

Northeast Region of NBPC
Virtual Annual Meeting
August 13-14, 2021
“Finding Our Identity in the Least of These”
Matthew 25:40

The first-ever virtual annual meeting of the Northeast Region (NER) of the National Black Presbyterian Caucus (NBPC), was convened on August 13, 2021 via Zoom. This two-day event, fueled by God’s loving grace and the Holy Spirit was hosted by the Philadelphia Chapter under the leadership of the Rev. Dr. Janel Dixon and the Rev. Ethelyn Taylor. This meeting was an inspirational joy to attendees and a glorious honor to El Shaddai!

Two members of the Philadelphia Chapter, Mrs. Rasheeda Hastings and Elder Julie Stephenson, opened the meeting with a creative and lively Meet and Greet. The Rev. Jimmie Hawkins, Director of the Office of Public Witness, using the meeting theme **“Finding Our Identity in the Least of These”** (Matthew 25:40), preached with power and clarity the opening worship sermon. Individuals from New York City, New Jersey, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Connecticut, and Zambia, Africa greeted, shared, and laughed together, closing the evening with an exciting Open Chat. What a joyous time to see, greet, and meet one another! Praise be to God for Zoom!

Interspersed throughout the two-day event, greetings and blessings were declared from the NBPC president, the Presbyterian Historical Society (PHS), and also, presbytery and synod leaders. The Rev. Dr. Charles Heyward, Sr. (NBPC), the Rev. Ruth F. Santana-Grace (Philadelphia Presbytery), the Rev. Dr. Sheldon Sorge (Pittsburgh Presbytery), the Rev. Dr. SanDawna G. Ashley (Synod of the Northeast), the Rev. Susan Wonderland (Synod of the Trinity), and Mr. David Staniunas (PHS), each articulated support and proclaimed God’s blessings on the Northeast Region. Saturday morning opened with an inspiring and uplifting Praise and Worship led by the Rev. Eustacia Marshall, pastor of the newly formed New River Presbyterian Church (Philadelphia). After which, the NER President, the Rev. Maxine E. Jenkins presided over the first-ever virtual NER business meeting. Well-written reports

were received, elections to the office of president and treasurer was successful, as was the adoption of the 2021 NER Bylaws.

The Rev. Gavin Walton, pastor of the Grace Memorial Presbyterian Church (Pittsburgh) led the meeting participants in a time of creative engagement around the theme. Rev. Walton expertly ushered the attendees into the necessity of the NER and individuals to find solidarity with the least of these, using scripture, current events, and his experiences. In five breakout rooms, members were to discern actions to take in order to find solidarity with the least of these. The breakout rooms were facilitated by Elder Jewel McRae (KY), the Rev. Doris Glaspy (NJ), the Rev. Walton (PA), Rev. Paula Cooper (Africa), and the Rev. Bernard Downing (PA). Special thanks to each room leader for sharing her/his God-given gift with loving grace and expertise! After a brief break, speakers from each room shared their actions with the entire assembly. It is the vision of the NER executive committee to use these actions in setting goals for the 2022 year.

The Closing Worship was a call to action, preached by the knowledgeable and gifted Rev. Dr. Rhashell Hunter (former Director of the Racial Equity and Women's Intercultural Ministries PCUSA). What a profound and challenging word Dr. Hunter proclaimed!

What an awesome God we serve! What an awesome meeting! What a joyous time of fellowship! What an awesome time of business! What a wondrous time to praise God! Hallelujah! Praise be to our God, **"Each went out singing and doing what God had called each to do!"**

