

**Report of the Administrative Commission  
for Nueva Esperanza Presbyterian Church  
to the Presbytery of St. Augustine  
October 6, 2020**

The Administrative Commission for Iglesia Presbiteriana Nueva Esperanza began its service following a called presbytery meeting on April 6, 2017. Since that time, the AC has worked closely with the congregation in restoring peace, unity and vision for the life and ministry of the church. The congregation and the stated supply pastor have worked faithfully to pursue a new vision. This has involved hard work by many people, and God has been glorified! However, it is with sadness that the AC and a majority of the leadership team have now discerned that it is time to close the church. This report contains a chronology, the presbytery action requested, and the reasons for the request.

**Chronology**

1997 - The presbytery called Rev. Carmelo Mercado to start the New Church Development

1999 - Nueva Esperanza was chartered under the ministry of Rev. Carmelo Mercado

2001 - Under the ministry of Rev. Carmelo Mercado, the congregation moved to Normandy Boulevard property in Jacksonville formerly occupied by Covenant Presbyterian Church

2003 - 2013 - Rev. Jose E. Muñiz-Agrón, was the Designated Pastor (2003) and Pastor (2005)

January 2014 - the congregation relocated to share space and hold worship services at Kirkwood Presbyterian Church due to condition of the Normandy Boulevard property

April 2017 - Administrative Commission elected at called meeting of the presbytery

July 2017 - AC assumed original jurisdiction and began to serve as session

October 2017- presbytery approved AC's request that NEPC be allowed to become a 1001 New Worshipping Community (NWC)

July 2018 - one-year contract signed with coach, Reverend Pablo Rivera, from NWC organization of PC(USA)

October 2019 - one-year contract signed with Reverend Ricardo Green as part-time stated supply pastor

February 2020 - presbytery approved the AC's request that NEPC continue as a congregation (rather than a 1001 New Worshipping Community); steps were to include forming a nominating committee to reestablish the session, training and installing the new session, and then dissolving the AC

## **Action Requested**

The Administrative Commission requests the presbytery to give the AC the following authority.

1. Dissolve the congregation in consultation with the congregation and determine the effective date of dissolution;
2. Receive members to a temporary presbytery roll or assign their membership to other congregations, in consultation with the members;
3. Take actions with respect to the church's personal property and financial accounts, business and corporate transactions, and real property (in coordination with the Coordinating Council and Presbytery Trustees as required);
4. Consult with and/or engage the services of presbytery committees, teams or staff, and incur reasonable and necessary expenses such as for legal, financial, and insurance needs (in coordination with the Coordinating Council and the Presbytery Trustees as required);
5. Provide the registers, session books, and other important records to the presbytery office for safekeeping or forwarding to the Presbyterian Historical Society;  
and
6. Take such other actions as may be reasonable and necessary in connection with the proposed dissolution of the congregation.

## **Reasons for Request**

At the February stated meeting of the Presbytery of St. Augustine, the presbytery approved the AC's proposed plan for reestablishing the session of the Nueva Esperanza congregation. Under this plan, the congregation would elect a nominating committee for the purpose of selecting a slate of elders to be voted on by the congregation. This request was approved unanimously by the presbytery. Unfortunately, the first Sunday that the church building was closed due to the pandemic was the Sunday scheduled for the congregational meeting.

The congregation has been unable to sustain their financial giving this year, so each month checks are written on the existing account without the same amount of pledges added back as revenue. The part-time stated supply pastor's contract is due for renewal in October. The leadership of the church does not see a way to continue to pay the bills and renew the contract. The leadership has worked so faithfully, for so many years, without the consistent leadership of a pastor for most of the last seven years, but that is not sustainable for them. They see this as the time that God is leading them to ask the presbytery to close the church. Therefore, the AC, after consultation with the congregation and its leadership, requests the authority described above to close the church, giving God thanks for its past mission and ministry and the fruit that ministry will continue to bear.

Respectfully,  
Mary L. Brown, Larry Green, and Cathy Sanders