

FIRST READING OF PROPOSED BYLAWS CHANGE  
FOR A NEW COMMITTEE ON ACCESSIBILITY, REPRESENTATION, AND EQUITY (C.A.R.E.)

**MOTION:** The Leadership Team teams moves the Presbytery of Great Rivers to amend the bylaws with the following **six changes** that would create a new committee on representation for Great Rivers Presbytery reconfigured as a Committee on Accessibility, Representation, and Equity (C.A.R.E.). *(While this is one motion, the six changes are broken up separately with their own rationales for ease of discussion)*

**1. ADD NEW SECTION**

[ARTICLE X- COMMITTEES Section 5 Committee on Accessibility, Representation, and Equity

- a. Responsibilities. The Committee on Accessibility, Representation, and Equity shall be responsible for responding to the goals and objectives and related matters which deal with enhancing and strengthening the participation, inclusiveness, and representation of Great Rivers Presbytery as required by the PCUSA Constitution (G-3.0103). In partnership with the committees and teams of the presbytery, the focus of this committee will be to “advise the council regarding the implementation of principles of unity and diversity, to advocate for diversity in leadership, and to consult with the council on the employment of personnel, in accordance with the principles of unity and diversity in F-1.0403.” (G-3.0103)

Specific responsibilities include:

- Assisting the presbytery in identifying barriers to participation and access within the work and life of the presbytery, and empower the committees and teams of Great Rivers with considerations, conversations, resources, and recommendations that expand access to the work and life of presbytery, with attention to how challenges around inequity and exclusion may arise in their work.
  - Leading, arranging, and promoting opportunities around intercultural competence, cultural humility, and capacity-building efforts for our presbytery, focusing on issues such as access, equity, gender issues, disability, language, race, culture, and identity, including a once-a-year mandated training on anti-racism, similar to our yearly required boundary training.
  - Help to identify regional agencies in the community of Great Rivers Presbytery as well as entities within the PC(USA) who are doing justice, advocacy, and equity work that the ministries of Great Rivers should be aware of in their partnering efforts for engaging the community, including but not limited to charity efforts.
  - Regularly assessing the impact, goals, and purpose of its own work, both internally and with periodic assistance from outside of the Presbytery of Great Rivers.
- b. Membership. The Committee on Accessibility, Representation, and Equity elected by the Presbytery Assembly shall consist of 9 members at large. Membership shall be divided into three equal classes and shall be nearly equal representation of Ruling Elders and Ministers of Word and Sacrament, with regular consideration towards equitable participation along gender, ethnicity, and region. The chair shall be nominated by the Presbytery Nominating Committee and elected for a three year term by the Presbytery Assembly at the last stated meeting of the year to begin serving January 1 of the year following election. At the first meeting of the year the Team shall elect from its membership a Vice Chair. No member shall serve more than two

consecutive terms or portions of terms.

- c. Corresponding Members. The Moderator, Moderator-Elect, Lead Presbyter, Stated Clerk, and Treasurer will be corresponding members.
- d. Meetings. Regular meetings of the Committee on Accessibility, Representation, and Equity shall be held at least quarterly. Other meetings may be held on the Committee's own appointment, at the call of the chair or at the call of the Presbytery Assembly
- e. Quorum. The quorum shall be a majority of the respective members.
- f. Staff. The Presbytery may provide staff services, as needed through permanent employed staff, short-term contractual services or by using available personnel with special skills.
- g. Delegation of Duties. The Committee on Accessibility, Representation, and Equity may appoint groups for duration and of a size necessary to carry out its work.]

Rationale for part 1:

*The following amendment to the bylaws would put us in compliance with the Book of Order:*

G3.0103 Participation and Representation

The councils of the church shall give full expression to the rich diversity of the church's membership and shall provide for full participation and access to representation in decision-making and employment practices (F-1.0403). In fulfilling this commitment councils shall give due consideration to both the gifts and requirements for ministry (G-2.-1-4) and the right of people in congregations and councils to elect their officers (F-3.0106).

Each council shall develop procedures and mechanisms for promoting and reviewing that body's implementation of the church's commitment to inclusiveness and representation. Council's above the session shall establish by their own rule committees on representation to fulfill the following functions: to advise the council regarding the implementation of principles of unity and diversity, to advocate for diversity in leadership, and to consult with the council of employment of personnel, in accordance with the principles of unity and diversity in F-1.0403 A committee on representation should not be merged with another committee or made a subcommittee of another committee.

On August 20, 2020, Leadership Team shared with the assembly that they would be recommending to the assembly a first reading of bylaws to establish a new committee, C.A.R.E. (Committee on Accessibility, Representation, and Equity) to bring us into compliance with our constitutional responsibility to have an independent committee on representation. In that work, our keynote speaker for that meeting was Rev. Molly Casteel from the Office of the General Assembly and Assistant Stated Clerk for Equity and Representation, who shared on "The Value of Accessibility, Representation, and Equity in our Presbytery." As our consultant, she has since assisted us with the specific text and duties of this work and endorses this recommendation.

The duties under the bullet points each respectively focus on the vital work of RESOURCING, CAPACITY-BUILDING, NETWORKING, and SELF-ASSESSING. The duties named are consistent with Item 00-29 "On the Church in This Moment in History" approved by the 224<sup>th</sup> PCUSA General Assembly (2020) to "Recommend that PC(USA) congregations, mid councils, and all General Assembly entities develop and adopt an antiracism policy in their bylaws by engaging Item 02-137, "On Amending G-3.0106 to Add an Antiracism Policy with Suggested Training for All Members of Each Council." Item 02-137 was deferred to the 225<sup>th</sup> General Assembly due to the abridged schedule due to the pandemic. Approval of this action will permit us to get a head of the curve of

General Assembly's potential recommendations. This committee would be tasked with further articulating our anti-racism policy in its committee's manual of operations.

Further details, specific procedures, anti-racism policies, anti-racism training requisites, and other processes will be articulated in the committee specific manual of operations, consistent with other committee handbooks and manuals of operations for different committees, which are typically not articulated in the bylaws.

The form, structure, and wording are consistent with much of the rest of the bylaws in how our committees are structured.

Here is a basic timeline of the history of the work of representation in Great Rivers Presbytery, based on written records:

- *On **February 27, 2007**, the Assembly granted a request from the Nominating Committee not to form a committee on representation for that year.*
- *On **January 18, 2012**, the Administration Team determined that constitutional "requirements for a Committee on Representation will be met by having a moderator's review of committee members."*
- *On **March 6, 2012**, a bylaw change was approved by the assembly to create a Consultation on Representation in which "Each year the Presbytery shall conduct a Moderator's Consultation on Representation prior to the final meeting of the Presbytery. The purpose of the Consultation is to direct the "implementation and review" of the "church's commitment to inclusiveness and representation" as expressed in F-1.043 and G-3.0103 in the Presbyterian Church USA Constitution...The members of the consultation shall be at the invitation of the Moderator and shall include the Chairs of the Nominating Committee, Personnel Committee, Visioning Team, Administration Team, Committee on Ministry, Committee on Preparation for Ministry and between three and six members at large."*
- *On **March 5, 2013**, a completed consultation was reported, with recommendations for the presbytery for the year 2013 that included recommendations for committees, sessions, and pastors to make the life and work of the presbytery more accessible to all.*
- *In **2015**, the work of "ensuring fair and effective representation on Presbytery committees and agencies" became included on the job description of the Stated Clerk.*
- *At the **February 14, 2017** assembly, there was a "Motion, Seconded and Approved to recommend to the Administration Team to discuss a committee on representation."*
- *On **May 13, 2017**, the Administration Team "discussed a Committee on Representation" and committed to "look further as to how our Presbytery nominates individuals for service."*
- *On **August 12, 2017**, under new business at the end of the assembly, it was moved and seconded "to form a committee on representation. The motion was defeated."*
- *On **October 19, 2017** at the Leadership Team meeting, the moderator-elect brought a report from the Mid Council Leaders Gathering about the denomination's evolving understanding of representation beyond simply being a body-counting auditing body of Nominating Committee, and also the denomination's encouragement to explore new approaches. After closer review, the Leadership Team documented its understanding that "it is very clear that this is a mandated committee. We, therefore, need to put this in place." Moving into 2018, the Leadership Team committed to explore what a committee on representation might look like if implemented here, and informal conversations began with those who expressing interest in a new model.*

- On **August 19, 2020**, Rev. Molly Casteel from the Office of the General Assembly and Assistant Stated Clerk for Equity and Representation, was invited to be the keynote speaker at our presbytery assembly on “The Value of Accessibility, Representation, and Equity in our Presbytery.” At that same meeting, the Leadership Team announced its goal to bring possible bylaws to the next assembly for consideration.
- Between **September 2020 and August 2021**, Molly Casteel collated samples from across the PCUSA on what a successful committee on presentation could look like, and the Lead Presbyter worked with a small group including the Moderator-Elect and a handful of volunteers (including people who were men, women, and of color) who had expressed interest as early as 2018 to offer feedback about the creation of the committee. In consultation with Molly Casteel, she offered feedback and suggestions on the working draft before it was brought to the Leadership Team.
- On **August 10, 2021**, the Leadership Team reviewed the working draft, strengthened it, and are now bringing it to the assembly.
- **August 24, 2021**: the bylaws will be presented for the first of two readings before bylaws can be changed, if the way be clear.
- **TBD: November 13, 2021**: The bylaws will be presented for a second reading before the new bylaws can be adopted, if the way be clear. (At the earliest), the Nominating Committee may present a slate following that action filling the committee so C.A.R.E. can be functional before 2022.
- **TBD: First Assembly, February 2022** (at the latest): the Nominating Committee will present a slate filling the committee so this committee can be functional for starting 2022.

This action today honors our past commitments towards representation, build on our collective work of those who have gone before us, and would sustainably consolidate this work in one clear, consistent, and central place.

## 2. AMEND TEXT, ADJUSTING LEADERSHIP TEAM

### ARTICLE VII – LEADERSHIP TEAM. Section 2 Membership

(Insert “**Committee on Accessibility, Representation, and Equity**” within members of the Leadership Team

#### Rationale for Part 2:

*The following routinely adds the chair of C.A.R.E. to the Leadership Team, consistent with our structure in which every committee has presence on the Leadership Team.*

## 3. AMEND TEXT, ADJUSTING NOMINATING COMMITTEE

### ARTICLE X- COMMITTEES, Section 1 Nominating Committee, b Membership

“The Nominating Committee shall be composed of ~~nine~~ **[ten]** members who shall be nearly equal representation of minister members and ruling elders[, **including one voting representative from the Committee on Accessibility, Representation, and Equity, chosen by C.A.R.E.**]

#### Rationale for part 3:

*Per recommendation from Molly Casteel as our consultant, it is good to bring in a member of C.A.R.E. into any spaces where leaders are selected to participate in official positions of the presbytery. As an alternative to overlooking the slate **after** much work has already been done by the Nominating Committee, this would change would permit the C.A.R.E. to*

have presence from the beginning of Nominating Committee's deliberations, and will hopefully make relations between the Nominating Committee and our committee on representation more collaborative.

#### 4. AMEND TEXT, ADJUSTING ADMIN

##### ARTICLE X- COMMITTEES Section 1 Nominating Committee, b. Membership

b. Membership The Nominating Committee shall be composed of nine members who shall be nearly equal representation of minister members and ruling elders. The membership, to include the chair, shall be nominated by the Administration Team in consultation with the Nominating Committee[;] **[a representative from the Committee on Accessibility, Representation, and Equity, chosen by C.A.R.E., shall also serve as a corresponding member for the purpose of nominating the Nominating Committee members.]** [T]he election by the Presbytery Assembly **[will ordinarily take place]** at the last stated meeting of the year to begin serving January 1 of the year following election. At the first meeting of the year the Committee shall elect from its membership a Vice Chair. No member shall serve more than two consecutive terms or portions of terms.

##### Rational for part 4:

*Per recommendation from Molly Casteel as our consultant, it is good to bring in a member of CARE into any spaces where leaders are selected to participate in official positions of the presbytery. Since the Nominating Committee cannot nominate themselves, that duty has been tasked to Administration Team. Having C.A.R.E. present during those deliberations would assist Admin in considerations of representation in the recruitment of new membership to Nominating.*

#### 5. INSERT TEXT TO PROPOSED AMENDMENT WITH NUMBER CORRECTIONS, ADJUSTING PERSONNEL\*

##### ARTICLE X- COMMITTEES, Section 6 – PERSONNEL COMMITTEE, Part 3 Corresponding Members

**[3. Corresponding Members. A representative from the Committee on Accessibility, Representation, and Equity, will be a corresponding member, chosen by C.A.R.E.]**

##### ~~3.~~**[4] Committee Meetings:**

Meetings shall be held monthly and as needed if special circumstances dictate.

##### ~~4.~~**[5] Quorum:**

The quorum shall be a majority of its membership.

##### ~~5.~~**[6] Staff:**

The Presbytery may provide staff services, as needed through permanent employed staff, short-term contractual services or by using available personnel with special skills.

##### Rationale for part 5:

*Rationale: Per recommendation from Molly Casteel as our consultant, it is good to bring in a member of C.A.R.E. into any spaces where leaders are selected to participate in official positions of the presbytery. This change would mean having C.A.R.E.'s voice alongside the responsible creation of job descriptions, the hiring of new staff, and our evaluation process. The renumbering is simple editorial upkeep.*

*\*This part assumes the passage of the first reading of the bylaw change to make Personnel an independent committee.*

**6. AMEND TEXT, WITH NUMBERING ADJUSTMENTS**

ARTICLE X- COMMITTEES Section-5 [7] Other Committees

*Rationale for part 6:*

*This is basic editorial upkeep.*