

As a resurrection people, Hudson River Presbytery engages people's passions; builds partnerships; nurtures strong leadership; and creates healthy, vital communities of faith; all to the Glory of God. As members of the Body of Christ, Hudson River Presbytery is called to live resurrection with passion and partnership in a changing world.

HRP Council Report to Presbytery

Here we are in the fall of 2020. Your Presbytery Council, which usually meets once a month, has continued to meet more frequently, alternating between weekly and bi-weekly Zoom meetings.

Council has been working on preparing a budget for 2021. As we began this process, encouraged by the Finance Committee to live into our fiduciary responsibility, we became aware of the need for both education and focus on the finances of the Presbytery. Such knowledge would permit us to responsibly answer the question, "what resources are available for the Hudson River Presbytery to fund its mission?"

Therefore, the Council committed to understanding the full picture of the finances of the Presbytery by the end of the year. We will review the use of all endowments and bequests, as well as per capita. The 2021 budget is presented for a first reading.

Members of the Finance Committee and the Council will meet with a facilitator so that we can get a "balcony view" of the resources of the Presbytery. Council's responsibility is to ensure that the resources of the Hudson River Presbytery align with its mission. Our fiduciary responsibility requires that we have a common understanding of the resources available to address our mission in service to our congregations. Council's goal is to revisit the budget during 2021, along with the Finance Committee, to ensure that we move forward with a balanced budget.

Additionally, Council is working with the Grants Committee to further define criteria by which congregations might be considered for capital grants from Legacy Funds. The Legacy Fund was expanded during 2019 to include the following sentence: *Churches are expected to maintain their own property as per Book of Order. However, Capital Grants may be available to financially challenged churches that have completed an assessment process and can use that work to support a grant request.* Council has formed a task force with representatives from Grants, Finance, Property, and Healthy Vital Congregations to provide appropriate criteria to assist the Grants Committee as they consider Legacy grant applications with a large Capital component. Therefore, the Grants Committee will not approve new Legacy applications that have such a component until January 2021 when these criteria are in place.

As we "live into" the intention of the modification to Legacy Fund grants, Council has approved a grant and a no-interest loan for Irvington Presbyterian Church to repair a structural wall in their sanctuary. These funds will complement a PILP loan as well as funds provided by the congregation for this critical structural emergency repair.

Council requested that Faith and Order develop a policy around public statements made in the name of the Presbytery. That policy is presented as part of the consent agenda. Please see the following page for the complete policy.

As the fall begins and we ready ourselves for the season of Advent, let us remember that hope propels us forward as we move ahead, trusting in the God who loves us.

Yours in Christ,

Connie Knapp
Moderator, HRP Council

Members of Council:

Tom Albert
David Burpee
Martha Carlson

Abbie Huff
Paul Lent
John Miller

Jonah So
Dale Southorn
Cathy Surgenor

-c- POLICY ON PRESBYTERY STATEMENTS

I. Preamble

The decision-making structure of the Presbyterian Church (USA) is deliberative and normally relies on the participation of presbyters to authorize actions of its representative bodies. We do not have an episcopal structure, and do not generally authorize individuals within our structure to make policy for larger bodies without the input of those bodies, the way bishops might in other ecclesial structures.

The strength of this Presbyterian structure is that it allows for discernment and for the input of many voices. A potential weakness is that such a structure can, at times, be slow to act in situations that demand prophetic response. This policy is intended to balance the desire to be faithful in our social witness with the need, at times, to be prophetic. Our default position will always be for greater deliberation and discernment. This policy demands places higher bars on statements made and actions taken with less room and time for deliberation and with fewer voices directly represented in the decision. But we recognize that sometimes events press upon us and demand response in a more immediate fashion than our normal structure allows.

II. Who may issue a statement on behalf of the Presbytery?

A. The Presbytery

This is the default position and is always to be desired. If possible, the Presbytery should vote as a body on statements made and/or other actions taken. A request for a statement from the Presbytery should ordinarily be submitted in writing at least 10 days before a called Presbytery meeting in order to be included in the distributed materials. The statement must include to whom the statement is to be issued. A majority vote is sufficient for the Presbytery to issue a statement. The Presbytery is not bound by denominational policy but should be guided by such policy unless conscience demands otherwise.

B. The Council

Because the Council is a commission of the Presbytery, it is empowered to act in the name of the Presbytery in between meetings of the Presbytery. Should an issue arise that demands a timely response, and for which the delay of waiting for a Presbytery vote would be an impediment, the Council may issue a statement or authorize other actions in the name of the Presbytery. The Council may wish to consult with the Faith and Order Committee regarding denominational policy. The Council is not bound by denominational policy but should be guided by such policy unless conscience demands otherwise.

C. The General Presbyter

In cases where there is a small window for timely response, the General Presbyter may issue statements or authorize other actions in the name of the Presbytery. This should always be considered as the final option, and only when the pressing nature of the issue does not allow for greater consultation. In such cases, the General Presbyter is bound either by current denominational policy or by a prior vote of the Presbytery or Council. Such precedent should be cited in the statement. The General Presbyter may consult with the Stated Clerk and/or the Faith and Order Committee to determine whether precedent exists.

III. Who may initiate a request for statements and/or other actions of the Presbytery?

A. A Session

A Session of a congregation in the Presbytery may call upon the Presbytery, the Council, or the General Presbyter to issue a statement and/or authorize another action, pursuant to the stipulations in Part II of this policy. A majority vote of a Session is sufficient for initiating such a request. A request from a Session is not bound by denominational policy but should be guided by such policy unless conscience demands otherwise.

B. A Committee of the Presbytery

A committee of the Presbytery may call upon the Presbytery, the Council, or the General Presbyter to issue a statement and/or authorize another action, pursuant to the stipulations in Part II of this policy. A majority vote of the committee is sufficient for initiating such a request. A request from a committee of the Presbytery is not bound by denominational policy but should be guided by such policy unless conscience demands otherwise.

C. Presbytery Council

Because the Council is a commission of the Presbytery, it is empowered to initiate statements and/or other actions in the name of the Presbytery, should timeliness demand such actions outside the normal meeting schedule of the Presbytery. Any statement and/or other action of the Council is governed by the stipulations in Part II of this policy.

D. An individual member of the Presbytery

If at all possible, individual members of the Presbytery should initiate requests for statements and/or other actions through a Session of a congregation or through a Committee of the Presbytery. If an individual is moved to present a request outside of these channels, the request should be guided by denominational policy, and cite such policy, or it should present a rationale for deviating from denominational policy in the given situation. The request must include concurrence from at least two other individual members of the Presbytery. The request will then be subject to the stipulations in Part II of this policy.

Note that this would mean that a request for a statement and/or other action by the Presbytery that either contradicts denominational policy or lacks a precedent either in the actions of the General Assembly or of the Presbytery would, at a minimum, be subject to the vote of Council and could not be issued by the General Presbyter alone.