

Fathers and brothers,

March 29, 2021

Greetings in the name of the King of kings. On March 22, 2021, the clerk of session of New Hope Orthodox Presbyterian Church received an email containing charges against six of the seven active members of the session. The email was sent to the stated clerk of the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic as well. It is not clear from the email itself what the understanding of those bringing the charges is concerning original jurisdiction. We believe that since both Mr. H. and Mr. VanD. are ministerial members of the Regional Church of the Mid-Atlantic, the court of original jurisdiction for them is the presbytery.

For the other men charged, Messrs. C., K., M., and W., the court of original jurisdiction is the New Hope session. The charges, however, are against all but one active member of the session, which leaves the session unable even to begin the process of handling these charges.

Thus the session requests the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic to assume jurisdiction, at least for the steps required in the Book of Discipline, Chapter III. Should the presbytery determine that a trial is warranted, it could then determine whether to retain jurisdiction and conduct the trial itself, or to augment the session for the purpose of conducting the trial on the sessional level.

We humbly ask Presbytery to deal with these charges expeditiously, perhaps even at the May meeting. We are willing to be corrected and we want presbytery to genuinely consider the charges. Any charges need to be given honest consideration. We offer a few observations on the charges.

These charges are almost verbatim what we charged Mr. R. with, which charges are before the May 2021 presbytery on appeal. Those bringing the charges also request that the right of performing the functions of office be denied each elder and minister. In our view such an action is unwarranted, injurious to the spiritual health of the sheep we shepherd, as well as extremely excessive.

More importantly, however, at least 6 of the total 12 specifications deal with matters for which the New Hope Session has already asked forgiveness, both privately to Mr. and Mrs. R., and publicly before the congregation.

The Session requests the PMA to expedite this matter as judiciously as possible because of the impact these matters have had on the members of Session and their families as they have been absorbed in it for almost a year and a half now. Furthermore, the congregation is weary of these matters. We long to have this matter resolved as quickly as possible so that we might have some peace, and go about the business of fulfilling our calling in shepherding our sheep.

The weight of dealing with these matters over the past year and a half has almost overwhelmed the session and has impacted the congregation as well. The session is eager to get on with the task of shepherding the flock entrusted to its care, and appreciates the assistance of the presbytery in handling this judicial matter.

Your servants in Christ,
The Session of New Hope OPC, Frederick, MD