship with communion. Rev Susan Andrews shared the scripture.

Rev Jeff Hatch and Rev Katherine Scott-Kirsher led communion.

#### **DISSOLUTION**

Jeanne Radak and Carl Wilton gave the Litany of Dissolution of the Presbytery of Newton.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion: To adjourn with benediction.

#### **MOTION APPROVED**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:10 pm.

Attested: \_\_\_\_\_  
Rev. Dr. Carlos Wilton, Acting Stated Clerk

Reports:

East Hanover Administrative Commission  
Committee On Ministry  
Presbytery Coordinating Team  
Jean Holmes Statement of Faith

**Administrative Commission  
of Newton Presbytery  
concerning  
the First Presbyterian Church  
East Hanover, NJ**

**February 20, 2021**

The Presbytery is given the 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 Committee on Ministry has made a deliberate inquiry into the situation at the First Presbyterian Church, East Hanover. This inquiry consisted of sending a team of COM members and Presbytery staff and officers to meetings of the session, communicating with former members of both the Church and its session in response to letters of concern, and conferring with the current covenant supply pastor. In addition, the COM and other representatives of the presbytery have received various communications, written and/or informal, from members of the First Presbyterian Church, East Hanover, and others who have observed the situation there.

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. This document describes the ways in which the commission will support, protect, and encourage the First Presbyterian Church, East Hanover's "Ministry under the Word." COM, the Stated Clerk and the Presbytery Leader remain committed to the long-term viability of this congregation and find this means of official support to be the best suited to ensure the future of their 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 Committee on Ministry has determined, at its electronic meeting of February 2, 2021, that significant disorder is reported to exist in the First Presbyterian Church, East Hanover such that its ministry under the Word is placed in jeopardy. The Committee on Ministry requests the Presbytery of Newton, at its Stated Meeting, on February 20, 2021 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 for East Hanover will have the following powers and responsibilities:

1. To visit the First Presbyterian Church, East Hanover.
2. To inquire into the difficulties occurring in the First Presbyterian Church, affording to all interested parties 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 First Presbyterian Church, without limitation. This shall include access to all financial documents and accounts.
  - 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, employees, 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 First 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 a comprehensive stewardship campaign. It will also include helping the session to examine the budget, trim costs where possible and help implement appropriate financial procedures and controls if those in place are found to be lacking. It will also include helping the session to plan in the short and longer term for sustainable pastoral leadership for the congregation. Any other such guidance and coordination as becomes necessary during the course of the Commission's work shall be included in the scope of this warrant.
- b. To determine whether there are constituencies in the First Presbyterian Church which are unrepresented on Session and to counsel with the church if necessary. To assist in assessment of leadership capacity and potential for leadership development within the congregation.
- 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 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 First Church.

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 First

Presbyterian Church in the fulfillment of its responsibilities listed in G-3.0201. The Commission members shall serve along side the session members of First Presbyterian Church with vote, advising them and encouraging them as they fulfill their responsibilities. The Committee on Ministry shall appoint the moderator of the session.

This Administrative Commission shall report to presbytery, or its successor at least every six months, beginning in November 2021.

Membership in this Administrative Commission shall be by appointment of the Moderator of presbytery, in consultation with the Committee on Ministry, the Stated Clerk and the Presbytery Leader.

If requested by the Administrative Commission, Newton Presbytery, or its successor, shall secure Counsel for their work.

*Rev. Alison Paden and Elder John Crozier,  
Co-Chairs of the Committee on Ministry  
Rev. Dr. Carl Wilton, Acting Stated Clerk of Presbytery*

## Report of the Committee on Ministry

### **Items to Report:**

*From February 2, 2021 COM meeting:*

#### **COM 2:**

Appointed Rev. Carie Morgan as moderator for Andover Presbyterian Church.

#### **COM 3:**

Appointed Rev. Stephen Choi as moderator for Delaware Presbyterian Church and First Presbyterian Church of Oxford at Hazen.

#### **COM 4:**

Approved that request from the Palisades Presbytery that Rev. Jean Holmes (HR) be transferred to the Presbytery of Newton.

#### **COM 5:**

Approved the updated Ordination and Installation guidelines.

#### **COM 6:**

Approved the Terms of Call for the following:

- Rev. Michael Nelms and Yellow Frame Presbyterian Church, Newton.
- Rev. Dr. Jefferson Hatch and First Presbyterian Church of Branchville.
- Rev. Katherine Scott-Kirschner and First Presbyterian Church of Sussex.
- Rev. Barry Young and Beemerville Presbyterian Church, Wantage.
- Rev. Barbara Aspinall as part time interim position with First Presbyterian Church, Stirling.

#### **COM 7:**

Approved the MIF for Kitchell Memorial Presbyterian Church, East

Hanover.

**COM 8:**

Approved changes to Pastor/Parish Separation Ethics Document.

## Report of the Presbytery Coordinating Team

February 20, 2021

**Items to Report:**

From the January 26, 2021 meeting:

**PCT 1:**

Reviewed the January Presbytery Meeting. Received positive feedback. Break out rooms well received. Worship was inspirational.

**PCT 2:**

Planned the February meeting – The Last meeting of the Presbytery of Newton:

- Annual meeting/Reports
- Celebration of Presbytery of Newton
- Pre-recorded stories and other videos
- Worship to include something from the Washington Church – location of the first Presbytery meeting

**PCT 3:**

Discussed March Presbytery Meeting:

- Rev. SanDawna Ashley, new Transitional Synod Executive will lead worship
- Agenda will contain all the information we need to start the new presbytery

**PCT 4:**

Reviewed end of year financial report.

**PCT 5:**

Reviewed the Technical team work to date.

**PCT 6:**

Reviewed the three legal documents that must be signed. Approved motion to authorize Elder Paula Benson, as President of the Corporation to sign corporation documents and Rev. Carl Wilton, Acting Stated Clerk to sign the Ecclesiastical document.

**PCT 7:**

Agreed to call an April presbytery meeting if needed.

**PCT 8:**

Presbytery Moderator, Rev. David Young reported that he led the online Installation service of the Rev. Don Brown at Morris Plains.

Next meeting February 23 at 7 pm.



## Statement of Faith – Rev. Jean A. F. Holmes

God is pure love, creative energy and perfect friend at all times. God is both mystical and concrete. God is both beyond understanding and totally believable. God is the rock upon which I stand, the ocean in which I swim, the parent in whom I trust. There is no more profound experience in this earthly life than the experience of knowing the presence of God.

The presence of God is known in the Universe by the power of the Holy Spirit. One does not need to believe in the Holy Spirit to experience it. The Spirit is alive and active, working at all times and in all places. Even when there seems to be no hope in the world the Spirit is present in the tiniest of things – a crocus blooming in a snowbank, a drop of rain in the midst of a draught, a smile on a baby's face, a spark of life in the eyes of a centenarian.

God's greatest effort and achievement in relating to the human creation was through a holy embodiment of the divine in Jesus Christ. Even when the Son was but a twinkle in God's eye there was a plan to create true spiritual intimacy between what is divine and what is incarnate. When God discovered how truly difficult it was to live within the human condition of separation from the divine, God sought to heal the wound of separation through a gift. That gift was the crucified and resurrected Christ. That gift is eternal and universal. Alleluia! Amen!

There is one human institution created for the specific purpose of continuing to give the gift of God's grace to the world. That institution would be the church. As the church we seek to be the body of Christ in the world. The two rituals most capable of offering the gift of grace are called sacraments. The sacraments of the church are baptism and communion. In baptism we are born into the body of Christ. At the communion table we are forgiven for all of the times we fail to *be* the body of Christ.

How do we know the truth of all the above? We know our story through the word of God as found in the Bible. The Bible is this wondrous book that speaks every language to every person. There is no black and white when it comes to interpreting the Bible. There are many tongues, so to speak, to be found in the spirituality and the authorship of the Bible, and the sooner the human creatures to whom the wisdom of the Bible has been bestowed understand this, the sooner God's original desire for diversity *and* unity will come into focus.

Yes, God is perfect even though God's creation is far from it. In our minds we know the perfection of God through the dance of the trinity –

Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer. In our experience we seek to represent God through the church. It may seem a bit crazy to use an institution as a vessel for the divine, but in the long run, the church is one of the best possibilities God has to try to create order out of chaos in our contemporary life.