

Presbytery of the Highlands
Stated Meeting
Administrative Commission for the Christ Presbyterian
Church, Martinsville Final Report
May 10, 2022

On October 13, 2020, the Presbytery of Elizabeth established an Administrative Commission at the request of Christ Presbyterian Church in Martinsville NJ to "conclude the affairs of the church and to find a new ministry for their church building." This was seven months into a worldwide pandemic, and five months before the transition from seven presbyteries (and their corresponding corporate entities) into four. Given this context, the following actions are not to be considered precedent setting.

Recognizing the confusion that can occur in the midst of such a transition, the following is provided to establish which corporation had authority over Christ Presbyterian Church following this transition. With this document, may it be clear that as of March 1, 2021 that the Presbytery of the Highlands had authority over Christ Presbyterian Church, and is now acting in accordance to the Book of Order G-3.0109b, including:

A council may rescind or amend an action of its administrative commission in the same way actions of the council are modified.

The purpose of this motion is

1. to clarify and correct any confusion about the authority of the Presbytery of the Highlands, and to complete the action of a predecessor presbytery;
2. as the successor presbytery, to ensure a clear title for the Bound Brook Presbyterian Church upon the conclusion of this action, that it may act as it discerns without hindrance.

Therefore, the Administration and Coordinating Team of the Presbytery of the Highlands of New Jersey, in light of the aforementioned request made by Christ Presbyterian Church, Martinsville, and the actions recorded by the Session of Bound Brook Presbyterian Church on February 22, 2022,

moves to

1. affirm the Administrative Commission, in its action to dissolve the congregation effective March 1, 2022, according to the terms of the Agreement that have been reached with the Presbyterian Church at

Bound Brook.

2. affirm that the Presbytery of the Highlands of New Jersey (successor to the Presbytery of Elizabeth as of March 1, 2021) then held the church's property and assets in accordance with the Book of Order (G-4.0205) "Property of a Dissolved or Extinct Congregation":

Whenever a congregation is formally dissolved by the presbytery, or has become extinct by reason of the dispersal of its members, the abandonment of its work, or other cause, such property as it may have shall be held, used, and applied for such uses, purposes, and trusts as the presbytery may direct, limit, and appoint, or such property may be sold or disposed of as the presbytery may direct, in conformity with the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.);

3. affirm the Administrative Commission's action to transfer all property and assets to the Bound Brook Presbyterian Church in November 2021;

confirms all other actions of the Administrative Commission, including

4. that the active members of the Christ Presbyterian Church, having made their intentions known, be released to the churches they have elected to join, citing in particular the transfer of members from that congregation to the Bound Brook Presbyterian Church on March 15, 2022;
5. transfer to the Stated Clerk for forwarding to Presbyterian Historical Society all official minutes, registers, and rolls of the congregation.
6. giving thanks to all those contributing to this faithful action, and dismisses the Administrative Commission;

and resolves that this be effective as of the May 10, 2022 meeting of the Presbytery of the Highlands of New Jersey.

BACKGROUND:

Christ Presbyterian Church (CPC) of Martinsville, New Jersey, has existed as a chartered congregation of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and its predecessor denomination since May 16, 1965, and has engaged in faithful ministry under the Word for nearly 57 years. In recent years, however, the congregation has recognized that its capacity for independent, self-sustaining ministry has drawn to a close.

Consequently, the Session of CPC requested that the Presbytery of Elizabeth create an Administrative Commission (AC) to help conclude the affairs of the Church. The AC was approved at the October 13, 2020 meeting of the Presbytery, and Lois Tangowski, Ian Rankine and Alan Ford, with Jamie Breeding of the Christ Presbyterian Church as liaison, were appointed. Subsequently, as part of the reorganization of the presbyteries in New Jersey, the Presbytery of the Highlands of New Jersey, of which CPC has become part, authorized the continuation of the AC.

A worship service was held on August 30, 2020 to celebrate CPC's history of ministry, mission and experiences. Memories and prayers were shared live and by Zoom.

Working with the AC, the session determined that the manse should be sold. A good offer was received and the sale closed on March 31, 2021.

Beginning in the fall of 2020, consideration was given to possible ways some of the missions of CPC could be sustained, and how this could be best accomplished. The concept of folding the Martinsville site and the congregation into another church emerged, and discussions began with the Bound Brook Presbyterian Church (BBPC). These discussions developed into the formation of a joint task force and the preparation of the document "Christ Presbyterian Church – A Plan for Moving Forward" which was adopted by both churches, with some final amendments made in September of 2021.

This document guided the management of the church property and the continuing of missions on the site, and movement toward the transfer of the property and financial assets to BBPC, and the dissolution of CPC, under the supervision of BBPC and the AC.

The process was delayed by the onset of hurricane Ida and historic flooding levels in the area, which severely damaged CPC's property and building. Partially funded by insurance, repairs were made and the building was made usable for the community groups using the church.

On March 1, 2022, the CPC Session met to make the resolutions needed to close the congregation and corporation.

We give thanks for the blessings that CPC has given throughout their 57 years of ministry, and are filled with joy as we see the seeds that have been planted continue to renew and yield bountiful harvest.