



MINUTES

224TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

**2020
PART I
JOURNAL**

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OFFICERS

Two Hundred and Twenty-Fourth General Assembly (2020)
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Co-Moderators

THE REVEREND GREGORY J. BENTLEY
RULING ELDER ELONA STREET-STEWART

Stated Clerk

THE REVEREND DR. J. HERBERT NELSON, II

Associate Stated Clerks

THE REVEREND TRICIA DYKERS KOENIG
RULING ELDER C. LAURIE GRIFFITH
THE REVEREND JIHYUN OH
RULING ELDER KERRY RICE

Assistant Stated Clerks

CORA BROWN
THE REVEREND TIMOTHY CARGAL
THE REVEREND MOLLY CASTEEL
THE REVEREND LUKE CHOI
DEAMBER CLOPTON
AMANDA CRAFT
DEBORAH DAVIES
RULING ELDER JULIA HENDERSON
RULING ELDER VALERIE IZUMI
RICK JONES
RULING ELDER MARTHA MILLER
DIANE MINTER
THE REVEREND MANUEL SILVA-ESTERRICH
DEACON NANCY TAYLOR
KRIS VALERIUS
RULING ELDER FLOR VÉLEZ DÍAZ
TERESA WAGGENER
RULING ELDER DIANNA WRIGHT

Errata 2018

The following errors in the *Minutes of the 223rd General Assembly (2018)* are called to the attention of users of that volume:

1. Item 13-01, p. 21

~~[Financial Implications: Per Capita Annual—\$75,600. Total—\$151,200]~~ [Financial Implications: Per Capita 2019—\$23,100; 2020—\$23,100. Total—\$46,200]

2. Item 13-01, p. 349

~~[Financial Implications: Per Capita Annual—\$75,600. Total—\$151,200]~~ [Financial Implications: Per Capita 2019—\$23,100; 2020—\$23,100. Total—\$46,200]

3. The 223rd General Assembly (2018) approved changing the name of the “Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns” to “Racial Equity Advocacy Committee.” However, the title, “Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns,” has remained unchanged in the 2018 *Journal* to preserve the historical record.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Changes made by the 224th General Assembly (2020) to overtures, commissioners' resolutions, communications, recommendations, and resolutions of General Assembly entities appear as text enclosed in brackets. Bracketed text that is underlined was added by the assembly to the original text; bracketed text that is stricken was original text deleted by the assembly.

This format serves to ensure a complete historic record of the actions of the General Assembly by noting both the original recommendation sent to the assembly and the revised text approved by the assembly.

SECTION ONE

Proceedings of the 224th General Assembly (2020) Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

The World Wide Web

<http://www.pcusa.org/ga224>

<https://www.pc-biz.org/#/>

Many of the reports of the General Assembly and the minutes can be found on the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Web site: <http://oga.pcusa.org/section/ga/ga/publications/>.

**THE JOURNAL OF THE
224th GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2020)**

Friday, June 19, 2020, 7:00 P.M. EDT

BUSINESS MEETING I

The 224th General Assembly (2020) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was convened via Zoom by Cindy Kohlmann, Co-Moderator, 223rd General Assembly (2018).

LAND RECOGNITION

Co-Moderator Kohlmann introduced a video recognizing the people who were first on the land where we now live. Fern Cloud, moderator of the Native American Consulting Committee, Holly Haile Thompson, Ron McKinney, June Lorenzo, and Anthony Trujillo spoke, representing the North, East, South, and West.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Jacqueline Taylor, general presbyter of the Presbytery of Baltimore, called the assembly to worship.

STATEMENT FROM THE STATED CLERK

Stated Clerk J. Herbert Nelson, II, spoke about the context for this online General Assembly. He said the assembly was not here by accident. When God is calling, we respond, not always knowing where we are going, what we will do when we get there, or what sacrifices we may have to make. He alluded to the fact that the coronavirus pandemic forced the in-person Baltimore assembly to become a virtual meeting. The illnesses and deaths from COVID-19; the deaths of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and Ahmaud Arbery at the hands of police officers; and the recent protests ignited by those deaths have profoundly impacted our lives. Yet, here we are, a predominantly white denomination, that is here for business, not simply to pass overtures but instead to get off of our blessed assurance and do the work that the Lord is calling us to do at this time. God has chosen the PC(USA) to lead the way.

COMMISSIONING OF COMMISSIONERS

Stated Clerk Nelson led the litany commissioning the commissioners. Following a hymn, Presbytery of Baltimore Moderator Guy Moody offered the closing prayer.

WELCOME FROM THE CO-MODERATORS

Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri, Co-Moderator, 223rd General Assembly (2018), welcomed participants and observers to the 224th General Assembly (2020). Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri then introduced videos from the Presbytery of Baltimore Committee on Local Arrangements and from the Co-Moderators of the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

COMMITTEE ON LOCAL ARRANGEMENTS WELCOME VIDEO

Jacqueline Taylor, Guy Moody, José H. Lopez-Chapa, and Carrie Finch-Burris addressed the assembly during the video from the Presbytery of Baltimore Committee on Local Arrangements.

REPORT OF THE CO-MODERATORS

Following a video reflecting on their two years as Co-Moderators of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri and Cindy Kohlmann showed the assembly the beautiful stoles presented to both Co-Moderators by the Presbytery of Baltimore. They then concluded their report with a final, live reflection on their service. They mentioned the protests that have erupted worldwide, calling for justice, an end to state-sanctioned police brutality, and calling Christians to confess that the words of love spoken do not always govern lives. Christian love is only complete when accompanied by confession, by recognizing hurt and trauma that have been caused, and by continuing to be committed to engage in the daily task of being changed, transformed, and re-formed so that love can flow more freely and deeply.

Co-Moderators Cintrón-Olivieri and Kohlmann declared that, out of deep love for the church, they called on the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to confess the continued complicity in the structures that perpetuate racial injustice, an economic system that requires a large percentage of the population to live in poverty so that a few may prosper, and the timidity of faith that

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prefers to measure by numbers of members instead of depth of impact. They also called on the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to confess that the denomination has not had the stamina to back up words, reports, surveys, and studies with the action that those words were meant to lead.

The Co-Moderators called on the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to cast a wider net, to listen to the voices of peoples long silenced in the denomination and the world, and to make space at the communion table for those who are still watching from afar the deliberations of a denomination that is supposed to be their own. They concluded by calling on the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to work for the transformation of this country as a part of this world, so that the kin-dom of God may be fully established here on earth.

VOTING ORIENTATION

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri and Co-Moderator Kohlmann reviewed the electronic voting system in PC-Biz. Advisory delegates and commissioners then voted on two test questions and a final question used to set a quorum: “Are you present and ready to vote?” After the final question, Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri declared 459 commissioners responded as present, establishing a quorum.

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri then reviewed how assembly participants seek recognition to speak and how to submit motions.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE CONSTITUTION VIDEO

Co-Moderator Kohlmann introduced a short video explaining the work of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC) throughout this General Assembly. Alyson Janke, moderator of the ACC, spoke during the video.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Co-Moderator Kohlmann recognized Lindsey Anderson, teaching elder from the Presbytery of Detroit and moderator of the General Assembly Nominating Committee (GANC), who described the process by which the GANC places names in nomination and the procedure for making nominations from the floor. Anderson called attention to Item 00-21, the 2020 nominations from the GANC, and Item 00-26, the nominations by Co-Moderators Cintrón-Olivieri and Kohlmann for service on the GANC.

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS REFERRAL

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri recognized Theresa Denton, ruling elder commissioner from the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee and moderator of the Assembly Committee on Business Referral, for a report.

Moderator Denton explained that Standing Rule C.1.c. states that moderators and vice moderators of the assembly committees, as a group, function as the Assembly Committee on Business Referral. Since Business Referral is the only committee at this online assembly, those commissioners previously appointed by the Co-Moderators of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to lead committees at the in-person assembly in Baltimore constitute the Assembly Committee on Business Referral for the online assembly.

Moderator Denton explained that the first part of Item 01-02 authorizes the assembly to meet electronically. The second part proposes special rules for the electronic meetings. In approving special rules, the provisions of the usual standing rules would be suspended wherever they conflict with the special rules.

Moderator Denton moved Item 01-02, Recommendation 1, for approval. In speaking to the motion, Moderator Denton said the *Book of Order* states the General Assembly must meet this year, and online is the only safe way to do that because of the coronavirus pandemic. However, neither the *Book of Order* nor the Standing Rules authorize meeting electronically. According to *Robert's Rules of Order*, the 225th General Assembly (2022), meeting in person, would need to ratify what the assembly does this year by confirming the decision to proceed with this electronic meeting.

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri recognized Barbara Gaddis, moderator of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA), to give additional comments about Item 01-02, Recommendation 1.

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri stated that Standing Rule L.3 says that “A motion to suspend the standing rules is not debatable and shall require a two-thirds vote of the total enrollment of the commissioners.” Under usual circumstances, suspending a standing rule happens in a situation when the assembly wishes to take one specific action not allowed by the rules, such as considering a proposal that was submitted after the deadline or that changes the order of business. The combination of the high bar of a 2/3 vote and it being non-debatable protects the body from spending time debating an

unusual action that may not have substantial support. However, the assembly is not operating under usual circumstances. Special rules are needed for this situation, and Item 01-02 necessarily goes beyond setting aside one rule to take one action. According to Standing Rule L.2, “The Standing Rules of the General Assembly may be amended by a majority vote of the commissioners present and voting. A motion to amend the rules is debatable.” Item 01 -02 applies only to the 224th General Assembly (2020); it does not change the Standing Rules beyond this year. However, due to the extensive changes that have to be made to operate this year, the nature of this action is akin to an amendment in some ways. Therefore, Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri ruled that this motion will require a 2/3 vote of the total enrollment of the commissioners, but is debatable. The total enrollment of the commissioners is 467, so in order to be approved, this motion will require 313 votes in favor.

The assembly approved Item 01-02, Recommendation 1.

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri recognized Moderator Denton who stated that Item 01-02, Recommendation 2, establishes the first set of rules that will govern how this assembly is conducted. In a typical General Assembly this step would not be needed, but the online format means this assembly cannot follow all the Standing Rules. The proposed special rules of order in Item 01-02, Recommendation 2, have been drawn up for this online assembly, and the recommendation also declares that the usual Standing Rules will be suspended wherever they diverge. There will be another, shorter set of special rules considered after this item. The Assembly Committee on Business Referral approved recommending this set at the meeting in early May, and the second set at the committee meeting on June 18. Moderator Denton moved approval of Item 01-02, Recommendation 2.

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri recognized Barbara Gaddis, moderator of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA), to give background information about Item 01 -02, Recommendation 2. Moderator Gaddis said the special rules proposed address two basic concerns: first, what is needed to hold an electronic meeting that maintains the full rights of members—to attend and hear what is happening; to see, hear, and understand motions on the floor; to seek recognition to speak; to make motions; and to vote. The second concern was to account for other discrepancies between the standing rules and what could reasonably be accomplished online. People are becoming accustomed to Zoom meetings, but also learning the limits for sitting in front of a screen and the different energy required to engage in this way. COGA realized that it simply was not feasible to replicate the schedule and experience planned for Baltimore. Furthermore, the time between knowing we needed to shift plans and tonight has not allowed much time for staff and other leaders to rethink almost every detail of a large and complicated endeavor. That is why this assembly is not set up for committees, other than the Assembly Committee on Business Referral. The capacity to set up committees in the time allotted seemed unlikely. Similarly, assembly participants’ capacity to endure long hours in front of a screen and then process the items that came out of committee deliberations seemed unlikely as well in the space of the week participants had set aside for the assembly.

Moderator Gaddis also addressed one other aspect of Item 01-02, Recommendation 2, that had drawn concern, the disallowing of commissioners’ resolutions and new business. Moderator Gaddis said this rule is not much different from what the regular Standing Rules would provide if there were no committees to process such business. Neither commissioners’ resolutions nor new business can come directly to plenary in a traditional General Assembly. There is, however, a mechanism to introduce new business that a substantial number of commissioners favor discussing. This mechanism is described in the Frequently Asked Questions section of the General Assembly website; or commissioners may ask a parliamentarian through the help function in PC-Biz.

A motion to amend Item 01-02, Recommendation 2, was defeated. The assembly then approved Item 01-02, Recommendation 2.

Co-Moderator Kohlmann recognized Moderator Denton, who stated that Item 01-07 contained supplemental special rules representing recommendations made by the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly since the first meeting of the Assembly Committee on Business Referral on May 5.

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri stated this motion also required 2/3 of the total enrollment of the commissioners for approval.

The assembly approved Item 01-07.

Co-Moderator Kohlmann recognized Moderator Denton who moved Item 01-03, the proposed docket.

The assembly approved Item 01-03.

Co-Moderator Kohlmann recognized Joseph Chu, teaching elder commissioner from Eastern Korean American Presbytery and vice moderator of the Assembly Committee on Business Referral, who stated that Item 01-09 consisted of

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additional referrals to be considered by the 224th General Assembly (2020). These business items were not available to the Assembly Committee on Business Referral at its first meeting in May.

There are two recommendations in this item:

- Recommendation 1 lists six items of business. Five are routine matters that missed the reporting deadline stipulated in Standing Rules A.1.b. and A.2.a., were misplaced, or were only available recently, such as the report of the Co-Moderators of the 223rd General Assembly (2018). One, Item 00-29, is the result of continued discernment and deliberation by the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly as they listened to the concerns of commissioners and others in the church hoping that this assembly would be able to address the issues of white supremacy and racial justice that are at the forefront of our national consciousness now. Item 00-29 gives the assembly a place to begin in lifting up a Presbyterian voice on what may perhaps be a turning point for our nation. In addition, Item 00-29 seeks to honor the faithful work of all the councils and committees that submitted reports and overtures to this assembly, only to have them deferred due to the coronavirus pandemic. It offers ways that issues raised by items not acted on this year might still be addressed between now and the 225th General Assembly (2022). Because these items are late business, admitting them into consideration requires suspending the rules.

- Recommendation 2 is of a different nature. This is a resolution that the Assembly Committee on Business Referral drafted itself out of a desire that this assembly speak to the church about the coronavirus pandemic the world is experiencing. Because both the special and the standing rules restrict new business, admitting this item also requires a 2/3 vote to suspend the rules.

Vice-Moderator Chu moved to suspend the rules and to refer the items listed in Item 01-09 for consideration at this General Assembly.

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri stated the motion would not approve the items themselves, only admit them as business to be considered at the 224th General Assembly (2020).

The assembly approved Item 01-09.

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri recognized Teaching Elder Commissioner Talitha Amadeo Aho from the Presbytery of San Francisco who moved that Jana Childers, dean of the University of Redlands Graduate School of Theology, be seated as a corresponding member to the 224th General Assembly (2020). Stated Clerk Nelson spoke to the motion, stating the University of Redlands currently has no standing that would allow Childers to be seated. Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri then ruled the motion out of order.

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri recognized Vice-Moderator Chu who stated that Item 01-04 contained proposed referrals for the list of business available to the Assembly Committee on Business Referral at the time of its May meeting. Due to the limitations of the electronic format, at the recommendation of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, the Assembly Committee on Business Referral recommends that the assembly refer to the 225th General Assembly (2022) much of the business submitted to the 224th General Assembly (2020). Vice-Moderator Chu explained there are three categories of business in Item 01-04:

- Items to be received by the 224th General Assembly (2020) for information. These require no action. They are numbered “00-INFO” in PC-Biz.
- Items to be considered in the plenary meetings of the 224th General Assembly (2020), numbered “00” in PC-Biz.
- Items to be referred for action by the 225th General Assembly (2022). These are numbered “02” in PC-Biz.

Vice-Moderator Chu moved Item 01-04.

Co-Moderator Kohlmann recognized Stephanie Anthony, Vice Moderator of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, to offer background information about Item 01-04. Vice-Moderator Anthony said COGA used a definition of “critical business” to determine its recommendation for which items needed to be docketed for the 224th General Assembly (2020). COGA understood “critical” to mean necessary for the continuity of governance and mission. COGA used a set of questions to evaluate each item of business and place it in the three categories outlined in Item 01-04. COGA then recommended this categorization of items to the Assembly Committee on Business Referral.

Co-Moderator Kohlmann announced that discussion of Item 01-04 would be suspended to deal with a process matter, and she turned the moderator duties over to Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri.

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri recognized Teaching Elder Commissioner Sue Collier from the Presbytery of Homestead who challenged Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri's ruling that the previous motion was out of order. Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri again called on Stated Clerk Nelson, who reiterated his previous points. After some discussion, Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri called for a vote on the question: "Shall the decision of the moderator be sustained?" The assembly voted to sustain the ruling.

Co-Moderator Kohlmann called for a ten-minute break.

After the break, Co-Moderator Kohlmann returned to Item 01-04.

The assembly approved two amendments to Item 01-04 in separate actions: Item 02-095, the Native American Coordinating Council Report, and Item 02-096, the Native American Church Property Report, were removed from the list of items to be referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022) in order to consider them at the 224th General Assembly (2020).

Co-Moderator Kohlmann recognized Theresa Denton, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Business Referral, who made a motion to move the election of the Co-Moderators to 7:00 p.m. EDT on Saturday, June 20. The assembly approved this motion.

Co-Moderator Kohlmann continued to moderate discussion on Item 01-04. After the assembly approved calling the question, the assembly then approved Item 01-04 as amended.

Co-Moderator Kohlmann recognized Vice-Moderator Chu who reported that the Assembly Committee on Business Referral had developed a consent agenda for the consideration of the assembly. The consent agenda consists of items that have been referred for action by this assembly and that the committee believes to be of a noncontroversial nature not requiring debate. The consent agenda is Item 01-11 in PC-Biz. Between now and Plenary Business Meeting 2, which begins at 1:00 p.m. EDT on Friday, June 26, Vice-Moderator Chu said commissioners should look over this consent agenda. If there are items commissioners want to discuss in plenary, they will have the opportunity to remove items from the consent agenda and add them back into the list of business for debate and individual action. One commissioner can remove any item—no vote is necessary. Items remaining on the consent agenda will then be approved automatically as a group. [For the remainder of the report, see p. 10.]

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri recognized Stated Clerk Nelson for announcements. Stated Clerk Nelson reminded assembly participants about the Poor People's Campaign online Assembly and Moral March, Saturday, June 20, at 10:00 a.m. EDT; the Hands and Feet Community Engagement event, Youth Rising, at 3:00 p.m. EDT on Tuesday, June 23; and the Bible study with Mary and James Taneti at 7:00 p.m. or 10:00 p.m. EDT on Wednesday, June 24.

CLOSING PRAYER

Stated Clerk Nelson recognized Young Adult Advisory Delegate Christopher "CJ" Morgan from the Presbytery of New Hope who offered the closing prayer for this session of the General Assembly.

RECESS

The assembly recessed at 11:28 p.m. EDT.

Saturday, June 20, 2020, 7:00 P.M. EDT

BUSINESS MEETING IA

The 224th General Assembly (2020) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was reconvened via Zoom by Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri, Co-Moderator, 223rd General Assembly (2018).

OPENING PRAYER

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri recognized Diane Moffett, Executive Director and President of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, who reflected on this moment in the assembly, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and the nation. Executive Director Moffett then opened the assembly in prayer.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS, REMINDERS, AND UPDATES

Cindy Kohlmann, Co-Moderator, 223rd General Assembly (2018), asked the assembly to remember this is not a normal General Assembly, nor is it the assembly the denomination had hoped for in Baltimore. While assembly participants are not building community by being physically together in Baltimore, that does not mean the assembly is not a community. Co-Moderator Kohlmann encouraged participants to reach out to each other, learn about each other, support each other, and encourage each other throughout the assembly. Co-Moderator Kohlmann thanked participants for their patience, kindness, and service to the church.

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri stated that members of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly and the General Assembly Committee on Representation were monitoring PC-Que to make sure inclusive practices were followed.

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri reviewed processes and guidelines for PC-Biz, Zoom, interpretation services, seeking recognition to speak, the mic queuing system, and using the assembly help desk.

TEST QUESTIONS/QUORUM

Co-Moderator Kohlmann reviewed the electronic voting system in PC-Biz. Advisory delegates and commissioners then voted on one test question used to set a quorum: "Are you present and ready to vote?"

Co-Moderator Kohlmann explained that pauses and silences during plenaries are often necessary to allow interpretation and captioning to occur.

Co-Moderator Kohlmann stated that motions to reconsider business must be made no later than the next day after an item of business has come before the assembly. Therefore, a motion to reconsider Item 01-04 is in order for this plenary. However, the discussion and vote on the motion to reconsider does not need to occur tonight. If such a motion is made and seconded, discussion of the motion will be the first item of business during Plenary 2 on Friday June 26.

A motion to reconsider Item 01-04 was made and seconded. (See p. 9.)

ELECTION OF THE MODERATOR OF THE 224TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2020)

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri called for the election of the Co-Moderators of the 224th General Assembly (2020) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), as required by *Book of Order*, G-3.0104, and Standing Rule Section H.

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri recognized Stephanie Anthony, vice-moderator of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA), who reported that, pursuant to Standing Rule H.1.c.(3), members of COGA have examined the expenses of the candidates for Co-Moderator and found them in order.

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri recognized Stated Clerk J. Herbert Nelson, II, who described the procedure for electing the Co-Moderators.

Co-Moderator Kohlmann announced that they had been advised of the intent to nominate three teams of candidates for the position of Co-Moderator.

Commissioner Yvette Grant, ruling elder from the Presbytery of St. Augustine, nominated Co-Moderator candidates Ruling Elder Commissioner Moon Lee from the Presbytery of the Northwest Coast and Teaching Elder Commissioner Alexandra Hedrick from the Presbytery of St. Augustine.

Commissioner Pam McShane, teaching elder from the Presbytery of Philadelphia, nominated Co-Moderator candidates Minister of the Word and Sacrament Gregory J. Bentley from the Presbytery of North Alabama and Ruling Elder Elona Street-Stewart from the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area.

Commissioner Rafael Viana, teaching elder from the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta, nominated Co-Moderator candidates Ruling Elder Arthur King Fullerton from the Presbytery of Albany and Minister of the Word and Sacrament Marie Mainard O'Connell from the Presbytery of Arkansas.

There were no nominations from the floor.

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri stated that the Co-Moderator candidates would address the General Assembly for five minutes for each pair. The order was determined by a drawing held on June 18: Marie Mainard O’Connell and Arthur Fullerton; Elona Street-Stewart and Gregory Bentley; and Alexandra Hedrick and Moon Lee.

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri called on Stated Clerk Nelson who explained the procedures for the forty-five-minute question and answer period. Stated Clerk Nelson said each team selected the order in which they would answer each question. Elona Street-Stewart would answer first, then Gregory Bentley. Marie Mainard O’Connell would speak first, then Arthur Fullerton. Alexandra Hedrick would speak first, then Moon Lee. Hedrick and Lee would alternate so Moon Lee would speak first for the second question.

Co-Moderator Kohlmann recognized Teaching Elder Commissioner Joseph Medearis from the Presbytery of St. Augustine to ask the first question: How do you envision yourself being an agent for change in our denomination? What are three things that you would advocate to change immediately?

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri recognized Gracyn Ashmore, young adult advisory delegate from the Presbytery of St. Andrew, to ask the next question: I want to know how we as a church need to come together and unite all the people with everything that is going on in our nation right now and how we make everybody feel included and feel the love of God.

Co-Moderator Kohlmann recognized Ruling Elder Commissioner Lloyd Higgins from the Presbytery of Philadelphia to ask the next question: The burning issues of inequality and injustice for African Americans are sweeping our nation and exposing our denomination’s caution; this is troubling and unacceptable. ... Can you share your vision towards providing human and financial resources at the congregational level to expand the work reflected in Galatians, Chapter 3, Verse 28.

Co-Moderator Kohlmann said most video questions submitted in advance came from white commissioners and advisory delegates. Co-Moderator Kohlmann asked people of color to submit questions through PC-Biz for the Co-Moderator candidates. These questions would be considered after the next video question.

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri recognized Crystal Brantley, ruling elder commissioner from the Presbytery of Grace, to ask the next question: In light of the unrest currently in our nation, what do you believe the role of the Presbyterian church is in regards to racism? And, how should local churches address the question of white supremacy, considering the vast majority of our members are white?

Co-Moderator Kohlmann recognized Mission Advisory Delegate Martin Han to ask a “live” question: So far, we’ve been discussing about domestic issues, and I’d like to turn our attention to the international as the center of gravity of the world. Christianity has been shifted to the Global South and since mission is not unilateral but bilateral and multilateral, how can we learn from our sister churches around the world in order to solve our domestic issues?

ELECTION

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri recognized Stated Clerk Nelson for a statement about the voting procedure.

Co-Moderator Cintrón-Olivieri led the assembly in prayer in Spanish and Co-Moderator Kohlman led the assembly in prayer in English for wisdom and discernment.

Co-Moderator Kohlmann polled advisory delegates and then asked commissioners to vote.

On the first ballot, Moon Lee and Alexandra Hedrick received 65 votes; Elona Street-Stewart and Gregory Bentley received 304 votes; and Marie Mainard O’Connell and Arthur Fullerton received 90 votes.

Elona Street-Stewart and Gregory Bentley were elected Co-Moderators of the 224th General Assembly (2020) on the first ballot.

Co-Moderator Kohlmann declared that Elona Street-Stewart and Gregory Bentley were duly elected to the office of Moderator of the 224th General Assembly (2020).

Elona Street-Stewart and Gregory Bentley spoke briefly to the assembly.

INSTALLATION OF NEWLY ELECTED CO-MODERATORS

Retiring Co-Moderators Cintrón-Olivieri and Kohlmann, along with Stated Clerk Nelson, installed Elona Street- Stewart and Gregory Bentley to the office of Co-Moderator of the 224th General Assembly (2020). Oscar McCloud and Madison McKinney led the assembly in prayer for the new Co-Moderators.

Stated Clerk Nelson thanked Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri and Cindy Kohlmann for their service as Co-Moderators and held up the commemorative gift each will receive at a later date.

Stated Clerk Nelson also held up the stoles and the cross the newly elected Co-Moderators will receive at a later date.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Stated Clerk Nelson reminded assembly participants about the Hands and Feet Community Engagement event, Youth Rising, at 3:00 p.m. EDT on Tuesday, June 23; and the Bible study with Mary and James Taneti at 7:00 p.m. or 10:00 p.m. EDT on Wednesday June 24.

CLOSING PRAYER

Stated Clerk Nelson offered the closing prayer for this session of the General Assembly.

RECESS

The assembly recessed at 9:14 p.m. EDT.

Friday, June 26, 2020, 11:00 a.m. EDT

Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri and Cindy Kohlmann, Co-Moderators of the 223rd General Assembly (2018), led the assembly in worship.

Friday, June 26, 2020, 1:00 p.m. EDT

BUSINESS MEETING II

CONVENING AND OPENING DEVOTION

The 224th General Assembly (2020) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was reconvened by Co-Moderator Elona Street-Stewart, who then recognized the Reverend Eber Candelario Olivieri, from Corcovada, Puerto Rico, for the opening devotion and prayer.

Co-Moderators Elona Street-Stewart and Gregory Bentley brought greetings and thanksgiving to assembly participants and read short passages from scripture.

Co-Moderator Street-Stewart thanked all who participated in the events since the last plenary. More than 600 Presbyterians participated in the Poor People's Campaign Assembly and Mass March on Saturday. Several hundred were part of the Youth Rising Coalition event on Tuesday. Four hundred and seventy General Assembly participants signed up for the Bible study and small group discussions held Wednesday evening, and more than 2,000 viewed the Bible study streamed on the GA224 website and on Facebook. Co-Moderator Street-Stewart reminded people that all the events were recorded and could be viewed on the GA224 website or the Spirit of GA Facebook page.

ORIENTATION

Co-Moderator Street-Stewart reported that the tech team added a new feature to the speaker recognition system over the last week. In Session Sync in PC-Biz, participants would see a new graphic that displays the item of business under consideration as well as the number of people in line to speak. The numbers will update automatically. If the assembly moves to consider another item of business, the queue will reflect the current item. For example, if participants had planned to speak on a main

motion but the assembly is now on an amendment, the queue will show speakers for the amendment only. Places in line to discuss the main motion would be retained.

Co-Moderator Street-Stewart reminded the assembly that members of the General Assembly Committee on Representation and the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly are observing the mic queuing system to ensure the process is fair and equitable.

Co-Moderator Street-Stewart thanked assembly participants for their patience with the pauses between speakers. The pauses are necessary to allow for captioning and interpretation so all may receive the critical information needed to fully participate.

QUORUM ESTABLISHED

Co-Moderator Street-Stewart briefly reviewed the electronic voting system in PC-Biz. Advisory delegates and commissioners then voted on two test questions. After the final question, Co-Moderator Street-Stewart declared a quorum present.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES FOR PLENARY I AND 1A

Co-Moderator Street-Stewart recognized Theresa Denton, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Business Referral and ruling elder commissioner from the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee to bring an information item regarding assembly minutes.

Moderator Denton directed the assembly to 01-INFO in PC-Biz, an information item which states that, in accordance with the Standing Rules, the minutes of the 224th General Assembly (2020) for Friday June 19 and Saturday June 20 had been reviewed and found to be in order.

APPROVAL OF ORDER OF BUSINESS

Moderator Denton then presented the proposed order of business for the rest of the assembly, Item 01-12. In speaking to the item, Moderator Denton said the proposed order of business consisted of the items on the agenda as of the close of the meeting last Friday night and the items already reported as removed from the consent agenda. It is required that the assembly act on budget matters after other items have been concluded in order to take into consideration the financial implications of any actions the assembly takes. This proposed order of business assumes that any other items removed from the consent agenda, added due to reconsideration of the referrals in Item 01-04, or accepted as new business, will be scheduled Saturday afternoon, June 27, just prior to the budget items. This schedule would help ensure that resource persons would be available to answer questions or clarify information. The plan was to continue according to this order, knowing that some items would take more or less time than allotted. Depending on the progress of business, the assembly may need to add time extending into the evening hours, and adding extra time would be the only reason the assembly would need to take another vote. Moderator Denton moved Item 01-12.

The assembly approved Item 01-12 by unanimous consent.

Co-Moderator Street-Stewart reviewed a new workflow graphic that would aid the assembly in tracking the items of business under consideration as well as the estimated time needed to act on remaining business. The new graphic was displayed periodically in the Zoom meeting.

RECONSIDERATION OF ITEM 01-04

Co-Moderator Street-Stewart recognized Ruling Elder Commissioner Megan Acedo from the Presbytery of Philadelphia to call up her motion from Plenary 1A to reconsider Item 01-04. Because the motion had already been made and seconded, it did not require a second during this plenary.

Co-Moderator Street-Stewart recognized Stated Clerk J. Herbert Nelson, II, to comment on the motion. Stated Clerk Nelson reminded the assembly that the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA), in making its recommendations to the Assembly Committee on Business Referral, took into account the circumstances of this virtual assembly, including the limited time and the inability to have committees sort out complicated issues prior to final action. COGA devised the following questions and applied them to all items of business:

- Is it so time-sensitive that the assembly needs to address it now? Would not addressing it have negative legal or polity implications?

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- If the assembly does not address it, will it have a negative impact on the church financially?
- If the assembly does not address it, will it leave critically important leadership positions vacant?

Stated Clerk Nelson said this analysis led to COGA's original recommendations on which items should be heard by the 224th General Assembly (2020) and which items should be referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). During Plenary 1 on Friday, the assembly removed two items from the list of those referred to 2022 and added them to the business for consideration at this assembly. Both items dealt with Native American ministries.

Stated Clerk Nelson also reminded the assembly that the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC) had stated that approving any amendments to the *Book of Order* at this time would raise complex constitutional issues since the actions of this assembly must be ratified by the next in-person assembly, and any such proposed amendments would have an uncertain status in the meantime.

After discussion, Co-Moderator Street-Stewart asked the assembly to vote on the motion to reconsider Item 01-04. The assembly disapproved the motion.

CONSENT AGENDA

Co-Moderator Street-Stewart recognized Theresa Denton, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Business Referral, to report on Item 01-11, the consent agenda. Moderator Denton reported that assembly participants had already removed the following items: 00-02, 00-04, 00-06, 00-08, 00-15, 00-22, and 00-24.

No other items of business were removed from the consent agenda.

Co-Moderator Street-Stewart declared the items listed in 01-11, except 02, 04, 06, 08, 15, 22, and 24, approved by unanimous consent.

This concluded action on all items from the Assembly Committee on Business Referral. A summary of the actions is as follows:

Assembly Committee on Business Referral

Consent Agenda item indicated by an asterisk.

There are no items with financial implications in this report.

Plenary Action

Item 01-01. *Assembly Committee on Business Referral May 5 Agenda.*

Not for assembly action.

Item 01-02. *Regarding On-Line Assembly and Approval of Special Rules of Order and Suspension of Any Standing Rules That Interfere with Them—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.*

Recommendation 1. Approved. [See pp. 3, 299.]

Recommendation 2. Approved. [See pp. 3, 299.]

Item 01-03. *Proposed Docket.*

Approved. [See pp. 3, 299.]

Item 01-04. *Referrals.*

Approved as amended. [See pp. 5, 300–308.]

Deleted two items in Recommendation 3 to “Refer ... for action by the 225th General Assembly (2022)” and move them to Recommendation 2 to “Consider the following items in a plenary meeting of the 224th General Assembly (2020)”: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and a strike-through.]

~~“[02-095 Native American Coordinating Council Report—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board~~

~~“[02-096 Native American Church Property Report—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board]”~~

Item 01-05. *On Responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic.*

Moved to 00 Plenary, as Item 00-30. [See pp. 17, 18, 27, 102–104.]

*Item 01-06. *Synod Minutes Review Report.*

[Approved with exceptions and with comments. See pp. 309–12.]

Item 01-07. *Approval of Additional Special Rules of Order and Suspend Any Standing Rules That Interfere with Them—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.*

Approved. [See pp. 3, 312–13.]

Item 01-08. *Authorization of Subcommittees Regarding Minutes, Protests, Dissents, Docket; Business Referral Moderator/Vice-Moderator to Recommend Adjustments to Docket and Debate Limits.*

Not for assembly action. [See p. 313.]

Item 01-09. *Suspension of Standing Rules in Order to Accept Late Business.*

Approved. [See pp. 4, 30, 314.]

Item 01-10. *Assembly Committee on Business Referrals June 18 Agenda.*

Not for assembly action. [See p. 314.]

Item 01-11. *Approval of Consent Agenda.*

Approved as amended. [See pp. 10, 314–15.]

[Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and a strike-through.]

“1. 00-01 Confirmation of David Dobson, President of Presbyterian Publishing Corporation

~~“[2. 00-02 Approval of the List of Related Schools, Colleges, and Universities—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board]~~

~~“3. 00-03 Recommendation to Approve National Certifying Bodies to the 224th General Assembly (2020)—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly~~

~~“[4. 00-04 Approval of Jihyun Oh as Associate Stated Clerk—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly~~

~~[5. 00-06 On Amending Standing Rule B.3.a. Regarding Corresponding Members—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly~~

~~“[6. 00-08 Report and Recommendation from the Administrative Commission Formed by the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to Address Disorder in the Synod of the Covenant]~~

~~“7. 00-12 Confirm the Reelection of James G. Rissler to Office of President and Chief Executive Officer of the PC(USA) Investment and Loan Program, Inc.—From the Board of Directors of the PC(USA) Investment and Loan Program, Inc.~~

“8. 00-13 Confirm the Election of Katherine M. Lueckert as President of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation—From the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation

“9. 00-14 Confirm the Election of Jihyun Oh as Stated Clerk Designee Director of New Covenant Trust Co., N.A.—From the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation

~~**“10. 00-15 Churches to Invite to Send Ecumenical Advisory Delegates to the 225th General Assembly (2022) —From the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations]**~~

“11. 00-16 Report of the Eighth Round of Dialogue between Reformed Churches in the U.S. and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops—From the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations

“12. 00-17 Amendments to the Board of Pensions Articles of Incorporation

“13. 00-18 Confirmation of the Persons to Serve on the Presbyterian Historical Society Board—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly

~~**“14. 00-22 Joint Recommendation Regarding the Apportionment Rate for 2022 —From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board**~~

~~**“15. 00-24 Joint Report from the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation Board, and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board to the 224th General Assembly (2020)]**~~

“16. 00-26 Co-Moderator Nominations to the General Assembly Nominating Committee

“17. 01-06 Synod Minutes”

Item 01-12. Schedule.

Approved. [See pp. 9, 315–17.]

BUDGET ORIENTATION

Co-Moderator Street-Stewart recognized Kathy Lueckert, President of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A), A Corporation; Kerry Rice, Deputy Stated Clerk in the Office of the General Assembly; and Barry Creech, Director of Policy, Administration, and Board Support at the Presbyterian Mission Agency, for a budget orientation. Lueckert spoke to the impact of COVID-19 on the 2021 and 2022 budgets. Creech and Rice spoke to the financial implications of some pending items of business and how that cost would be added to the mission and per capita budgets. Creech directed assembly participants to the budget items in PC-Biz, Item 00-24 and Item 00-22 as well as other supporting documents.

CRITICAL BUSINESS: ITEM 00-25

Co-Moderator Street-Stewart introduced Item 00-25, Confirming the Class of 2024 of the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., Board of Directors. The item was moved and seconded.

After discussion, the assembly approved Item 00-25.

DISSENT

The following commissioner filed a dissent from the action taken on Item 00 -25, Plenary 2: Eric Beck, Presbytery of The Pacific.

CRITICAL BUSINESS: ITEM 00-04

Co-Moderator Street-Stewart introduced Item 00-04, Approval of Jihyun Oh as Associate Stated Clerk. The item was moved and seconded.

The assembly approved Item 00-04.

CRITICAL BUSINESS: ITEM 00-28

Co-Moderator Street-Stewart introduced Item 00-28, Nominations to the 11th Assembly of the World Council of Churches. The item was moved and seconded.

The assembly approved Item 00-28.

CRITICAL BUSINESS: ITEM 00-15

Co-Moderator Street-Stewart introduced Item 00-15, Churches to Invite to Send Ecumenical Advisory Delegates to the 225th General Assembly (2022). The item was moved and seconded.

The assembly approved Item 00-15.

CRITICAL BUSINESS: ITEM 00-19

Co-Moderator Street-Stewart introduced Item 00-19, On Establishing a General Assembly Administrative Commission on Mid Councils. The item was moved and seconded.

Co-Moderator Street-Stewart recognized Corresponding Member Nancy Talbot, stated clerk of the Synod of the Northeast, to give background information on the item. Stated Clerk Talbot stated that, for the past three years, representatives of the seven presbyteries in New Jersey have worked together to consider the needs and goals of those presbyteries, the possibility of redrawing presbytery boundaries, and the possibility of creating new presbyteries with a new vision of life together as missional and spiritual communities. While this work is not yet completed, it should be finished by early 2021. The presbyteries' need at that time will be for swift approval by the Synod of the Northeast and the General Assembly so they can begin life together in their new presbytery configuration for which they have worked so hard. To wait until June 2022 for assembly approval would most likely dissipate their enthusiasm, energy, and ability to focus on their task as well as drain the spirit needed for the long haul in this work. Since the writing of this overture, a church within the Synod of the Northeast has requested to relocate from one presbytery to another. This has already been approved by both presbyteries and is ready to move forward. In addition, an overture before this assembly that is being referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022) concerns the merger of the congregations and minister members of the Presbytery of Sacramento and the Presbytery of Stockton to form a new presbytery. This overture was sent forward by the Synod of the Pacific. There is no reason to wait for two years when the need for this change is now. Given the current financial and resource pressures but also the desire of so many to create new ways of being and living together, there are likely to be more changes from mid councils that should have the opportunity to blossom and not have to wait until the 225th General Assembly (2022) for approval.

The assembly approved Item 00-19.

CLOSING

Co-Moderator Street-Stewart stated that Plenary 3 would begin at 4:00 p.m. EDT. During the break, testimonial videos submitted by General Assembly participants and others from across the church were shown via the Zoom feed.

Co-Moderator Street-Stewart recognized Missionary Advisory Delegate Esther Shin, who offered the closing prayer.

RECESS

The assembly recessed at 2:54 p.m. EDT.

Friday, June 26, 2020, 4:00 p.m. EDT

BUSINESS MEETING III

CONVENING AND OPENING DEVOTION

The 224th General Assembly (2020) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was reconvened by Co-Moderator Gregory Bentley via Zoom.

Co-Moderator Bentley recognized Army Reserve Chaplain Y. Eunice Yang for the opening devotion. Yang introduced a video from the Presbyterian Historical Society honoring four of the General Assembly Moderators who had passed away since the 223rd General Assembly (2018): The Reverend Charles A. Hammond (192nd General Assembly [1980] of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.); William H. Wilson (197th General Assembly [1985]); Marj Carpenter (207th General Assembly [1995]); and Freda A. Gardner (211th General Assembly [1999]).

Co-Moderator Bentley led the assembly in prayer and said the church grieves the loss of many saints since the last assembly and invited participants to read the Necrology report found in the Resources section of PC-Biz for a full list of ministers of the Word and Sacrament who had died since the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

QUORUM ESTABLISHED

Co-Moderator Bentley led the assembly through a vote on one test question to establish a quorum. A quorum was declared.

CRITICAL BUSINESS: ITEM 00-29

Co-Moderator Bentley introduced Item 00-29, On the Church in This Moment in History, and said the item came from the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly in response to the current civil unrest in our society and the world. It urges all Presbyterians into a deeper commitment in building God's kin-dom. The item was moved and seconded.

Co-Moderator Bentley recognized Stephanie Anthony, vice moderator of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA), to provide background information on the item. Vice Moderator Anthony said that during COGA's process of determining critical business for this assembly, it received feedback from people around the church lamenting the loss of some of the justice-oriented business usually addressed at General Assemblies. In addition, the world was changing dramatically as we experienced the rising pandemic and high-profile acts of violent racism. So, COGA developed this new item of business. It certainly cannot accomplish all that might have been done or said through a traditional assembly, but it is something that might help the assembly speak into this moment. COGA offered it as a way the assembly can call individual Presbyterians, congregations, presbyteries, and synods into the justice and social witness work that we have been learning about during the special events around this assembly and those that have been referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). COGA offers it to give the assembly a suggested way to empower and encourage the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency to address referred items of business that might already be covered by social witness mandates from previous assemblies.

Ruling Elder Commissioner Mark Eakin from the Presbytery of National Capital moved to amend Item 00-29 to add language related to the Poor People's Campaign, "Open Letter to Our Nation's Lawmakers on Systemic Racism." Co-Moderator Bentley recognized Stated Clerk Nelson who spoke about his involvement and the PC(USA)'s involvement with the Poor People's Campaign. Co-Moderator Bentley then called for a ten-minute break so that assembly participants could read the letter, linked in PC-Biz.

After the assembly reconvened, the assembly approved the amendment.

Ruling Elder Commissioner Megan Acedo from the Presbytery of Philadelphia offered a substitute motion for Item 00-29, which was seconded. Co-Moderator Bentley called for a five-minute break so the assembly could read the substitute motion.

After the break, the assembly declared perfected the main motion as amended and then approved two amendments to the substitute motion and declared it perfected. The assembly then voted to make the substitute motion, as amended, the main motion. The assembly then approved this motion:

Plenary Action

Substitute Motion: Item 00-29

[which was perfected with two amendments and approved as the main motion]

[Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added is shown with brackets and with an underline; amendments made to the substitute motion in plenary are shaded in gray.]

“On the Church in This Moment in History|—Responding to the Sin of Racism and a Call to Action

**“[Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt;
you shall raise up the foundations of many generations;
you shall be called the repairer of the breach,
the restorer of streets to live in.’
-Isaiah 58:12 (NRSV)”**

“[This 224th General Assembly (2020) of the PC(USA) declares that Black lives matter; that our country’s most important institutions have been built to sustain white privilege, to protect white lives and white property at the expense of our siblings of color; and that the church, through ignorance, denial, and in some cases deliberate action, has participated in this injustice. We have been slow to face the reality of systemic racism. We have been slow to acknowledge the pain of our fellow Presbyterians, of our fellow Christians, of our fellow citizens, and of those who have come to America for a better life, whose value has been judged by the color of their skin. We pledge to join hands and hearts with our BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) siblings to actively confront and dismantle systemic racism in our church and in society at large, and to work for a more just, merciful, and peaceful country that allows all of God’s children to flourish.]

“The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020)

“1. [Call] [Urge] all Presbyterians to hear and heed the Gospel imperative to love God, neighbor, and self by living out a deeper commitment to active participation with Jesus Christ in the work of building God’s kingdom through

“a. Personal and corporate repentance, spiritual renewal, and devotion to the Great Ends of the Church[§][.] [Repenting, both personally and corporately, for the role we as individuals and as a predominantly White-dominated church played in history and continue to perpetuate today, even if unknowingly, in systemic racism and White Supremacy, especially in terms of our own local silence, silencing those who attempt to speak or act, and our failure to act regarding police brutality, voter suppression, educational and healthcare inequality, and other acts of systemic racism on federal, state, and local levels.]

“b. Listening and responding to the voices of peoples long silenced through programs such as Hands and Feet: Presbyterians Engaging in Communities, the Poor People’s Campaign[§][, and Freedom Rising, approved by the 222nd General Assembly (2016).]

“c. Energetic, intelligent, imaginative, and loving involvement in the [intertwined] Matthew 25 [Initiative and its intertwined] foci: building congregational vitality, dismantling structural racism, and eradicating systemic poverty.

“2. Direct the Co-Moderators of the 224th General Assembly (2020) to facilitate a time of silent vigil of 8 minutes and 46 seconds as a symbolic representation in solidarity with our BIPOC siblings, and of corporate lament and personal introspection of our complicity in perpetuating systemic racism and racial injustice before the adjourning of the 224th General Assembly (2020).]

“~~2.~~ 3.] Direct the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency to review all items of business referred [from the 224th General Assembly (2020)] to the 225th General Assembly (2022) to consider prayerfully whether the recommendations could be enacted under current social witness policy or the authority of agencies and their boards to make programmatic decisions between assemblies.

“~~3.] [4.] [Call] Encourage congregations, sessions, presbyteries, and synods to review items of business referred [from the 224th General Assembly (2020)] to the 225th General Assembly (2022) and prayerfully consider the call of God to work and witness for the goals and values expressed therein[, in particular the following items as starting points for developing plans for action in dismantling structural racism at every level of the PC(USA):~~

“[a. 02-020, ‘Disparities Experienced by Black Women and Girls Task Force Report’

“[b. 02-034-INFO, ‘Special Committee on Racism, Truth, and Reconciliation Progress Report with Recommendation’

“[c. 02-041, ‘Lazarus Is Walking in Baltimore—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy’

“[d. 02-084, ‘A Resolution Addressing the Lack of Installed Pastoral Leadership in People of Color Congregations in the PC(USA) - From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee’

“[e. 02-100, ‘Approval of Part 1 of the 2021–2022 Mission Work Plan for the Presbyterian Mission Agency—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board,’ especially the sections on dismantling structural racism

“5. 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.’ This work can be done now at all levels, even in

advance of the 225th General Assembly (2022), at which time that General Assembly can act on setting a constitutional requirement to do so if it chooses.

“[6. Honoring the spirit of Item 02-034-INFO—the Progress Report from the Special Committee on Racism, Truth, and Reconciliation and its conclusions regarding the need to address ‘institutional racism and oppression within the church’ and ‘to call the church to do the hard work of repair necessary for reconciliation,’ we direct the Special Committee on Racism, Truth, and Reconciliation to prepare for the 225th General Assembly (2022) a report deconstructing white privilege within our own denomination’s (and predecessor denominations’) history of involvement in the colonization, enslavement, oppression, and genocide of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), including theological support and benefits to our institutions. The report should also include a study of our denomination’s history of prophetic witness, resistance and abolition, and make recommendations towards proposed amends, reparations, and reconciliation.

“[7. Thank the Stated Clerk for adding his signature to the Open Letter of the Poor People’s campaign and direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to commend the use of the learning resources and the Open Letter of the Poor People’s campaign as educational tools for congregations.

“[8. Commend to the entirety of the PC(USA), its members, congregations, presbyteries, synods, and the General Assembly entities the poem included in the rationale and retyped here for reading, reflection, meditation.

“[A knee on a neck
laying bare for all to see
the evil of
callous
soulless
entitled
power
choking the life from
God’s beloved
just because.

“[We know what must change.
Will we, church?

“[We have written many
true, significant,
sometimes even sincere
words.

“[We have confessed:
Belhar, C’67, Barmen...

“[Enough words?
Never enough witness.

“[We know we must change.
Will we, church?

“[Kairos.

“[We believe that the work of attending to the pain, suffering, and long-standing oppression of our BIPOC siblings in Christ is central to our work of proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ. When Black Americans are killed at twice the rate of white Americans (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/investigations/police-shootings-database/>) we have much to lament. We, in particular white people, and as a predominantly white denomination, must confess our complicity in perpetuating systems of oppression against our BIPOC siblings. The church must be the first place seeking racial justice and reconciliation, the dismantling of structural racism, and the healing of our marginalized communities. It has, unfortunately, not often been so. We must have our own denominational and congregational houses in order. We must dare to be an image of hope for those around us.

“[While we recognize and honor the work towards justice that has been happening and continues at every level of the PC(USA), we also name that in this time it is not enough. We must become actively antiracist in our theology,

policy, and praxis. When our colleagues, siblings, and neighbors protest in the streets to say that being Black should never be an excuse to be targeted and killed, when so many stand in solidarity to say #BlackLivesMatter, and when our own communities are weighed down in grief and anger, it is the time to stand alongside our BIPOC siblings in voice and in action.

“[bell hooks, an American author and social activist says this, ‘Love is an action, never simply a feeling.’ If we claim to love our neighbor, especially our BIPOC neighbors, we are called to action. We have said a lot and not done enough. Acknowledging the grief of our siblings in Christ and naming that the church has a primary calling to be repairers of the breach means nothing without moving towards action. We cannot wait until the 225th General Assembly (2022) to begin again to take action.]”

Co-Moderator Bentley recognized Joseph Chu, teaching elder commissioner from the Eastern Korean American Presbytery and vice moderator of the Assembly Committee on Business Referral, who moved that the assembly recess until 7:30 p.m. EDT.

The assembly approved the motion to recess, and Co-Moderator Bentley declared the recess at 6:35 p.m. EDT and closed with prayer.

CRITICAL BUSINESS: ITEM 00-30

The assembly reconvened at 7:30 p.m. EDT.

Co-Moderator Bentley introduced Item 00-30. It was moved and seconded.

Co-Moderator Bentley recognized Joseph Chu, teaching elder commissioner from the Eastern Korean American Presbytery and vice moderator of the Assembly Committee on Business Referral, to speak to Item 00-30, On Responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Vice Moderator Chu said the committee officially met twice in preparation for the assembly, first at Leader Briefing I on May 1, and second at Leader Briefing II on June 18. In between the two meetings, several members of the committee felt moved by the Holy Spirit to make a statement regarding the COVID-19 crisis that has engulfed the planet, and which has pushed the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to hold its first-ever entirely virtual General Assembly. The committee members met through Zoom and exchanged many ideas through email on what the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) should say, through the voice of the 224th General Assembly (2020), to Presbyterians and to our ecumenical partners in the United States and around the world. Item 00-30 is the culmination of that process.

The assembly approved Item 00-30. [This item was reconsidered. See p. 18.]

CRITICAL BUSINESS: ITEM 00-95

Co-Moderator Bentley introduced Item 00-95, the Native American Coordinating Council Report. The item was moved and seconded. Co-Moderator Bentley recognized June Lorenzo from the Native American Coordinating Council to speak to the item. Lorenzo said the seeds for the recommendations contained in the report were planted at least twenty years ago when a General Assembly task force presented a report to the 212th General Assembly (2000) entitled, “Mission and Ministry with Native American Peoples: A Historical Survey of the Last Three Centuries.” A key finding of that report was that for “at least 200 years of the Presbyterian relationship with Native American peoples,” the church was “active in the formation and implementation of government policies affecting Native American peoples.” Major Indian policy in the United States has focused on the land rights of Native peoples; thus, Presbyterian work among Native Americans was closely tied to Native American land. At the 222nd General Assembly (2016), the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) joined other major denominations in repudiating the doctrine of discovery. The 223rd General Assembly (2018) received a report on the doctrine and its history. Another overture in 2018 from the Presbytery of Yukon called for an expanded response beyond repudiation. This led to creation of the Native American Coordinating Council, which was given a twofold purpose: (1) to encourage, monitor, and share ongoing responses to the Stated Clerk’s call to action on the repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery—at all levels of the church, and (2) to make recommendations to this General Assembly (2020) on how the national church, mid councils, and congregations can support Native Americans in their ongoing efforts for sovereignty and fundamental human rights. Lorenzo concluded by saying the PC(USA) is becoming a church that participates in an examination of how to undo much of the harm done for over two centuries by its complicity in racist doctrines and policies that have done great harm to Indigenous peoples.

After discussion, the assembly approved Item 00-95.

CRITICAL BUSINESS: ITEM 00-96

Co-Moderator Bentley introduced Item 00-96, the Native American Church Property Report. The item was moved and seconded.

Co-Moderator Bentley recognized the Reverend Rashell Hunter, director of Racial Equity and Women's Intercultural Ministries in the Presbyterian Mission Agency; the Reverend Irvin Porter, associate for Native American Intercultural Congregational Support in Racial Equity and Women's Intercultural Ministries; and Steve Hirsh, coordinator for Native American Church Property in Racial Equity and Women's Intercultural Ministries to speak to the item. Rev. Hunter said the recommendations of the Native American Church Property Report call upon mid councils and congregations with Native American churches and chapels in their bounds to develop a process for repair of church properties. It also calls upon mid councils with funds that they hold to improve Native American churches and chapels to engage in funds development and encourage support for the Native American Church Property Fund established by the Presbyterian Foundation in 2019. Rev. Porter said the 2018 General Assembly action on Item 10-01 called for an inventory of Native American church properties to ascertain their condition and report those findings to this General Assembly. There are 92 Native churches and chapels in the United States. Hirsch said the report reflects repairs and estimates for 86 of 92 properties. Of the properties he visited, there were some common repairs needs including roofing, painting, window and door repair, electrical panels, heating and cooling, and structure and foundation. The report focuses on immediate concerns, including health and safety issues that are evident in each church inventoried.

After discussion, the assembly approved Item 00-96.

RECONSIDERATION OF ITEM 00-30

Co-Moderator Bentley recognized Ruling Elder Commissioner Deborah Mayhew from the Presbytery of Los Ranchos who moved to reconsider Item 00-30. The motion was seconded. The assembly approved reconsideration. [For original discussion, see p. 17.]

After approving two amendments, the assembly approved Item 00-30 as amended.

Plenary Action Item 00-30

Amend the second bulleted item as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“• We seek compassion and justice for the most vulnerable among us, especially those who have been further marginalized by the pandemic—older persons, ~~[African Americans and other persons of color, Latinx persons, Native Americans, Asian Americans]~~ [BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color), the LGBTQIA+ community,] immigrant communities, impoverished and working poor persons, homeless persons and those for whom home offers no safety, those who are ill, afflicted, or challenged in body, mind, and spirit, [persons living with HIV,] and all whose lives are threatened because of harmful social structures and discrimination, which have been made even more apparent during the COVID-19 outbreak. We repent of the role we have played in these injustices.”

CLOSING

Co-Moderator Bentley asked commissioners who know they want to submit motions for the business scheduled to come before the assembly tomorrow to consider submitting those motions tonight in PC-Biz to save time tomorrow.

Co-Moderator Bentley also said he appreciated the concerns voiced by some about social distancing practices and wearing masks among the assembly participants gathered at the Presbyterian Center. He said proper precautions were being followed as much as possible, and the Co-Moderators were wearing their masks when not addressing the assembly.

Co-Moderator Bentley recognized the following ecumenical advisory delegates who offered the closing prayer: the Reverend Valente Tseco, Presbyterian Church of Mozambique; the Reverend Rosangela Jarjour, Fellowship of Middle East Evangelical Churches; and the Reverend Dr. Gordon Cowans, United Church of Jamaica and Cayman Islands.

RECESS

The assembly recessed at 9:18 p.m. EDT.

Saturday, June 27, 2020, 11:00 a.m. EDT

BUSINESS MEETING IV

CONVENING AND OPENING PRAYER

The 224th General Assembly (2020) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was reconvened by Co-Moderator Elona Street-Stewart via Zoom.

Co-Moderator Street-Stewart recognized Theological Student Advisory Delegate Christópher (Ófe) Abreu Rosario from Columbia Theological Seminary who opened the plenary with prayer.

QUORUM ESTABLISHED

Co-Moderator Street-Stewart led the assembly through a vote on one test question to establish a quorum. A quorum was declared.

ORDER OF THE DAY: STATED CLERK ELECTION

Co-Moderator Street-Stewart appointed Ruling Elder Kerry Rice, Associate Stated Clerk, to serve as the temporary Stated Clerk during the Stated Clerk election.

Co-Moderator Street-Stewart recognized Wilson Kennedy, moderator of the Stated Clerk Nomination Committee. Kennedy directed the assembly to the committee's process report in PC-Biz, Item 00-23.

Moderator Kennedy placed in nomination the Reverend Dr. J. Herbert Nelson, II, as Stated Clerk of the General Assembly. Kennedy thanked the members and staff of the nomination committee and then spoke to Stated Clerk Nelson's call to the office of Stated Clerk and to his accomplishments during his first term.

Co-Moderator Street-Stewart recognized Stated Clerk Nelson, who spoke about his vision for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Co-Moderator Street-Stewart stated that the Standing Rules allow commissioners to ask questions of the Stated Clerk Nomination Committee and the Stated Clerk before the vote. Six commissioners posed questions to the nomination committee for fifteen minutes and then five commissioners asked questions of the Stated Clerk for fifteen minutes.

Co-Moderator Street-Stewart then called for the vote. Because Stated Clerk Nelson was the only candidate, assembly participants affirmed his election [Item 00-23] by voting yes.

Co-Moderator Street-Stewart declared J. Herbert Nelson, II, duly elected to the office of Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

Stated Clerk Nelson addressed the assembly.

STATED CLERK INSTALLATION

Co-Moderator Street-Stewart and three members of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) led the installation: incoming COGA Moderator Stephanie Anthony, incoming COGA Vice Moderator Eliana Maxim, and Moderator of the Stated Clerk Nomination Committee Wilson Kennedy. Stated Clerk Nelson was accompanied by his wife, the Reverend Gail Porter Nelson, daughter Alycia Nelson, and mother-in-law Alice Porter. The Reverend Gail Porter Nelson offered a prayer during the installation.

Co-Moderator Street-Stewart declared J. Herbert Nelson, II, commissioned to serve as Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Co-Moderator Street-Stewart thanked and dismissed the Stated Clerk Nomination Committee.

Co-Moderator Street-Stewart introduced Item 00-05, On Amending the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and its Procedures. The item was moved and seconded.

After discussion and the approval of four amendments, the assembly approved Item 00-05 as amended.

Plenary Action

Item 00-05

Amend Item 00-05 as follows: [Text to be deleted is show with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

(Amendments in section titled Event Rules for Working with Minors and Vulnerable Adults)

“2. Two-adult rule: Two non-related adults must always be present in groups of Minors or Vulnerable Adults ~~children and youth~~, for both in person and online gatherings. The only exception is if an emergency situation deems this not immediately possible. All child and youth workers and volunteers must be a minimum of four years older than the age group they lead or supervise.

“3. Ratios: The adult to child ratio for all child-related events/activities is 2:10 for both in person and online gatherings. The adult to youth ratio for all youth-related events/activities is 2:17 for both in person and online gatherings. There shall also be one adult of each gender when there is one or more ~~Minors~~ minors of each gender in a group. Only in emergency situations may the ratios and gender diversity be compromised.”

(Amendments in Policy Rationale section, bullet point three)

“• The larger Church suffers with the victim/survivor and his or her family when abuse and neglect occurs. The Church is ~~crippled by~~ unable to do the full work of Christ, due to the hurt, pain, and distrust that accompanies abuse. Not only does the Church lose its credibility at all levels, it also suffers considerable financial loss and loss of integrity. More importantly, in instances of child, youth, or vulnerable adult abuse within the Church, there is immeasurable spiritual, psychological, emotional, and physical harm perpetrated that woefully ~~cripples~~ hinders God’s call on the Church.

(Amendment in Social Media Communications and Social Networking Code of Conduct sections)

“Social Media Communications

“Persons who shall create public pages on behalf of General Assembly Entity programs are responsible to monitor communications and to assure that employees and volunteers do not have private (and possibly inappropriate) conversations with ~~Minors children and youth~~ and Vulnerable Adults.

“Persons having Facebook privileges on behalf of the General Assembly Entity shall treat unsolicited communication or ‘friending’ from ~~Minors children and youth~~ and Vulnerable Adults under age as an unauthorized text message. No reply may be given except to indicate by a posting that accepting a ‘friend’ invitation by under-age ~~Minors children~~ and Vulnerable Adults is a violation of the code of conduct.

“If a ~~Minors children and youth~~ and Vulnerable Adults reveals abuse or inappropriate interactions with an adult, the person must report this information in the manner of any ‘suspected abuse.’

“When using Facebook to communicate with ~~Minors children and youth~~ and Vulnerable Adults, the authorized minister shall inform parents/guardians of each ~~Minor child and youth~~ and Vulnerable Adult that the latter is communicating with the person via Facebook, providing the parent/guardian the opportunity to disapprove or to participate in a group.

“Social Networking Code of Conduct

“Each person who leads using the resources of social media shall apply this Social Networking Code of Conduct:

“• Prohibit comments that are, or could be construed by any observer, to be harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating.

- “• Prohibit sexually oriented conversations or discussions about sexual activities.
 - “• Prohibit private messages between employees and volunteers and ***Minors children and youth [and Vulnerable Adults]***.
 - “• Prohibit posting inappropriate pictures (for example, sexually suggestive, exploitive, or voyeuristic) or inappropriate comments on pictures.
 - “• Provide ***Minors children and youth [and Vulnerable Adults]***, and their parents with this Social Networking Code of Conduct.
 - “• Encourage parents to play a role in monitoring their ***Minors’ children’s and youth’s [and Vulnerable Adults’]*** interactions with employees and volunteers.
 - “• Continuously remind ***Minors children and youth [and Vulnerable Adults]*** how to interact appropriately through social networking sites.
 - “• Deny participation by individuals who repeatedly violate the code of conduct.
- “At the institution of the use of social media, the authorized minister shall present this Social Networking Code of Conduct to ***Minors children and youth [and Vulnerable Adults]*** and parents/guardians.”

Co-Moderator Street-Stewart recognized Theresa Denton, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Business Referral, who said the remaining items of business in Plenary 4 would be moved to Plenary 5, which would convene at 1:45 p.m. EDT.

RECESS

The assembly recessed at 1:00 p.m. EDT.

Saturday, June 27, 2020, 1:45 p.m. EDT

BUSINESS MEETING V

CONVENING AND PRAYER

The 224th General Assembly (2020) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was reconvened by Co-Moderator Elona Street-Stewart via Zoom.

Co-Moderator Street-Stewart recognized Karla Dias, ruling elder from the Presbytery of Northern New England, who offered the opening devotion and prayer.

Co-Moderator Street-Stewart said the assembly yesterday paid tribute to four former General Assembly Moderators who entered the Church triumphant since the last General Assembly. Today, the assembly honored the Reverend Dr. Joan Salmon Campbell who served as Moderator of the 201st General Assembly (1989). Co-Moderator Street-Stewart recognized Diane Moffett, Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, who spoke about the life and service of Rev. Salmon Campbell and introduced a tribute video.

QUORUM ESTABLISHED

Co-Moderator Street-Stewart led the assembly through a vote on one test question to establish a quorum. A quorum was declared.

CRITICAL BUSINESS: ITEM 00-07

Co-Moderator Street-Stewart introduced Item 00-07, Revision of the Bylaws of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) A Corporation. The item was moved and seconded.

After discussion and the moving and seconding of one amendment, Co-Moderator Street-Stewart divided the amendment for voting. The portion of the motion that would amend Section 2.01 failed. The portion of the motion that would amend Section 2.13 was approved.

The assembly approved Item 00-07 as amended.

Plenary Action

Item 00-07

Amend Item 00-05, Section 2.13, as follows: [Text to be deleted is show with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“Section 2.13. Authority to Delegate Powers to Other Body. The Board of Directors shall have the authority to appoint a specific person or persons, agency, or entity other than ~~of~~ the Board of Directors to act on its behalf as an ‘other body,’ as such term is defined and used in 15 Pa. C.S. §§5103, and 5721, and to assume such governing body powers and responsibilities, and such other duties and responsibilities, as may be delegated to such other body by resolution of the Board of Directors, provided that such delegation shall be consistent with the directions from time to time of the General Assembly. ***An other body appointed by the Board of Directors under this section is not a Committee of the Board of Directors as described in Section 2.11.*** Such delegation of governing body powers and responsibilities shall not be exclusive ***or permanent, [and shall be for a specified period of time.]*** ~~[and the]~~ ***[The]*** Board of Directors shall continue to have the authority and power to act in lieu of such other body or to remove or limit the powers and authority granted to such other body, as necessary to fulfill the Board of Director’s fiduciary duties to the Corporation ...”

CRITICAL BUSINESS: ITEM 00-21

Co-Moderator Street-Stewart introduced Item 00-21, General Assembly Nominating Committee 2020 Nominations. Co-Moderator Street-Stewart stated that according to a special rule the assembly approved governing its business, “uncontested nominations shall be elected by unanimous consent when the second report of the General Assembly Nominating Committee is given.” Because there were no contested nominations, and this is the second report of the nominating committee, Moderator Street-Stewart declared Item 00-21 approved by unanimous consent.

CO-MODERATORS’ STATEMENT ON SAN FRANCISCO THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY DISPUTE

Co-Moderator Gregory Bentley spoke about the discord among assembly participants related to the relationship that the University of Redlands Graduate School of Theology/San Francisco Theological Seminary (SFTS) has to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Co-Moderator Bentley said this is an important issue, and the Co-Moderators do not want to diminish it in any way. However, it is not possible for this assembly to settle the dispute between the University of Redlands/SFTS and the Committee on Theological Education. There is not a clear item of business that allows the assembly to address the core questions in the dispute; nor is there adequate capacity among commissioners to this assembly to fully discuss, understand, and make a decision. There are many issues the church is facing today, and the Co-Moderators do not think this assembly wants to be defined by this conflict in this time and place, when so much of the world is in pain and yearning for a word of hope. Further, as is public knowledge, there is a remedial case before the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission that is attempting to adjudicate the very questions at the heart of the disagreement. Therefore, the Co-Moderators have committed themselves to call both parties together as soon as possible after the assembly to continue conversations in earnest in an attempt to settle the dispute. If need be, the Co-Moderators will engage a mediator to assist. The Co-Moderators trust that all parties will engage this process in good faith and enter with no preconditions. The Co-Moderators do this in the interest of justice, reconciliation, and the work everyone is called to do together at this assembly.

CRITICAL BUSINESS: ITEM 00-11

Co-Moderator Bentley introduced Item 00-11, Confirmation of the Election of the President of McCormick Theological Seminary. The item was moved and seconded.

The assembly approved Item 00-11.

Co-Moderator Bentley recognized the newly confirmed president of McCormick Theological Seminary, David Crawford, who spoke to the assembly.

CRITICAL BUSINESS: ITEM 00-09

Co-Moderator Bentley introduced Item 00-09, the Approval of New Trustees Elected by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Theological Institutions. The item was moved and seconded.

The assembly approved Item 00-09.

CRITICAL BUSINESS: ITEM 00-10

Co-Moderator Bentley introduced Item 00-10, to Grant Permission to Theological Institutions to Celebrate the Lord's Supper. The item was moved and seconded.

Co-Moderator Bentley ruled a motion made by Teaching Elder Commissioner Howard Boswell of the Presbytery of Shenandoah out of order. The motion proposed adding San Francisco Theological Seminary (SFTS) at the University of Redlands to the list of theological institutions granted permission to celebrate the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Co-Moderator Bentley said the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) does not currently have authority over SFTS at the University of Redlands so is not in a position to grant permission to celebrate communion at that institution.

The assembly approved Item 00-10.

CRITICAL BUSINESS: ITEM 00-02

Co-Moderator Bentley introduced Item 00-02, Approval of the List of Related Schools, Colleges and Universities. The item was moved and seconded.

The assembly approved Item 00-02.

Co-Moderator Bentley recognized the following ecumenical advisory delegates who led the assembly in prayer: the Reverend Dora Arce Valentin, Presbyterian Reformed Church in Cuba; the Reverend James Bhagwan, Pacific Conferences Churches; and the Reverend Isaac Kalonji, Presbyterian Church of Kinshasa.

CRITICAL BUSINESS: ITEM 00-06

Co-Moderator Bentley introduced Item 00-06, Amending Standing Rule B.3.a. Regarding Corresponding Members. The item was moved and seconded.

The assembly approved one amendment and then approved Item 00-06 as amended.

Plenary Action**Item 00-06**

Amend Item 00-06 as follows: [Text to be deleted is show with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

(Amendment to a.)

“... all members of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution; the executives [~~or, when there is no executive, the stated clerks~~] of synods; one person designated by each entity reporting directly to the General Assembly...”

CRITICAL BUSINESS: ITEM 00-08

Co-Moderator Bentley introduced Item 00-08, Report and Recommendation from the Administrative Commission formed by the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to Address Disorder in the Synod of the Covenant. The item was moved and seconded.

Co-Moderator Bentley said that Standing Rule K.1.d stated that “Special committees or commissions shall normally complete their work within two years. Requests for an extension of work shall be referred to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. An extension shall require a two-thirds vote of the assembly.”

After discussion, the assembly approved Item 00-08.

CRITICAL BUSINESS: ITEM 00-20

Co-Moderator Bentley introduced Item 00-20, Extending Special Committees, Teams, and Task Forces Until Dismissal by the 225th General Assembly (2022). Co-Moderator Bentley noted there were no financial implications associated with this item. The item was moved and seconded. Co-Moderator Bentley said approval required 2/3 of commissioners voting.

After the defeat of two proposed amendments, the assembly approved Item 00-20.

CLOSING

Co-Moderator Bentley said the assembly would be in recess until 4:30 p.m. EDT after a prayer by Young Adult Advisory Delegate Aliahliz Martínez Pérez.

RECESS

The assembly recessed at 4:05 p.m. EDT.

Saturday, June 27, 2020, 4:30 p.m. EDT

BUSINESS MEETING VI

CONVENING AND OPENING PRAYER

The 224th General Assembly (2020) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was reconvened by Co-Moderator Elona Street-Stewart via Zoom.

Co-Moderator Street-Stewart recognized ecumenical partner, Bishop Staccato Powell from the AME Zion Church and Central Committee member of the World Council of Churches, who opened the plenary with a devotion and prayer.

QUORUM ESTABLISHED

Co-Moderator Street-Stewart led the assembly through a vote on one test question to establish a quorum. A quorum was declared.

CONSIDERATION OF NEW BUSINESS

Co-Moderator Street-Stewart recognized Parliamentarian Tricia Dykers-Koenig who explained the process for considering new business. Commissioners must submit the new business through PC-Biz. Before any new business can be considered, however, the assembly must vote to suspend the Standing Rules, which requires 326 votes (two-thirds of enrolled commissioners).

No new business was brought forward.

BUDGET ORIENTATION

Co-Moderator Street-Stewart recognized Bridget-Anne Hampden and Chris Mason, co-chairs of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation Board of Directors, to speak about the Administrative Services Group and its proposed budget; Diane Moffett, Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA), and PMA Board Chair Joseph Morrow to speak about PMA, the Matthew 25 initiative, and the proposed Mission Budget; and Eliana Maxim, vice moderator elect of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA), and COGA Vice Moderator Stephanie Anthony to speak about the Office of the General Assembly and the proposed Per Capita Budget.

CRITICAL BUSINESS: ITEM 00-27

Co-Moderator Street-Stewart introduced Item 00-27, Approval of the John C. Lord and Edmund P. Dwight Fund. The item was moved and seconded.

After discussion, the assembly approved Item 00-27.

CRITICAL BUSINESS: ITEM 00-24

Co-Moderator Street-Stewart introduced Item 00-24, Joint Report from the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, Board, and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board to the 224th General Assembly (2020). The item was moved and seconded.

During discussion, the Zoom connection for the meeting was momentarily lost. It was completely restored in three minutes.

After disapproving two amendments and approving one, the assembly approved Item 00-24 as amended.

Plenary Action**Item 00-24**

Amend Item 00-24, Recommendation 2, as follows: [Text to be deleted is show with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“2. Authorize the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation Board, and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board [~~to amend the various approved budgets as appropriate to address ongoing financial implications of the COVID-19 pandemic and other situations that might emerge. Any amendments to the~~ [to spend amounts in excess of, or less than, amounts budgeted for a specific line item as a result of emerging situations. Any variance from the approved] budgets shall be reported to the 225th General Assembly (2022).”

CRITICAL BUSINESS: ITEM 00-22

Co-Moderator Street-Stewart introduced Item 00-22, Joint Recommendation regarding the Apportionment Rate for 2021–2022 from the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. The item was moved and seconded.

After discussion, the assembly approved Item 00-22.

This concluded action on all items for Plenary. A summary of the actions is as follows:

Plenary

Consent Agenda items indicated by an asterisk.

Recommendation with financial implications indicated with a \$ sign.

I. Plenary Action

Item 00-01. *Confirmation of Election of David Dobson as President/Publisher of PPC.

Approved. (See pp. 11, 35.)

Item 00-02. *Approval of the List of Related Schools, Colleges, and Universities—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.*

Approved. (See pp. 23, 35–36.)

Item 00-03. *Recommendation to Approve National Certifying Bodies to the 224th General Assembly (2020)—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

Approved. (See pp. 11, 36.)

Item 00-04. *Approval of Jihyun Oh as Associate Stated Clerk—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.*

Approved. (See pp. 12–13, 44.)

Item 00-05. *On Amending the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and Its Procedures—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.*

Approved with amendment. (See pp. 20–21, 45–55.)

Item 00-06. *On Amending Standing Rule B.3.a. Regarding Corresponding Members—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.*

Approved with amendment. (See pp. 23, 55–56.)

Item 00-07. *Revision of the Bylaws of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation—From the Administrative Services Group.*

Approved with amendment. (See pp. 21–22, 56–68.)

Item 00-08. *Report and Recommendation from the Administrative Commission Formed by the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to Address Disorder in the Synod of the Covenant.*

Approved. (See pp. 23, 68.)

Item 00-09. *Approve New Trustees Elected by Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Theological Institutions—From the Committee on Theological Education.*

Approved. (See pp. 22, 74–75.)

Item 00-10. *Grant Permission to Theological Institutions to Celebrate the Lord’s Supper—From the Committee on Theological Education.*

Approved. (See pp. 23, 30, 76.)

Item 00-11. *Request to Docket an Item of Business for Consideration by the 224th General Assembly (2020) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.): Confirmation of Election of President of McCormick Theological Seminary—From the Committee on Theological Education.*

Approved. (See pp. 22, 76.)

Item 00-12. *Confirm Reelection of James G. Rissler to Office of President and Chief Executive Officer of the PC(USA) Investment and Loan Program, Inc.—From the Board of Directors of the PC(USA) Investment and Loan Program, Inc.

Approved. (See pp. 11, 77.)

Item 00-13. *Confirmation of Election of Kathy M. Lueckert as President of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation—From the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation.

Approved. (See pp. 12, 78.)

Item 00-14. *Confirm the Election of Jihyun Oh as Stated Clerk Designee Director of New Covenant Trust Co., N.A.—From the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation.

Approved. (See pp. 12, 79.)

Item 00-15. *Churches to Invite to Send Ecumenical Advisory Delegates to the 225th General Assembly (2022)—From the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations.*

Approved. (See pp. 13, 79.)

Item 00-16. *Report of the Eighth Round of Dialogue between Reformed Churches in the U.S. and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops—From the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations.

Approved. (See pp. 12, 79–80.)

Item 00-17. *Amendments to the Board of Pensions Articles of Incorporation—From the Board of Pensions.

Approved. (See pp. 12, 81.)

Item 00-18. *Confirmation of the Persons to Serve on the Presbyterian Historical Society Board—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

Approved. (See pp. 12, 81–82.)

Item 00-19. *On Establishing a General Assembly Administrative Commission on Mid Councils—From the Synod of the Northeast.*

Approved. (See pp. 13, 82.)

[Financial Implications: Per Capita (2021) \$11,860 (2022) \$15,610. Total—\$27,470]

Item 00-20. *On Extending Special Committees, Teams, and Task Forces—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.*

Approved. (See pp. 23, 85–86.)

Item 00-21. *General Assembly Nominating Committee Report of Nomination Recommendations*

Approved. (See pp. 22, 86–95.)

Item 00-22. *Joint Recommendation Regarding the Apportionment Rate for 2022—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.*

Approved. (See pp. 25, 95–96.)

Item 00-23. *Nomination of the Reverend Dr. J. Herbert Nelson to Serve a Four-Year Term as Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the PC(USA)—From the Stated Clerk Nomination Committee.*

Approved. (See pp. 19, 96.)

Item 00-24. *Joint Report from the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation Board, and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board to the 224th General Assembly (2020).*

Approved as amended. (See pp. 24–25, 96–97.)

Item 00-25. *Confirm Class of 2024 of PILP Board of Directors—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.*

Approved. (See pp. 12, 97.)

Item 00-26. *Co-Moderator Nominations for General Assembly Nominating Committee.

Approved. (See pp. 12, 97–98.)

Item 00-27. *Regarding the Allocation of Annual Income Realized in 2019 and Projected for 2020 from the John C. Lord and Edmund P. Dwight Funds.*

Approved. (See pp. 24, 98.)

Item 00-28. *Nominations to the 11th Assembly of the World Council of Churches—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.*

Approved. (See pp. 13, 99.)

Item 00-29. *On the Church in This Moment in History—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.*

Approved as amended. (See pp. 14–17, 99–101.)

Item 00-30. *On Responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic.*

Approved as amended. (See pp. 17, 18, 102–04.)

Item 00-95. *Native American Coordinating Council Report—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.*

Approved. (See pp. 17, 104–05.)

Item 00-96. *Native American Church Property Report—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.*

Approved. (See pp. 17–18, 111–12.)

Item 00-97

A Statement in Honor of Vicente Guna.

Approved. (See pp. 31, 122.)

II. Committee Final Action and Report to Assembly

Item 00-Info-01. *General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission Self-Study 2012–2019.* [See pp. 122–148.]

Item 00-Info-02. *General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission.* [See pp. 148–189.]

Item 00-Info-03. *Report of Changes to the Appendices of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Manual of Operations.* [See pp. 189–194.]

Item 00-Info-04. *The Book of Confessions and the Doctrine of Discovery.* [See pp. 195–197.]

Item 00-Info-05. *Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc., Report to the 224th General Assembly (2020).* [See pp. 197–201.]

Item 00-Info-06. *Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation Report.* [See pp. 202–05.]

Item 00-Info-07. *Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC) Agency Summary.* [See pp. 205–08.]

Item 00-Info-08. *Agency Summary—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.* [See pp. 208–12.]

Item 00-Info-09. *Presbyterian Publishing Corporation Agency Summary–2020.* [See pp. 213–18.]

Item 00-Info-10. *General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations Agency Summary and Narrative Report.* [See pp. 219–20.]

Item 00-Info-11. *General Assembly Nominating Committee Agency Summary.* [See pp. 221–22.]

Item 00-Info-12. *A Report on the Six Agencies’ Employment—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation.* [See pp. 223–25.]

Item 00-Info-13. *Report on the Six Agencies Supplier Diversity—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation.* [See pp. 225–28.]

Item 00-Info-14. *2018 Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action Workforce Analysis—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency.* [See p. 228.]

Item 00-Info-15. *Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) Agency Summary.* [See pp. 228–35.]

Item 00-Info-16. *Report of the Presbyterian Mission Agency on Current Task Forces, Work Groups, and Ad Hoc Committees—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency.* [See pp. 235–37.]

Item 00-Info-17. *General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) Agency Summary.* [See pp. 237–39.]

Item 00-Info-18. *Report of Benefits Plan Amendments—From the Board of Pensions.* [See pp. 240–41.]

Item 00-Info-19. *Self-Study Report—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.* [See pp. 242–49.]

Item 00-Info-20. *Mid Councils’ Statements of Compliance with the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission Decisions.* [See pp. 249–52.]

Item 00-Info-21. *New Covenant Trust Company, N.A., a Subsidiary of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation.* [See p. 252.]

Item 00-Info-22. *Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation Agency Summary.* [See pp. 253–56.]

Item 00-Info-23. *Committee on Theological Education (COTE) Agency Summary.* [See pp. 256–64.]

Item 00-Info-24. *Christian Churches Together (CCT) 2019 Yearly Ministry Report.* [See pp. 264–66.]

Item 00-Info-25. *Brief Report from the World Council of Churches (WCC) to the 224th General Assembly (2020) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).* [See pp. 266–69.]

Item 00-Info-26. *Report of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) 2018–2019.* [See pp. 269–76.]

Item 00-Info-27. *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Assessment 2020 From the Washington Consulting Group.* [See pp. 276–85.]

Item 00-Info-28. *PC(USA) Audit.* [See pp. 285.]

Item 00-Info-29. *Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC) 2020 Agency Summary.* [See pp. 286–87]

Item 00-Info-30. *Concurrence of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly with the Co-Moderators of the 223rd General Assembly in Designating Persons to Represent Board of PC(USA), A Corporation, as Corresponding Members of 224th General Assembly (2020).* [See p. 287.]

Item 00-Info-31. *The Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.): Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Assessment Results.* [See p. 287.]

Item 00-Info-32. *Co-Moderators' Report to the 224th General Assembly (2020)* [See pp. 288–94.]

Item 00-Info-33. *MEMORANDUM* [See pp. 294–98.]

Item 00-Info-34. *Vote of Presbyteries on Proposed Amendments.* [See p. 298.]

RECONSIDERATION OF NEW BUSINESS

Co-Moderator Street-Stewart said technical issues prevented commissioners from bringing forward new business earlier in the plenary. Co-Moderator Street-Stewart called for the submission of new business.

Teaching Elder Commissioner Brian Entz from the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area moved to suspend the rules to consider the approval of a statement on the disparities experienced by Black women and girls; the motion was seconded. The motion failed the two-thirds threshold for approval.

Co-Moderator Street-Stewart responded to a process question from Teaching Elder Commissioner Louise Westfall from the Presbytery of Denver asking if the assembly could acknowledge the concerns raised earlier by Corresponding Member, the Reverend Kerri Allen, moderator of the Disparities Experienced by Black Women and Girls Task Force, about the systemic racism in the church's finances and budget and pause for a moment of lament and confessions. Co-Moderator Street-Stewart recognized Stated Clerk Nelson who asked for a moment of silence and then offered a prayer for Black women and girls and for the needed repentance of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Teaching Elder Commissioner George Records of the Presbytery of Palo Duro moved to suspend the rules to consider new business about the pre-born; the motion was seconded. The motion failed the two-thirds threshold for approval.

DISSENT

The following commissioner filed a dissent from the motions to suspend the rules, Plenary 6: Teaching Elder Commissioner Ben Fitzgerald-Fye, Presbytery of Cayuga-Syracuse.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

Co-Moderator Street-Stewart said that the previous night (Business Meeting III), the assembly approved as amended Recommendation 2 of Item 00-29, "On the Church in this Moment in History," which directs "the Co-Moderators of the 224th General Assembly (2020) to facilitate a time of silent vigil of 8 minutes and 46 seconds as a symbolic representation in solidarity with our BIPOC siblings, and of corporate lament and personal introspection of our complicity in perpetuating systemic racism and racial injustice before the adjourning of the 224th General Assembly (2020)."

Co-Moderator Street-Stewart said that, as its final action, the assembly would hold this vigil, a vigil not simply to remember the tragic murder of George Floyd, but to remember all the injustices suffered by Black, Indigenous, and People of Color due to systemic racism and white supremacy; to remember the economic oppressions upon people who are poor; to remember the denial to many immigrants of the rights of U.S. citizenship; to remember the inequities suffered by those whom our nation has forsaken; and to remember and repent for our sins of ignoring and marginalizing our siblings in our churches and throughout our denomination.

Co-Moderator Street-Stewart urged the assembly to take the 8 minutes and 46 seconds of silence to be resolved: "Let us be resolved to live out the justices of God's kingdom. Let us be resolved to use our resources and privileges to live out the church's great ends into the streets, our communities, our cities, our nations, and our world. Let these 8 minutes and 46 seconds begin now."

After the vigil, Co-Moderator Street-Stewart led the assembly in prayer. Co-Moderator Street-Stewart said the work of the church and of this 224th General Assembly (2020) is not about self-maintenance of our institution for those within our congregations; rather it is work for supporting, equipping, and empowering us as the body of Christ to proclaim the gospel and continue the mission as set forth by our savior Jesus of Nazareth. It is through this work that we live by faith and walk in hope.

PROTESTS

Protests found to be in decorous language are recorded in the Minutes as follows:

ITEM-01-09: The following commissioners filed nearly identical protests concerning the action taken on Item 01-09, Plenary 1: Cynthia Alloway, Presbytery of The Redwoods; Sue Coller, Presbytery of Homestead; Meghan Davis, Presbytery of Des Moines; and Scott D. Hill, Presbytery of Pittsburgh.

I protest (1) the ruling of the Co-Moderator on Friday, June 19, 2020, to rule “out of order” the request to open the acceptance of the list of the Corresponding Members of the General Assembly to admit Rev. Dr. Jana Childers as the representative of the San Francisco Theological Seminary, and (2) the vote to sustain such ruling; and (3) the advice given by Stated Clerk J. Herbert Nelson that “at the present time they’re not recognized by the Committee on Theological Education and the Presbyterian church as being a member of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)”, and that San Francisco Theological Seminary was “purchased” and that “at this time there is no standing that would allow them to be seated.” The ruling, the vote and the advice were inconsistent with the polity and current policies of the PC(USA). Under those policies, as expressed by the 1993 Report of the Special Committee to Study Theological Institutions, COTE has the function only of recommending any “change” in which institutions should be recognized as Presbyterian Theological Institutions, and the General Assembly decides after considering the recommendation of COTE. The decisions of the Co-Moderator and the Stated Clerk failed to recognize that the most recent action of the General Assembly, in 2018, included San Francisco Theological Seminary in the list of Presbyterian theological institutions entitled to representation in the General Assembly, and that until the General Assembly votes to change that status (which requires an opportunity for reasoned consideration which the procedural motion did not provide), it remains on the list. As a consequence, the PC(USA)’s polity was weakened, its relationship with one of its historic seminaries was damaged, and the reputation of the denomination’s leadership was diminished. The Stated Clerk should have recused himself from providing advice on the point of order since he may have been personally involved in the COTE consultations that led to the erroneous decision to exclude San Francisco Theological Seminary, and he previously published a statement in support of COTE’s position. The decision was one for the General Assembly to make, not for COTE or for the Stated Clerk. The protested actions prevented such a discussion from being conducted. In the absence of any General Assembly consideration of a change in its status, San Francisco Theological Seminary was entitled to have its representative seated as a corresponding member.

I protest also the removal of decision making power from the General Assembly as to the seating of Corresponding Members. The staff of the denomination determined who would be on the list, required advance training for participation in the General Assembly, and denied training to anyone who was not on the list. The result for the seating of Jana Childers was to deny the General Assembly its power and requirement to decide who should, and should not, be seated.

ITEM-00-10: The following commissioner filed a protest concerning the action taken on Item 00-10, Plenary 5: Charles Stark, Presbytery of The Redwoods.

I protest (1) the ruling of the Co-Moderator on Saturday, June 27, 2020, to rule “out of order” the motion to amend Item 00-10 to add the San Francisco Theological Seminary at the University of Redlands to the list of theological institutions that are authorized to serve communion, and (2) the advice given by Stated Clerk J. Herbert Nelson that there was currently no relationship between the seminary and the denomination, and that San Francisco Theological Seminary is no longer “Presbyterian.” The ruling and the advice were inconsistent with the polity and current policies of the PC(USA). Under those policies, as expressed by the 1993 Report of the Special Committee to Study Theological Institutions, COTE has the function only of recommending any “change” in which institutions should be recognized as Presbyterian Theological Institutions, and the General Assembly decides after considering the recommendation of COTE. A committee has no authority to make decisions. The decisions of the Co-Moderator and the Stated Clerk failed to recognize that the most recent action of the General Assembly, in 2018, included San Francisco Theological Seminary in the list of Presbyterian theological institutions entitled to representation in the General Assembly, and that until the General Assembly votes to change that status (which requires an opportunity for reasoned consideration which the procedural motion did not provide), it remains on the list. As a consequence, the PC(USA)’s polity was weakened, its relationship with one of its historic seminaries was damaged, and the reputation of the denomination’s leadership was diminished. The Stated Clerk should have recused himself from providing advice on the point of order since he may have been personally involved in the COTE consultations that led to the erroneous decision to exclude San Francisco Theological Seminary, and he previously published a statement in support of COTE’s position. The decision was one for the General Assembly to make, not for COTE or for the Stated Clerk. The protested actions prevented such a discussion from being conducted. In the absence of any General Assembly consideration of a change in its status, San Francisco Theological Seminary was entitled to have its representative seated as a corresponding member. The decision was also terrible theology. The communion table is a place

to settle conflicts, not to impose them. COTE bases its opposition to including San Francisco Theological Seminary on its interpretation of corporate law. Corporations do not serve communion: spiritual bodies and ordained elders do so. The spiritual body that is the San Francisco Theological Seminary consists of the same people today—Presbyterian teaching elders and students of theology—as yesterday. It is wrong for the PC(USA) to excommunicate—which is what the Stated Clerk thinks it has done—a body of people who have been faithfully Presbyterian for 150 years, and who plan to continue in the faith. I protest.

CLOSING

Co-Moderator Street-Stewart recognized Stated Clerk J. Herbert Nelson, II, who honored African American leaders Darius Leander Swann and Gayraud Wilmore, both of whom died earlier this year.

Stated Clerk Nelson recognized the young adult advisory delegates for a special presentation thanking the Co-Moderators.

Co-Moderator Street-Stewart recognized Julia Henderson, interim director of Assembly Operations in the Office of the General Assembly (OGA), who spoke about the necessary shift from an in-person assembly in Baltimore to a virtual assembly via Zoom. Henderson thanked everyone who helped with that process.

Henderson recognized Stated Clerk Nelson who spoke about the contributions of the Presbytery of Baltimore and its Committee on Local Arrangements (COLA) and displayed a gift of a commemorative plate for the COLA.

Co-Moderator Street-Stewart recognized Stated Clerk Nelson who honored the work of OGA Manager of Technologies Vicente Guna with Item 00-97.

Co-Moderator Street-Stewart declared the meeting of the 224th General Assembly (2020) adjourned immediately following the closing worship.

ADJOURNMENT

The assembly adjourned at 7:52 p.m. EDT.

SECTION TWO

Assembly Committee Reports Containing
All Reports, Referrals, and Recommendations of the
Committee on the Office of the General Assembly,
the Office of the General Assembly, Permanent and Special Committees,
the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Board of Pensions,
the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation,
the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation,
and Overtures.

[Due to the COVID-19 virus and the switch to a
virtual assembly, there were no Commissioners' Resolutions.]

Item 00-01

[Approved. See pp. 11, 25.]

The Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation (PPC) recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) confirm the election of David Dobson to a four-year term as president and publisher of PPC.

Rationale

The Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation (PPC) has elected David Dobson to a four-year term as president and publisher of PPC subject to the confirmation of the General Assembly.

A nominating committee comprised of Jesse Hite (chair), the Reverend Christine Chakoian, Rob Holben, LaVert Jones, and the Reverend Mary Gene Boteler (ex officio) was elected by the Board of Directors of Presbyterian Publishing Corporation (PPC) to conduct a national search for a new president and publisher of PPC to succeed Marc Lewis, who retired June 30, 2019, after a twenty-year tenure with PPC.

The nominating committee, after careful consideration of qualified candidates, presented David Dobson to the Board of Directors of PPC as their clear and enthusiastic choice; the Board of Directors of PPC, in May 2019, voted unanimously to elect Dobson as president and publisher of PPC beginning July 1, 2019, and to recommend to the 224th General Assembly (2020) the confirmation of his election.

Dobson joined PPC in 1999 as an editor for Geneva Press. He had previously served for six years as an editor for the denomination's curriculum publishing. During Dobson's tenure with PPC, he worked as an editor for the Westminster John Knox Press imprint as well as director of marketing. Dobson was named editorial director in 2007.

As editorial director, Dobson managed the launch of several new product lines and resources, including a new line of books for general readers that focus on social justice and inclusion, as well as the new nine-volume lectionary commentary titled "Connections: A Lectionary Commentary for Preaching and Worship." He has worked extensively with international publishing partners. Recently Dobson led the organization in strategically launching a new imprint for children's books called Flyaway Books.

In January 2018 Dobson was promoted to associate publisher, overseeing the editorial, production, marketing, and operations departments of PPC.

Dobson is a graduate of Earlham College with a bachelor's degree in political science and received a master's in business administration from the University of Louisville School of Business. He has also completed the rigorous Yale School of Publishing at Yale University as well as a certification program in publishing from the University of Chicago.

Dobson is a member of Highland Presbyterian Church in Louisville, Kentucky.

Item 00-02

[Approved. See pp. 23, 25.]

Approval of the List of Related Schools, Colleges, and Universities—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve the following List of Related Schools, Colleges, and Universities:

Agnes Scott College—Decatur, Georgia
 Alma College—Alma, Michigan
 Arcadia University—Glenside, Pennsylvania
 Austin College—Sherman, Texas
 Belhaven University—Jackson, Mississippi
 Blackburn College—Carlinville, Illinois
 Bloomfield College—Bloomfield, New Jersey
 Buena Vista University—Storm Lake, Iowa

Carroll University—Waukesha, Wisconsin
 Centre College—Danville, Kentucky
 Coe College—Cedar Rapids, Iowa
 The College of Idaho—Caldwell, Idaho
 College of the Ozarks—Point Lookout, Missouri
 The College of Wooster—Wooster, Ohio
 Davidson College—Davidson, North Carolina
 Davis & Elkins College—Elkins, West Virginia

Eckerd College—St. Petersburg, Florida
 Hampden-Sydney College—Hampden-Sydney, Virginia
 Hanover College—Hanover, Indiana
 Hastings College—Hastings, Nebraska
 Illinois College—Jacksonville, Illinois
 Johnson C. Smith University—Charlotte, North Carolina
 King University—Bristol, Tennessee
 Lafayette College—Easton, Pennsylvania
 Lake Forest College—Lake Forest, Illinois
 Lees-McRae College—Banner Elk, North Carolina
 Lindenwood University—St. Charles, Missouri
 Lyon College—Batesville, Arkansas
 Macalester College—St. Paul, Minnesota
 Mary Baldwin College—Staunton, Virginia
 Maryville College—Maryville, Tennessee
 Millikin University—Decatur, Illinois
 Missouri Valley College—Marshall, Missouri
 Monmouth College—Monmouth, Illinois
 Montreat College—Montreat, North Carolina
 Muskingum University—New Concord, Ohio
 Presbyterian College—Clinton, South Carolina
 Queens University of Charlotte—Charlotte, North Carolina
 Rhodes College—Memphis, Tennessee
 Rocky Mountain College—Billings, Montana

Schreiner University—Kerrville, Texas
 St. Andrews University—Laurinburg, North Carolina
 Sterling College—Sterling, Kansas
 Stillman College—Tuscaloosa, Alabama
 Trinity University—San Antonio, Texas
 Tusculum College—Greeneville, Tennessee
 Universidad de InterAmericana—San Juan, Puerto Rico
 University of Dubuque—Dubuque, Iowa
 University of Jamestown—Jamestown, North Dakota
 University of the Ozarks—Clarksville, Arizona
 University of Pikeville—Pikeville, Kentucky
 University of Tulsa—Tulsa, Oklahoma
 Warren Wilson College—Asheville, North Carolina
 Waynesburg University—Waynesburg, Pennsylvania
 Westminster College—Fulton, Missouri
 Westminster College—New Wilmington, Pennsylvania
 Westminster College—Salt Lake City, Utah
 Whitworth University—Spokane, Washington
 William Peace University—Raleigh, North Carolina
 Wilson College—Chambersburg, Pennsylvania
 Blair Academy—Blairstown, New Jersey
 Goodland Academy—Hugo, Oklahoma
 Menaul School—Albuquerque, New Mexico
 Presbyterian Pan-American School—Kingsville, Texas
 Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School—Rabun Gap, Georgia
 Wasatch Academy—Mt. Pleasant, Utah

Rationale

The criteria for being included on the List of Related Schools, Colleges, and Universities is that the institutions can identify an historic connection to the PC(USA), and demonstrate a commitment to Reformed values through the education they provide. Among these values are a commitment to faith, truth, learning, service, community, character, and the dignity and worth of each person. Beginning with the 225th General Assembly (2022), additional criteria will be used. (See the Presbyterian Mission Agency’s response regarding the additional criteria in PMAs final responses to referrals at Item 02-01, II.D.39., 2018 General Assembly Referral Item to 10-10.)

Item 00-03

[Approved. See pp. 11, 25.]

Recommendation to Approve National Certifying Bodies to the 224th General Assembly (2020)—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve the applications of the Administrative Personnel Association, the Educator Certification Committee, and the Presbyterian Association of Musicians as national certifying bodies.

Rationale

Background: The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s *Book of Order* calls for the General Assembly to approve national certifying bodies in order for those individuals achieving certification to be recognized in the church. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly approved, at its October 2015 meeting, the application process for organizations wishing to be recognized as national certifying bodies.

Approved National Certifying Bodies are approved for the period of time starting at the close of the General Assembly where the approving action was taken to the close of the next General Assembly. These organizations must apply every two years (for consideration at the biennial General Assemblies) to maintain their status as an Approved National Certifying Body. All three of these bodies were approved as National Certifying Bodies by the 222nd General Assembly (2016).

Applications were due to the Office of the General Assembly by January 15, 2020. OGA received three applications: the Administrative Personnel Association, the Educator Certification Committee, and the Presbyterian Association of Musicians. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly is asked to review the applications and transmit appropriate applications to the General Assembly for action.

Attachments:

- Section G-2.11 from the *Book of Order*
- Synopsis* of the application from the Administrative Personnel Association
- Application form* from the Educator Certification Committee
- Narrative section* from the application from the Presbyterian Association of Musicians

* - The full applications from these organizations include several supporting documents. A hard copy will be available during the COGA meeting and access to the electronic versions are available upon request (please contact Diane Minter at diane.minter@pcusa.org).

From the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s *Book of Order*:

G-2.11 CERTIFIED CHURCH SERVICE

G-2.1101 Forms of Certified Church Service

Persons may be certified and called to service within congregations, councils, and church-related entities, serving in staff positions. These individuals endeavor to reflect their faith through their work and to strengthen the church through their dedication. They should be encouraged by their session and presbytery to meet, or be prepared to meet, the certification requirements in a handbook provided by a national certifying body approved by the General Assembly. Names of those who have earned certification through a national certifying body shall be transmitted to the appropriate body of the General Assembly, which will forward them to the stated clerk of the presbyteries in which those persons labor.

G-2.1102 Presbytery and Certified Church Service

The presbytery shall encourage sessions to make continuing education funds and time available to those seeking certification, and shall affirm the skill and dedication of these certified persons by providing a service of recognition at the time of certification. The presbytery may grant the privilege of voice at all its meetings to persons in certified church service.

G-2.1103 Christian Educators a. Skills and Training

Certified Christian educators are persons certified and called to service in the ministry of education in congregations or councils. They shall have skills and training in biblical interpretation, Reformed theology, worship and sacraments, human development, faith development, religious educational theory and practice, and the polity, programs, and mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

b. Presbytery Responsibility

The presbytery shall establish minimum requirements for compensation and benefits for

Certified Christian Educators and Certified Associate Christian Educators and shall provide access to the area of presbytery that oversees ministry (G-3.0307). During their term of service in an educational ministry under the jurisdiction of the presbytery, Certified Christian Educators are entitled to the privilege of the floor with voice only at all presbytery meetings, and in the case of Certified Christian Educators who are ruling elders, the privilege of voice and vote at all its meetings.

Administrative Personnel Association Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Persons may be certified and called to service within congregations, councils, and church-related entities, serving in staff positions. These individuals endeavor to reflect their faith through their work and to strengthen the church through their dedication. They should be encouraged by their session and presbytery to meet, or be prepared to meet, the certification requirements in a handbook provided by a national certifying body approved by the General Assembly. Names of those who have earned certification through a national certifying body shall be transmitted to the appropriate body of the General Assembly, which will forward them to the stated clerk of the presbyteries in which those persons labor. G-2.1101

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s *Book of Order* calls for the General Assembly to approve national certifying bodies in order for those individuals achieving certification to be recognized in the church. The Office of the General Assembly has developed this application process for organizations wishing to be recognized as national certifying bodies.

Approved National Certifying Bodies are approved for the period of time starting at the close of the General Assembly where the approving action was taken to the close of the next General Assembly. These organizations must apply every two years (for consideration at the biennial General Assemblies) to maintain their status as an Approved National Certifying Body.

Applications are due to the Office of the General Assembly by **January 15, 2020**. Please provide both a paper copy and an electronic copy of the full application. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly will review the applications and transmit appropriate applications to the General Assembly for action.

Please address any questions to:

Ordered Ministries and Certification Office of the General Assembly Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
100 Witherspoon Street
Louisville KY 40202-1396

Diane.Minter@pcusa.org

502.569.5421 or 888.728.7228 x5421

1. Organization Information:

a. Organization's name: Administrative Personnel Association, PC(USA)

b. Organization's address: 257 West 4th Street, Unit 4, Greeley, CO 80634

c. Organizational status (check all that apply):

not-for-profit organization membership organization committee/group/unincorporated association

d. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) only or ecumenical association? We are ecumenical in our membership because PC(USA) churches and governing bodies have ecumenical staffs

2. Organization's Primary Contact/Information:

a. Name of primary contact: Bobbi Hoffman

b. Organizational role of primary contact: National President

c. Term of office (if appropriate): 2018 – 2020

d. Mailing address of primary contact: 257 West 4th Street, Unit 4, Greeley, CO 80634

e. E-mail address of primary contact: bobbi@plainsandpeaks.org

f. Phone numbers of primary contact: 970-352-6496

3. Narrative:

a. What certification(s) does your organization oversee? What church workers benefit most from your certification program(s)?

APA's certification program – the organization's core – is available to all employees of PC(USA) churches, presbyteries, synods, the Board of Pensions and Offices of the General Assembly in all administrative and financial positions. APA offers three primary levels of certification as well as continuing education and certificates of concentrated studies in the areas of administration and facilities management, church history, communications, finance, polity, and theology for members who've completed all three primary levels of certification (See Attachment 3-A, "APA Certification Program"). The program supports PC(USA) entities' employees in their daily work and provides a means for personnel committees to better evaluate their employee's performance through continuing education.

b. How does your organization's certification process support the life and mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)? If your organization is ecumenical, how does the certification specifically prepare those seeking certification for service in the PC(USA)?

APA ensures members have up-to-date knowledge of PC(USA) polity, Presbyterian Church theology, annual statistical reporting and PC(USA) entities including the Presbyterian Mission Agency and Presbyterian Historical Society, as well as administrative, technology and interpersonal skills, financial and accounting procedures and other knowledge for effective service in the PC(USA). APA requires that members complete at least one Polity course every three years to retain their current certifications.

c. Brief History of Organization and Certification Process:

APA began in 1976 during a business administrators' meeting in Richmond, VA, as the attendees realized a need for a professional organization for church secretaries and administrators. There was a need and desire for an association for lay employees in the offices of the governing agencies of the PC (USA) denomination. Thus, the Administrative Personnel Association PC(USA) was founded by Joyce Bauer as the Presbyterian Secretarial Association of the Southern Church (PCUS). Within two years, the UPCUSA church staff joined the organization.

In subsequent years, APA proposed to the General Assembly that certified lay employees be recognized by presbytery and be invited to presbytery meetings and given privilege of the floor (without vote) in accordance with the Book of Order section G-14.0740. APA had been associated with the Office of Vocation. Certified APA members were listed in the Directory and Book II of the General Assembly minutes until that service was discontinued.

00 PLENARY

The Association continues to grow and has members across the country in five regions – Southeast, Heartland, Atlantic, Pacific and Southwest – throughout the United States and Puerto Rico. Annual regional and national conferences are held. APA’s mission is to offer opportunities for professional development and personal growth for those called by God to serve as support staff of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). APA accomplishes this by providing continuing education events for certification and occasions for fellowship, worship, spiritual nurture and prayer at national and regional conferences, as well as at Board of Pensions-, seminary- and presbytery-sponsored training events.

The purpose of the organization is to improve the quality of professionalism in those offices that are usually the first point of contact with congregations, governing bodies, boards and agencies of the denomination; and to affirm the ministry of the lay church professional and recognize the importance of efficient office procedures and competent personnel who strive to provide a deeper commitment and understanding of the issues, polity, history and theology of the Presbyterian Church.

d. To what “appropriate General Assembly body” do you propose transmitting “names of those who have earned certification,” so that the body may “forward them to the stated clerk of the presbyteries in which those persons labor?” (*G-2.1101*) Why do you propose the body that you do?

We propose transmitting the names of those certified to the Office of the General Assembly, because that is the body which oversees Ordered Ministries and Certification.

4. Required Attachments:

a. Certification Standards/Manual: Please see Attachment 4-A, “ Administrative Personnel Association Council on Accreditation and Standards Handbook.”

b. Report on those within the PC(USA) certified in 2018 and 2019* (the last two full calendar years prior to the next General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)). Please list each person by name and presbytery, certification achieved, as well as the aggregated numbers for each of the following categories*: Please see Attachment 4-B, “2018 and 2019 Administrative Personnel Association Certifications”

i. racial ethnic status: (Asian, African, African American/Black, Hispanic, Middle Eastern, Native American, White, Other)

ii. Age Distribution: (25 and under, 26-45, 46-55, 56-65, 65 and over)

iii. Persons with a Disability: (Hearing Impairment, Mobility Impairment, Sight Impairment, Other)

iv. Gender

c. Six year numerical history of those seeking certification and achieving certification (if applicable) Please see Attachment 4-C, “Six-year Numeric History of Those Seeking/Achieving APA Certification (2014 – 2019)”

d. Organization leadership roster, with contact information, including roles and denominational membership Please see Attachment 4-D, “APA Executive Board”

e. Key organizational documents, including by-laws (if applicable), articles of incorporation (if applicable), and annual budget Please see Attachment 4-E.

* -- Please note – categories for racial ethnic status, age distribution, and persons with disabilities are based upon categories approved by the General Assembly for congregational statistical reporting.

Presbyterian Association of Musicians Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

APPLICATION TO BE RECOGNIZED NATIONAL CERTIFYING BODY
224th General Assembly (2020) Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Submitted by Presbyterian Association of Musicians
Kelly Abraham, Executive Director

224th General Assembly (2020) Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Persons may be certified and called to service within congregations, councils, and church-related entities, serving in staff positions. These individuals endeavor to reflect their faith through their work and to strengthen the church through their dedication. They should be encouraged by their session and presbytery to meet, or be prepared to meet, the certification requirements in a handbook provided by a national certifying body approved by the General Assembly. Names of those who have earned certification through a national certifying body shall be transmitted to the appropriate body of the General Assembly, which will forward them to the stated clerk of the presbyteries in which those persons labor. (*Book of Order*, G-2.1101)

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s *Book of Order* calls for the General Assembly to approve national certifying bodies in order for those individuals achieving certification to be recognized in the church. The Office of the General Assembly has developed this application process for organizations wishing to be recognized as national certifying bodies.

00 PLENARY

Approved National Certifying Bodies are approved for the period of time starting at the close of the General Assembly where the approving action was taken to the close of the next General Assembly. These organizations must apply every two years (for consideration at the biennial General Assemblies) to maintain their status as an Approved National Certifying Body.

Applications are due to the Office of the General Assembly by January 15, 2020. Please provide both a paper copy and an electronic copy of the full application. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly will review the applications and transmit appropriate applications to the General Assembly for action.

Please address any questions to:

Ordered Ministries and Certification Office of the General Assembly Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
100 Witherspoon Street
Louisville KY 40202-1396

Diane.Minter@pcusa.org
502.569.5421 or 888.728.7228 x5421

1. Organization Information:

- a. Organization's name Presbyterian Association of Musicians
- b. Organization's address 100 Witherspoon St.
- c. Organizational status (check all that apply):
 - not-for-profit organization
 - membership organization
 - committee/group/unincorporated association
- d. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) only or ecumenical association? Our primary denominational identity and connections are PC(USA); however, membership in the denomination is not a requirement for membership in the organization.

2. Information

- a. Name of primary contact Kelly Abraham
- b. Organizational role of primary contact Executive Director
- c. Term of office (if appropriate) N/A Employed by Organization
- d. Mailing address of primary contact 100 Witherspoon, Louisville, KY 40202
- e. E-mail address of primary contact Kelly.abraham@pcusa.org
- f. Phone numbers of primary contact 502-569-5759

3. Narrative: (See Attachment A)

- a. What certification(s) does your organization oversee? What church workers benefit most from your certification program(s)?
- b. How does your organization's certification process support the life and mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)? If your organization is ecumenical, how does the certification specifically prepare those seeking certification for service in the PC(USA)?
- c. Brief History of Organization and Certification Process
- d. To what "appropriate General Assembly body" do you propose transmitting "names of those who have earned certification," so that the body may "forward them to the stated clerk of the presbyteries in which those persons labor?" *{G-2.1101}* Why do you propose the body that you do?

4. Required Attachments: (See Attachments B-1)

- a. Certification Standards/Manual (See Attachment B)
- b. Report on those within the PC(USA) certified in 2018 and 2019 (the last two full calendar years prior to the next General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)). Please list each person by name and presbytery, certification achieved, as well as the aggregated numbers for each of the following categories*: (See Attachment C)
 - i. racial ethnic status: (Asian, African, African American/Black, Hispanic, Middle Eastern, Native American, White, Other)
 - ii. Age Distribution: {25 and under, 26-45, 46-55, 56-65, 65 and over}
 - iii. Persons with a Disability: (Hearing Impairment, Mobility Impairment, Sight Impairment, Other)
 - iv. Gender

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- c. Six year numerical history of those seeking certification and achieving certification (if applicable) (See Attachment D.)
- d. Organization leadership roster, with contact information, including roles and denominational membership (See Attachment E.)
- e. Key organizational documents, including by-laws (if applicable), articles of incorporation (if applicable), and annual budget (See Attachment F, G, H, and I)

**--Please note-categories for racial ethnic status, age distribution, and persons with disabilities are based upon categories approved by the General Assembly for congregational statistical reporting*

ATTACHMENT A APPLICATION TO BE RECOGNIZED NATIONAL CERTIFYING BODY PRESBYTERIAN ASSOCIATION OF MUSICIANS

1. Narrative:

- a. What certification(s) does your organization oversee? What church workers benefit most from your certification program(s)?

Certified Church Musician (CCM)

Certified Associate Church Musician (CACM) Certified Colleague in Church Music (CCCM)

Church workers engaged as church musicians serving congregations will benefit most from this program.

- b. How does your organization's certification process support the life and mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)? If your organization is ecumenical, how does the certification specifically prepare those seeking certification for service in the PC(USA)?

The certification process offered by the Presbyterian Association of Musicians allows persons engaged in the practice of church music the opportunity to receive recognition for the continuing refinement and enriching of skills, abilities, and knowledge. By continuing to learn, professional church musicians bring depth, thought, and fresh ideas to the church's liturgical activities, as well as to the training of musicians and liturgical leaders of all ages within congregations. Persons certified through this process are recognized as leaders in their local communities, and provide a valuable resource to the church at all levels.

Because many congregations will not allow persons employed by them to be members of their particular congregation, we find that we have members whose long-term employment and liturgical orientation is with the PC(USA), however, they remain members of other worshipping traditions. Since church musician membership in presbyteries is not possible under our polity, our certification process allows for church musicians who are not members of the PC(USA) to participate and be certified. Our certification materials and guidelines make clear to those who are not members of the PC(USA) that presbyteries are not able to grant voice to certified people in any field who are not also members of the PC(USA).

- c. Brief History of Organization and Certification Process

The idea of an association of Presbyterian church musicians was conceived in The Presbyterian Conference on Church Music, a gathering sponsored from 1956-1969 by the Board of Christian Education of the Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUS) at the Montreat Conference Center. In 1969, an announcement that the Board of Christian Education was being disbanded and the conference on church music would no longer be presented caused leaders of previous Montreat church music conferences to join forces to assure continuation of these events. An *ad hoc* group of leaders, chaired by Jerry Black and including James Rawlings Sydnor, Richard Peek, Herbert Archer, William Whitehead, Mabel Boyter, David McCormick, and Adele Diekmann McKee met during the 1969 conference to begin strategizing the future of a not-yet-named organization. From its beginnings, the organization envisioned itself as serving and welcoming both southern and northern Presbyterians who had not yet reunited to form the current Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

The new organization held its first meeting July 26, 1970 in Anderson Auditorium at Montreat. At that meeting, the organization named itself Presbyterian Association of Musicians (PAM) and elected Adele Diekmann McKee its first president.

Since 1970, PAM has presented weeklong conferences on worship and music led by nationally and internationally recognized preachers, conductors, organists, and clinicians at the Montreat Conference Center. In 1979, in response to more demand than the Montreat facilities could accommodate, a second week of the Montreat conference was initiated. In addition, PAM presented weeklong conferences in the Montreat model at Westminster College in New Wilmington, PA from 1988-2006, and in Albuquerque, San Francisco, and other locations in the western United States from 1978-2008. In 2009, PAM partnered with Presbyterian Mo-Ranch Assembly in Hunt, TX to present annual worship and music conferences at that location. Since 2005, PAM has also held biennial four-day Professionals Gatherings in cities where PC(USA) seminaries are also located, including Louisville, KY; Austin, TX; Princeton, NJ; and Charlotte, NC.

In addition to sponsoring these conferences on worship and music, PAM offers an online job referral service; provides seed money grants to support worship and music events organized by its members; funds conference scholarships for approximately 40-50 individuals with financial need; and sponsors a PAM chapter in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

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In cooperation with the PC(USA) Office of Theology & Worship, PAM co-publishes the print and online journal *Call to Worship*. PAM also publishes a quarterly online newsletter and resource guides for church musicians on topics including: guidelines for employment of church musicians, guidelines for professional conduct in adversity, resource guides for weddings and funerals, and an ever-evolving guide to print and online resources on various subjects important to church musicians.

PAM collaborates with Morningstar Music Publishers in the publication of a PAM anthem series and recently launched both a choral anthem composition competition and an internship program for aspiring church musicians. Since 1979, PAM has also provided a process for its members to earn certification as Certified Church Musician (CCM), Certified Associate Church Musician (CACM), or Certified Colleague in Church Music (CCCM).

PAM was an active participant in the development of both the 1990 and 2013 Presbyterian hymnals, as well as the widely influential liturgical study, *Invitation to Christ*, published by the PC(USA) in 2006. Currently, PAM is partnering with Presbyterian Publishing Corporation and the PC(USA) Office of Theology and Worship in a revision of the 1993 *Book of Common Worship*, scheduled for publication in 2018.

PAM first began offering certification opportunities for its members in the mid-1970s with the first persons completing the process and being recognized in 1979. Since that time more than 80 individuals have earned certification. 25 persons certified through this process are currently active in service to PC(USA) congregations and 10 individuals are currently pursuing initial certification. In 2014 several changes were made to the certification process. These changes included the addition of a video requirement for all applicants, and the requirement that an application be filed prior to beginning the certification process. Prior to that point, individuals began the process unbeknownst to us, and were on their own to gather materials and prepare certification essays prior to submitting the application. The application requirement now allows us to better track those in the process, as well as to offer mentors and other assistance.

d. To what “appropriate General Assembly body” do you propose transmitting “names of those who have earned certification,” so that the body may “forward them to the stated clerk of the presbyteries in which those persons labor?” (G-2.1101) Why do you propose the body that you do?

We propose that notice of PAM certification completions be transmitted to the Director of Theology, Formation, and Evangelism in the Presbyterian Mission Agency for forwarding to the stated clerk of the presbyteries in which these persons labor. Since PAM is in formal Missional Relationship with PMA through this office and works closely with it in numerous projects and activities, this seems the most logical conduit.

Educator Certification Committee Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Persons may be certified and called to service within congregations, councils, and church-related entities, serving in staff positions. These individuals endeavor to reflect their faith through their work and to strengthen the church through their dedication. They should be encouraged by their session and presbytery to meet, or be prepared to meet, the certification requirements in a handbook provided by a national certifying body approved by the General Assembly. Names of those who have earned certification through a national certifying body shall be transmitted to the appropriate body of the General Assembly, which will forward them to the stated clerk of the presbyteries in which those persons labor. G-2.1101

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s *Book of Order* calls for the General Assembly to approve national certifying bodies in order for those individuals achieving certification to be recognized in the church. The Office of the General Assembly has developed this application process for organizations wishing to be recognized as national certifying bodies.

Approved National Certifying Bodies are approved for the period of time starting at the close of the General Assembly where the approving action was taken to the close of the next General Assembly. These organizations must apply every two years (for consideration at the biennial General Assemblies) to maintain their status as an Approved National Certifying Body.

Applications are due to the Office of the General Assembly by January 15, 2020. Please provide both a paper copy and an electronic copy of the full application. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly will review the applications and transmit appropriate applications to the General Assembly for action.

Please address any questions to:

Ordered Ministries and Certification Office of the General Assembly Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
100 Witherspoon Street
Louisville KY 40202-1396

Diane.Minter@pcusa.org
502.569.5421 or 888.728.7228 x5421

1. Organization Information:

a. Educator Certification Committee

- b. 100 Witherspoon St., Louisville, KY 40202
- c. Organizational status (check all that apply):
 - not-for-profit/organization/membership/organization
 - committee/group/unincorporated/association
- d. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (denominational certification only)

2. Organization's Primary Contact/Information:

- a. Martha Miller, Manager for Ministry Education and Support
- b. Office of the General Assembly Staff to Committee
- c. Term of office – n/a
- d. 100 Witherspoon St., Louisville, KY 40202
- e. martha.miller@pcusa.org
- f. Office: (502)569-5751; Cell: (502)432-3674

3. Narrative:

- a. What certification(s) does your organization oversee? What church workers benefit most from your certification program(s)?

Christian educators are persons called by God to a ministry of education who demonstrate their faith in and love for Jesus Christ, are dedicated to the life of faith and are serious in purpose, honest in character and joyful in service. It is expected that Christian educators be persons with skills and training in biblical interpretation, Reformed theology, human development, religious education theory and practice, and the polity, programs and mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The educator certification process provides this training.

- b. How does your organization's certification process support the life and mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)? If your organization is ecumenical, how does the certification specifically prepare those seeking certification for service in the PC(USA)?

The Reformed Tradition has always raised up the importance of educated leaders going back to the era of John Calvin and other reformers. Continuing that emphasis, the educator certification process offers an opportunity for those serving in educational ministries to engage in coursework, peer support, vocational discernment, and an examination of the integration of learnings and skills culminating in a confirmation of demonstrated knowledge. The Educator Certification Committee establishes educator certification standards, designates Educator Certification Advisors in consultation with presbyteries, evaluates certification examinations, and grants certification.

- c. Brief History of Organization and Certification Process

Throughout the late 1800's and through the early and mid-1900's, the PCUS had an informal educator certification process as a way of recognizing the vocation of those serving in educational roles in the church. During the mid-1900's the UPUSA also had a process of recognizing educators through the Commissioned Church Workers (which also included musicians, board members, etc.). At the time of reunion in 1983, the certification process continued and directed studies were added. Throughout the years since, the process has been divided into levels based on an educator's educational background, with differing requirements at each level. While previously focused only on professional church educators, the process was adjusted within the past seven years to also include faithful volunteers serving in these roles but not receiving remuneration for their service. A mandate from the 223rd General Assembly (2018) is currently the focus of the Educator Certification Committee to make the Christian Education Associate (an entry, non-certified) level more accessible, particularly for those without any formal educational and/or theological training. General guidelines for certification are included within the Book of Order with the specifics of the process being included in the Educator Certification Committee's Handbook which is revised annually. 2018 marked the fourth General Assembly which has elected members of the Educator Certification Committee to serve in their role through the General Assembly Nominating Committee process.

- d. To what "appropriate General Assembly body" do you propose transmitting "names of those who have earned certification," so that the body may "forward them to the stated clerk of the presbyteries in which those persons labor?" (*G-2.1101*) Why do you propose the body that you do?

Because the Educator Certification Committee falls under the budgeting and program of the Office of Mid Council Ministries of the Office of the General Assembly, the names of certified educators should be reported through the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. This has been the practice of the office for several years and is the most direct reporting body as staff to the committee reports to this body.

4. Required Attachments:

- a. Certification Standards/Manual

The Educator Certification Handbook 2019 is attached.

- b. Report on those within the PC(USA) certified in 2018 and 2019 (the last two full calendar years prior to the next General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)). Please list each person by name and presbytery, certification achieved, as well as the aggregated numbers for each of the following categories*:

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- i. racial ethnic status: Asian = 0, African = 0, African American/Black = 0, Hispanic = 0, Middle Eastern = 0, Native American = 0, White = 5, Other = 0
- ii. Age Distribution: 25 and under = 0, 26-45 = 2, 46-55 = 3, 56-65 = 0, 65 and over = 0
- iii. Persons with a Disability: Hearing Impairment = 0, Mobility Impairment = 0, Sight Impairment = 0, Other = 0
- iv. Gender: Male = 1, Female = 4

2018

Joelle Jarrait CCE: Presbytery of Detroit
 Jeanne Simpson CCE: Presbytery of Greater Atlanta
 David Smithey CCE: Salem Presbytery
 Jennifer Taylor CCE: Presbytery of Cincinnati

2019

Alicia Rowland CCE: Peace River Presbytery

c. Six-year numerical history of those seeking certification and achieving certification (if applicable)

Apps Submitted in 2019		Apps Submitted in 2018		Apps Submitted in 2017		Apps Submitted in 2016		Apps Submitted in 2015		Apps Submitted in 2014	
CCE	6	CCE	14	CCE	3	CCE	8	CCE	8	CCE	10
CEA	1	CEA	0	CEA	1	CEA	1	CEA	2	CEA	4
Total	7	Total	14	Total	4	Total	9	Total	10	Total	14

Educators Certified in 2019		Educators Certified in 2018		Educators Certified in 2017		Educators Certified in 2016		Educators Certified in 2015		Educators Certified in 2014	
CCE	1	CCE	4	CCE	9	CCE	7	CCE	2	CCE	8
CEA	0	CEA	0	CEA	1	CEA	2	CEA	0	CEA	1
Total	1	Total	4	Total	10	Total	9	Total	2	Total	9

d. Organization leadership roster, with contact information, including roles and denominational membership
 Educator Certification Committee membership list is attached. All ECC members are members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

e. Key organizational documents, including by-laws (if applicable), articles of incorporation (if applicable), and annual budget
 The Policy document of the Educator Certification Committee is attached.

The Educator Certification Committee does not have a financial budget. All committee expenses occur through the per capita budget of the Mid Council Ministries of the Office of the General Assembly.

** -- Please note – categories for racial ethnic status, age distribution, and persons with disabilities are based upon categories approved by the General Assembly for congregational statistical reporting.*

Item 00-04

Approved. (See pp. 12, 25.)

Approval of Jihyun Oh as Associate Stated Clerk—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly requests that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Jihyun Oh, director of Mid Council Ministries, for election as Associate Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

Rationale

According to H.2.d. in the *Standing Rules of the General Assembly*:

The General Assembly may elect one or more Associate Stated Clerks as the General Assembly shall determine. The Stated Clerk shall nominate persons to fill each such office after consultation with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. The term of office shall be four years, subject to reelection at the pleasure of the General Assembly. [Also referenced in the *Organization for Mission* in IV.B.2.k.)

Jihyun Oh joined the Office of the General Assembly in 2018 as manager of call support in January 2018. Oh, a minister of Word and Sacrament, was selected as the director of Mid Council Ministries in 2019. She is responsible for the overall work of Mid Council Ministries and coordinating OGA's deployment of resources to support the work of mid councils.

Oh has a wide range of experience in the PC(USA). She has held leadership positions in the Presbyteries of Greater Atlanta and Chicago and was a commissioner to both the 221st General Assembly (2014) and the 222nd General Assembly (2016), at both of which she served as a committee leader. She most recently served on the Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation. In addition, Rev. Oh has served as both an English- and Korean-language Standard Ordination Examinations reader.

Oh provides exemplary service to the church, is in good standing as a teaching elder, and is a faithful Christian leader who serves the church with "energy, intelligence, imagination, and love." The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly enthusiastically nominates Jihyun Oh for election as an Associate Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

Other Associate Stated Clerks previously elected at the 223rd General Assembly (2018):

Laurie Griffith, Associate Director of Constitutional Interpretation

Tricia Dykers Koenig, Associate Director for Mid Council Relations

Kerry Rice, Deputy Stated Clerk of the Office of the General Assembly

Item 00-05

Approved with amendment. (For amendments, see pp. 20–21, 25.)

On Amending the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and Its Procedures—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve and implement the following amendments to the "Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and Its Procedures," which was originally approved by the 222nd General Assembly (2016), as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.) CHILD/YOUTH/VULNERABLE ADULT PROTECTION POLICY AND ITS PROCEDURES

POLICY APPLICATION STATEMENT

It is the policy of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) [*"PC(USA)"*] and all entities of the General Assembly ("**Entities**") that all church members, church officers, nonmember employees and/or contractors, and volunteers of congregations, councils, and Entities of the church are to maintain the strongest sense of integrity, safety, nurturing, and care involving all interactions with children, youth, and vulnerable adults. This ~~p~~Policy applies to all General Assembly Entity sponsored activities that involve children, youth, and vulnerable adults.

DISTRIBUTION

Copies of this Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and its Procedures ("Policy") shall be made available to all agency, council, and entity offices in hard copy or electronically or via the internet. It is intended as guidance for churches, mid councils, and related Entities. This is a Policy of the General Assembly of the PC(USA) and is a Policy of General Assembly agencies and Entities, including the Office of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Administrative Services Group, and the other four agencies of the General Assembly and General Assembly Entities. Other councils and organizations of the PC(USA) may use this Policy as a guide to develop their own policies and procedures related to the protection of children, youth, and vulnerable adults. Wherever this Policy indicates that entities shall do something, if a council adopts all or part of this Policy, the council should do likewise.

POLICY RATIONALE

The implementation and documentation of a Child/Youth/Vulnerable Protection Policy strives to reduce the risk of abuse and neglect for the following reasons:

- Children, youth, and vulnerable adults are a gift from God and the Church has a divine mandate to provide for their safety and nurturing. The Church is called to be a place that reflects the open arms of Jesus. In Matthew 19:14, Jesus says, “Let the little children come to me.” The Church is to be, at all levels of council and in all entities, a place of safety and nurture reflective of the arms of Christ.

- Any type of abuse involving children, youth, or vulnerable adults has lasting and devastating effects on the life of the victim/survivor. It is the call of the Church to be a life-giving entity of Christ’s healing and hope for community and individuals, not an entity that brings harm and hurt.

- The larger Church suffers with the victim/survivor and his or her family when abuse and neglect occurs. The Church is ~~crippled by~~ **unable to do the full work of Christ, due to** the hurt, pain, and distrust that accompanies abuse. Not only does the Church lose its credibility at all levels, it also suffers considerable financial loss and loss of integrity. More importantly, in instances of child, youth, or vulnerable adult abuse within the Church, there is immeasurable spiritual, psychological, emotional, and physical harm perpetrated that woefully ~~cripples~~ **hinders** God’s call on the Church.

- The *Book of Order* states, “The congregation as a whole, on behalf of the Church universal, assumes responsibility for nurturing the baptized person in the Christian life,” and Presbyterians believe this baptismal commitment to be a serious one, understanding it to apply to all in the church’s care, including children, youth, and vulnerable adults (*Book of Order*, W-3.0403).

- Children, ~~and~~ youth, **and vulnerable adults** are not only persons of care and service in the church, but they are also co-recipients of the graces and love of God. Jesus exemplified this in the Gospel of Mark 10:15–16 when he urged his followers to receive the kingdom of God as a little child. And he specifically takes up the children into his arms and blesses them. So also the Church, as the body of Christ, is to be the presence of Christ’s love, in the same way taking up all children, ~~and~~ youth, **and vulnerable adults** into its arms and blessing them; providing for them a safe, thriving, and nurturing environments in which to grow in every way.

PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW WHEN ENTITIES ARE PROVIDING CARE FOR MINORS

When entities provide care and supervision for minors at one of its meetings, events, or conferences (this excludes meetings, events, or conferences for which an Entity reimburses parents or guardians to pay for care for minors), the following procedures shall be utilized.

DEFINITIONS

Each state has its own statutes regarding what is defined as child/youth/vulnerable adult abuse. This **P**olicy advises all **entities of the General Assembly of the** Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to consider and be familiar with state statutes pertaining to the location of each event/activity.

The following is a comprehensive list of definitions of terms and their intended use in this particular **P**olicy. For the purpose of this **P**olicy:

Child: A child ~~is will be~~ defined as a person between the ages of 0–11.

Youth: A youth ~~is will be~~ defined as a person between the ages of 12–17.

Minor: A minor is *defined as* any child or youth 0–17 years-old.

Child/Youth Worker: Any person, volunteer or paid staff or contractor, who participates at any level at General Assembly Entity sponsored events or activities involving children and/or youth. **This includes chaperones who accompany minors to and during meetings, events, and activities covered by this Policy.**

Vulnerable Adult: Any person eighteen-years-old or older without the developmental or cognitive capacity to consent.

Vulnerable Adult Abuse: Any act or failure to act that results in ~~the~~ physical **abuse, neglect, and/or sexual molestation or abuse**, sexual, psychological, or emotional mistreatment, ~~neglect~~, or exploitation of a vulnerable adult.

Child/Youth Abuse: Any act or failure to act that results in ~~the~~ physical **abuse, neglect, and or sexual molestation or abuse**, sexual, psychological, or emotional mistreatment, ~~neglect~~, or exploitation of a child or youth.

Sexual Abuse: In the *Book of Order*, sexual abuse is defined as, “Sexual abuse of another person is any offense involving sexual conduct in relation to (1) any person under the age of eighteen years or anyone over the age of eighteen years without the mental capacity to consent; or (2) any person when the conduct includes force, threat, coercion, intimidation, or misuse of ordered ministry or position” (*Book of Order*, D-10.0401c).

Misuse of technology: The use of technology that results in *Vulnerable Adult Abuse, Child/Youth Abuse, or* in the harassing or abusing of a child/youth. ~~This includes using technology to send suggestive message and images to a child or youth. Adults should not have any technological contact with a child or youth that is not either preapproved by the child/youth’s legal guardian with a signed waiver, or the contact is on an open public medium, such as a church website or other social media program.~~

PMA: Presbyterian Mission Agency.

OGA: Office of General Assembly.

Safe Child Response Team: The Safe Child Response Team is a team comprised of a minimum of *at least* three members of or appointed by the ~~or~~ Entity of the General Assembly who are specifically trained to respond to allegations and reports of child, youth, or vulnerable adult abuse at General Assembly Entity sponsored activities. These teams must be readily available to be contacted and used at all General Assembly Entity sponsored events.

~~**Sponsoring Council or Entity:** Any council or entity of the General Assembly within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) that is tasked with the responsibility of planning events and activities for children, youth, or vulnerable adults.~~

Sexual Misconduct: as that is defined in the *Sexual Misconduct Policy and its Procedures (219th General Assembly (2010))* and revised by the *Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (2013)*.

Sexual Misconduct is the comprehensive term used in this policy to include:

Child sexual abuse; including, but is not limited to, any contact or interaction between a child and an adult when the child is being used for the sexual stimulation of the adult person or of a third person. The behavior may or may not involve touching. Sexual behavior between a child and an adult is always considered forced whether or not consented to by the child. In the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the sexual abuse definition of a child is anyone under age eighteen.

Sexual abuse as defined in the Book of Order: “Sexual abuse of another person is any offense involving sexual conduct in relation to (1) any person under the age of eighteen years or anyone over the age of eighteen years without the mental capacity to consent; or (2) any person when the conduct includes force, threat, coercion, intimidation, or misuse of ordered ministry or position” (*Book of Order*, D-10.0401c).

Sexual harassment; defined for this policy is as follows: unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

- a. submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual’s employment, or their continued status in an institution;
- b. submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such an individual;
- c. such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s work performance by creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment; or
- d. an individual is subjected to unwelcome sexual jokes, unwelcome or inappropriate touching, or display of sexual visuals that insult, degrade, and/or sexually exploit men, women, or children.

Rape or sexual contact by force, threat, or intimidation.

Sexual conduct is offensive, obsessive or suggestive language or behavior, unacceptable visual contact, unwelcome touching or fondling that is injurious to the physical or emotional health of another.

Sexual Malfeasance; is defined by the broken trust resulting from sexual activities within a professional ministerial relationship that results in misuse of office or position arising from the professional ministerial relationship.

Misuse of technology; use of technology that results in sexually harassing or abusing another person, including texting or emailing suggestive messages and images to persons with whom one has a ministerial relationship. It is never appropriate to view pornography on church property. When this includes a person under the age of eighteen, it is considered child abuse. There is never an expectation of personal privacy when using technological equipment owned by a church or church entity or within the context of ministry.

SCREENING, TRAINING, AND BACKGROUND CHECKS

A child/youth worker, whether on a paid staff, contractor, or volunteer basis, shall be subject to:

1. The organizing ~~Entity's Council's~~ receipt of a completed, signed, and approved application and background check authorization forms, including a signed form verifying the event policy has been read. The application should include a minimum of two references.

2. All child/youth workers must be at least eighteen-years-old and four years older than the oldest youth whom they are serving.

3. The applicant's consent to a ***comprehensive background check, including a*** criminal background check. The Entity must consult with the insurance company through which they have coverage to determine what background checks are appropriate for their particular event. The ~~sponsoring council or~~ Entity should cover the costs of the background checks for all child/youth workers. These checks shall be run no more than six (6) months prior to the event. (This time restraint is also at the discretion of the organizing ~~Entity's council's~~ insurance company's requests. Child/Youth workers who participate annually in events may only be required to have one (1) background check per calendar year, depending on insurance company standards.)

4. All child/youth workers, paid, contracted, or volunteer, must participate in training sometime within the year prior to the event. The training is to be provided by the ~~sponsoring council or~~ Entity and shall cover the event child/youth protection policy thoroughly as well as methods of abuse prevention and a detailed plan of reporting. The ~~sponsoring council or~~ Entity may contract with others to provide these trainings. These trainings shall further cover:

- What constitutes child/youth/vulnerable adult abuse and neglect.
- How to recognize signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect.
- State laws concerning definitions of abuse and reporting.
- Mandatory criminal background checks and the security of those files.
- Explanation of the importance of the application and screening processes.
- Appropriate boundaries with ~~minors children and youth~~, especially regarding adult/child/youth ratios, transportation, and use of technology.
- If an overnight event is planned, discussions of boundaries involving appropriate sleeping arrangements and restroom/shower facilities use shall be discussed.
- The presence of a Safe Child Response Team at each event and how to contact them.
- All paid employees working directly with children or youth at any General Assembly Entity sponsored events must be certified in first aid and CPR.
- Other related topics.

5. No person may serve as a child/youth worker who has a conviction on his/her record of certain felonies or misdemeanors, including, ***but not limited to***, any of the following:

- Criminal homicide;
- Aggravated assault;
- Crimes related to the possession, use, or sale of drugs or controlled substances;
- Sexual abuse;

- Sexual assault;
- Injury to a youth;
- Incest;
- Indecency with a youth;
- Inducing sexual conduct or sexual performance of a youth;
- Possession or promotion of child pornography;
- The sale, distribution, or display of harmful material to a minor;
- Employment harmful to youth;
- Abandonment or endangerment of a youth;
- Kidnapping or unlawful restraint;
- Public lewdness or indecent exposure; and enticement of a youth;
- Any crime that involves Sexual Misconduct or sexual abuse, particularly if it involves misconduct or abuse with a minor;
- Any crime that involves misuse of technology for sexual purposes, such as collecting or distributing photographs of minors who are naked or in sexual or inappropriate poses (child pornography);
- Any crime that involves the use of force, such as assault or endangerment;
- Any crime that involves abduction and kidnapping;
- Any crime that involves drinking and driving, such as driving while intoxicated.

In addition, if an Council or General Assembly Entity is aware that a child/youth worker has a prior conviction for one of the aforementioned crimes or a related crime, the child/youth worker shall automatically be ineligible to attend a child/youth event in any capacity.

6. No person may act as or be engaged as a child/youth worker if that person has been found guilty of an offense, in local, state or federal court or in an ecclesiastical proceeding, that includes actions that fall under definitions or prohibitions set forth in this Policy.

7. Whenever a General Assembly Entity organizes an event for minors for which the **Entity Agency** will invite minors from other church Councils who will be supervised by child/youth workers, the Councils who selects the youth workers shall:

a. Not send a person to act as a child/youth worker whom the Council knows has violated the provisions of the *Book of Order* or policy of a local congregation or presbytery pertaining to Sexual Misconduct or child/youth protection.

b. Not send a person to act as a child/youth worker for minors when that person is also scheduled to work at the event.

c. Require Councils at all levels of church life who are assisting in organizing General Assembly Entity events for minors or sending child/youth workers to these events to abide by the same screening, training, and background check standards mandated in this **Ppolicy** for the General Assembly and its Entities.

8. Whenever a General Assembly Entity organizes an event for minors that invites minors from Councils who will be supervised by child/youth workers, the General Assembly Entity shall:

a. Provide guidance to the Councils that are sending child/youth workers about best practices for securing child/youth workers and eligibility requirements.

b. Provide guidance to the Councils that are sending child/youth workers concerning the requirement that the Council perform and pay for background checks for potential child/youth workers and how to evaluate the background check for offenses that would disqualify a person from being a child/youth worker with minors.

c. Provide guidance to the Councils on when to perform the background checks and with what background check provider.

- d. Identify someone on the organizing **committee or staff council** of the General Assembly Entity/~~event~~ to be the designated recipient of background checks from Councils and train that person:
- i. To review every background check received;
 - ii. To identify criminal convictions on background checks that should disqualify a person from being a child/youth worker;
 - iii. To notify a Council if the staffer believes the Council has erred in selecting a child/youth worker whose background check indicates that the person should not act as a child/youth worker;
 - iv. Report to the General Assembly-Entity **sponsor** of the event of each potentially disqualifying background check and related concerns so that a formal decision can be made to inform the Council that the person whose background check is in question is not eligible to attend the event as child/youth worker.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS

The ~~sponsoring council or~~ Entity shall maintain all child/youth worker applications, results of background checks, and related information in confidential, secured files.

REPORTING

Each sponsoring-General Assembly Entity will publicize a procedure for reporting any prohibited actions and have copies available at all times in a public place at the event. Anyone suspecting or having knowledge of a violation of child abuse may report such violation to any leader of the General Assembly Entity sponsored event. Any child or youth who suspects or has knowledge of any type of minor abuse is invited to share the knowledge with any adult leader of the General Assembly Entity sponsored event. Anyone who has knowledge or suspicion of child/youth abuse should be made aware that state law requires the immediate reporting of such abuse to the civil authorities. Any adult leader should report such violation to any Stated Clerk or Associate or Assistant Stated Clerk of the General Assembly or any other leader designated by the sponsoring General Assembly Entity of the event. Any person receiving information under this paragraph shall share that information immediately with the designated response team.

SAFE CHILD RESPONSE TEAM

At every meeting, conference, event or activity for minors planned by ~~an council or~~ Entity of the General Assembly, a Safe Child Response Team must be trained by the sponsoring ~~council or~~ Entity and be present and available throughout the entire duration of the event. This team should be comprised of at least three members, staff or appointed, **selected and sent** by the sponsoring ~~council or~~ Entity **staff**. An attorney chosen and secured by the General Assembly Entity shall be on-call for all events. The response team will familiarize itself with the terms of this **P**olicy as well as established procedures under the Rules of Discipline, *Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)* for responding to complaint(s) of alleged child/youth abuse against any teaching elder, ruling elder, employee, or volunteer in a leadership position(s) with the sponsoring Entity and any events they may sponsor.

The Safe Child Response Team shall have the following responsibilities in response to allegations of child/youth or vulnerable adult abuse or neglect incurred against any child/youth worker or event participant:

1. Immediately provide for the safety of the alleged victim(s) involved.
2. If the report alleges abuse or harassment of a minor, the response team will:
 - a. immediately ensure the allegation is reported to the civil authorities under state law;
 - b. immediately notify the parents or guardian of the minor;
 - c. notify the insurance company of the allegation and that no investigation has yet occurred.
3. Make immediate decisions concerning the temporary removal of the individual accused from any contact with **Minors children or youth** pending an investigation and/or removal of the accused from the event until a resolution of the allegations has occurred.

4. Notify designated people at the General Assembly Entity immediately of the report of alleged abuse/neglect including ~~the an~~ attorney who is on-call throughout the duration of each event, who *has been* ~~must be~~ previously secured by the General Assembly Entity in case of such allegations during each sponsored event. Any possible media requests will be handled by a designated person or office with advice from the on-call attorney, taking care to safeguard the privacy and confidentiality of all involved.

5. Consult the OGA and PMA about resources available for victims of the alleged abuse prior to each event and have those resources readily available at every event. This will provide victims and their families immediate resources that may aid in the particular spiritual, psychological, or emotional needs and trauma that arise from the devastation of abuse.

6. If the report is against a teaching elder, the response team shall send a written statement of allegation to the stated clerk of the presbytery that holds the teaching elder's membership. This written statement of allegation shall trigger the formation of an investigating committee under the Rules of Discipline of the *Book of Order: The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Part II*.

7. If the report is against a ruling elder, the response team will notify the *clerk of* session of membership that an allegation of offense has been received against an elder that triggers the formation of an investigating committee under the Rules of Discipline of the *Book of Order: The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Part II*.

8. If the report is against an employee of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, the response team will notify the person(s) or committee responsible for supervision of the employee, Human Resources, and Legal Services. The response team will request a follow-up report from the supervisory body of the outcome of any subsequent investigation or discipline.

9. If the report is against an employee of a sponsoring ~~council or~~ Entity other than Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, the response team will notify the person(s) or committee responsible for supervision of the employee. The response team will request a follow-up report from the supervisory body of the outcome of any subsequent investigation or discipline.

10. If the report is against a volunteer, or nonmember of the PC(USA), the response team will request that the General Assembly Entity appoint an investigating committee of three persons to initiate an investigation of the allegations in order to:

- a. gather any statements of abuse from those making the report, including any information from the Safety Response Team, and any party to the abuse;
- b. gather any information from the person who was accused of abuse;
- c. make written determinations and take actions appropriate to resolve the matter including, but not limited to, making recommendations for prevention as well as response.

11. Provide *for* pastoral counseling for the principal parties involved (accuser(s), possible victim(s), accused, family members).

12. A written summary of any proceedings in such cases will be maintained by the General Assembly Entities.

13. Any person bringing a report of abuse or assisting in investigating will not be adversely affected in terms and conditions of employment, church membership or affiliation, or otherwise discriminated against or discharged.

~~MANDATORY EVENT RULES FOR WORKING WITH MINORS AND VULNERABLE ADULTS CHILDREN AND YOUTH~~

The sponsoring ~~council or~~ Entity of the General Assembly shall ensure that the following measures be in place and actions taken for each event or activity involving *Minors and Vulnerable Adults* ~~children and youth~~:

1. *Child/Youth workers shall:*

- a. *respond to Minors and Vulnerable Adults with respect and consideration and treat all of them equally, regardless of race/ethnicity, color, national origin, gender, age (40 and over), marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, creed, protected disability status, citizenship status, genetic information, uniformed service or veteran status or religious affiliation; and*

b. act as a positive role model for Minors and Vulnerable Adults by maintaining an attitude of respect, patience, and maturity.

c. maintain appropriate boundaries when in positions of power with Minors or Vulnerable Adults.

d. not give money or gifts to Minors, except within the context of a group gift given to all participants in the celebration of special events or recognitions.

2. Two-adult rule: Two non-related adults must always be present in groups of *Minors or Vulnerable Adults children and youth, for both in person and online gatherings*. The only exception is if an emergency situation deems this not immediately possible. All child and youth workers and volunteers must be a minimum of four years older than the age group they lead or supervise.

3. Ratios: The adult to child ratio for all child-related events/activities is 2:10 *for both in person and online gatherings*. The adult to youth ratio for all youth-related events/activities is 2:17 *for both in person and online gatherings*. There shall also be one adult of each gender when there is one or more ~~Minors~~ minors of each gender in a group. Only in emergency situations may the ratios and gender diversity be compromised.

4. View Windows and Open Doors: When ~~Minors~~ minors and adult workers or volunteers are in a room, if the door is closed, the door must have a view window installed. If no view window is installed in the door, the door must remain open at all times.

5. Adult workers/caregivers should respect the privacy of the *Minors and Vulnerable Adults children* to whom they provide care. Responsible use of digital devices and cell phones is required in all situations (ex. Taking age-appropriate photographs and movies, not taking photographs of ~~Minors~~ minors who are not fully clothed). Adults and minors are required at all times to wear appropriate attire. *Child/youth workers are not permitted to take photographs of minors or vulnerable adults under their care or at the meeting or event and share them in any way, including on the internet, without the written permission of a parent or guardian of the minor or vulnerable adult.*

6. Age appropriate training to *Minors children and youth* should be provided regarding behavior that should be reported to caregiver or leader of the event.

7. Transportation: All adult drivers at child/youth events must have proper licensure and insurance on file with the organizing *Entity council*. All vehicles used must have seat belts for the driver and each passenger. No minor under eighty-five pounds may sit in the front seat of any vehicle. All drivers transporting minors and vulnerable adults must be over the age of twenty-five and must be informed that if their vehicle is used, their insurance would be primary if an accident occurs. If a charter bus is rented, or any outside carrier is contracted, the company hired must ensure criminal background checks on their drivers. Each vehicle must follow the ratio rules noted in point 2 in this section. Lastly, no minor may be a driver at any event or activity (this includes golf carts at events).

8. Forms: The legal guardians of each minor must provide the appropriate information and medical forms for each activity/event. The information form should include all contacts for legal guardians and the medical form must include a copy of the minor's health insurance card. Further consent forms must be signed by legal guardians for any off campus events. Any photos at the event that are used in social media or published material by the organizing *Entity council* must be released by a signed consent form from a participant's legal guardian as well as the minor. All such forms must be stored at the event site, in a secure place with restricted access.

9. Each event/activity must ensure that rules are gone over with participants at each event/activity. These rules shall include but are not limited to a code of conduct specific to the event/activity, as well as a list prohibited and expected behaviors for the specific event/activity. The code of conduct and prohibited and expected behaviors list should be given in written form to each participant and legal guardians, as well as discussed thoroughly at the beginning of the event/activity.

10. *Minors Children/youth* and adults must maintain different showering and grooming hours at events in which bathrooms and shower rooms are shared in housing. These hours must be posted on site.

11. Adults should never share sleeping quarters with *Minors children or youth*. The exception to this rule is for the occasional legal caregiver/child situation or parent/child situation. If a *Minor child/youth* requires a caregiver/parent, written permission must be given and kept on record from the *Minor's child/youth's* parent/legal guardian.

12. All volunteers and employees at any General Assembly Entity sponsored *meetings and events who are responsible to supervise Minors and vulnerable adults* must also abide by a code of conduct that emphasizes the following prohibited behaviors. Some of these prohibited behaviors include but are not restricted to:

- a. Display of sexual affection toward a **Minor child**.
- b. Use of profanity or off-color jokes.
- c. Discussion of sexual encounters with or around **Minors or Vulnerable Adults children** or in any way involving **Minors children** in personal problems or issues.
- d. Dating or becoming “romantically” involved with **Minors or Vulnerable Adults children (under the age of eighteen)**.
- e. Using or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs in the presence of **Minors and Vulnerable Adults children**.
- f. Possessing sexually oriented materials—including printed or online pornography—on church property or property being utilized for a church event.
- g. Having secrets with **Minors or Vulnerable Adults youth/children**.
- h. Staring at or commenting on **the children’s** bodies **of Minors or Vulnerable Adults**.
- i. Engaging in inappropriate or unapproved electronic communication with **Minors or Vulnerable Adults children**.
- j. Working one-on-one with **Minors or Vulnerable Adults children** in a private setting.
- k. Abusing **Minors or Vulnerable Adults youth/children** in anyway, including (but not limited to) the following:
 - Physical abuse: hit, spank, shake, slap, unnecessarily restraint.
 - Verbal abuse: degrade, threaten, or curse.
 - Sexual abuse: inappropriately touch, expose oneself, or engage in sexually oriented conversations.
 - Mental abuse: shame, humiliate, act cruelly.
 - Neglect: withhold food, water, shelter.
 - Permit **Minors or Vulnerable Adults children or youth** to engage in the following: hazing, bullying, derogatory name-calling, ridicule, humiliation, or sexual activity.

Social Media—Electronic Communications

General Social Media Policy—No minister, employee, contractor, or volunteer of the General Assembly and its Entities shall create or use a media site (Web, Facebook, YouTube, or similar) in the name of or purporting to represent the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) without the explicit written permission of the **sponsoring council**, General Assembly Entity, or event leadership. When clergy or staff, acting in their capacity as a representative of the General Assembly or its Entities, lead or coordinate a group activity using social media, each may use only official General Assembly Entity sites/channels when they have been made available by the Entity of the General Assembly. These may include Web pages, Facebook, e-mail, and similar means.

Social Media Communications

Persons who shall create public pages on behalf of General Assembly Entity programs are responsible to monitor communications and to assure that employees and volunteers do not have private (and possibly inappropriate) conversations with **Minors children and youth and Vulnerable Adults**.

Persons having Facebook privileges on behalf of the General Assembly Entity shall treat unsolicited communication or “friending” from **Minors children and youth and Vulnerable Adults** under age as an unauthorized text message. No reply may be given except to indicate by a posting that accepting a “friend” invitation by under-age **Minors children and Vulnerable Adults** is a violation of the code of conduct.

If a **Minors children and youth and Vulnerable Adults** reveals abuse or inappropriate interactions with an adult, the person must report this information in the manner of any “suspected abuse.”

When using Facebook to communicate with ~~Minors children and youth~~ and *Vulnerable Adults*, the authorized minister shall inform parents/guardians of each ~~Minor child and youth~~ and *Vulnerable Adult* that the latter is communicating with the person via Facebook, providing the parent/guardian the opportunity to disapprove or to participate in a group.

Social Networking Code of Conduct

Each person who leads using the resources of social media shall apply this Social Networking Code of Conduct:

- Prohibit comments that are, or could be construed by any observer, to be harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating.
- Prohibit sexually oriented conversations or discussions about sexual activities.
- Prohibit private messages between employees and volunteers and ~~Minors children and youth~~ and *Vulnerable Adults*.
- Prohibit posting inappropriate pictures (for example, sexually suggestive, exploitive, or voyeuristic) or inappropriate comments on pictures.
- Provide ~~Minors children and youth~~ and *Vulnerable Adults*, and their parents with this Social Networking Code of Conduct.
- Encourage parents to play a role in monitoring their ~~Minors children's and youth's~~ and *Vulnerable Adults* interactions with employees and volunteers.
- Continuously remind ~~Minors children and youth~~ and *Vulnerable Adults* how to interact appropriately through social networking sites.
- Deny participation by individuals who repeatedly violate the code of conduct.

At the institution of the use of social media, the authorized minister shall present this Social Networking Code of Conduct to ~~Minors children and youth~~ and *Vulnerable Adults* and parents/guardians.

Misuse of Technology

No minister, employee, contractor, or volunteer of the General Assembly and its Entities shall misuse technology in the following ways:

- *Using technology to send suggestive messages and/or images to a Minor.*
- *Having contacts by misuse of technology to contact a Minor or vulnerable adult that is not preapproved by the Minor's or vulnerable adult's legal guardian with a signed waiver, unless the contact is on an open public medium, such as a church or Entity website or church or Entity social media program.*
- *To view pornography or sites (ex. dating websites) that include pornography or naked bodies on the premises of a General Assembly Entity event, activity, or meeting, no matter where it is held or by which Entity it is organized.*

SIGNING OF POLICY AND APPLICATION TO SERVE

Each adult engaged in the leadership of a General Assembly Entity event shall acknowledge receipt of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and Its Procedures by signing *a form verifying they read the Policy an application to be employed, volunteer, or supervise*. In addition, each person engaged in the leadership of a General Assembly Entity event shall consent to all comprehensive background checks required and shall comply with any consequences of a reported violation of this ~~P~~policy.

PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW WHEN AN ENTITY IS PROVIDING CARE FOR MINORS OUTSIDE THE U.S.

There are times when a General Assembly Entity may offer care for minors at a meeting, conference, or event to be held outside the United States (ex. a regional meeting of World Mission liaisons and/or mission co-workers). The organizing Entity will take all appropriate actions to comply with this Policy to the extent they can be complied with, considering the venue of the meeting, the resources and facilities available, and the laws of the country of the venue. Exceptions should be discussed and addressed with leadership of the Entity and its legal advisors.

PROCESS TO REVISE THIS POLICY AND ITS PROCEDURES

Between meetings of the General Assembly proposed changes to this Policy and its procedures shall be submitted to the Mid Council Ministries office in the OGA and the Legal Services Office of the Administrative Services Group who will review and present any proposed changes to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation Board of Directors (“A Corp.”) for review and approval, after consultation with the Coordinating Committees of the Board of the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. Changes will become effective when approved by the Board of the A Corp. Changes approved by A Corp. that are substantive, and more than mere editorial changes, should be reported by A Corp. Board to the next meetings of the General Assembly after the changes are approved. The General Assembly can receive and accept those changes, but any assembly may revise this Policy with or without a report of changes from the A Corp.

Rationale

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve the above amendments to the “Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and Its Procedures”. The 222nd General Assembly (2016) approved and implemented the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and Its Procedures following the mandate of the *Book of Order* in G-3.0106 that all councils have a child protection policy and to supplement the Sexual Misconduct Policy and the Standards of Ethical Conduct approved by the 219th General Assembly (2010) and amended by COGA in 2013.

These proposed changes reflect clarifications of definitions in line with above General Assembly policies and standards, application of the policy to General Assembly entities and employees, added procedures to follow when a General Assembly entity is providing care outside of the United States, added section on Misuse of Technology, and clarified the approval process in between meetings of the General Assembly. A detailed description of changes can be found in the Resource section under Table of the Proposed Changes to the Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 00-05

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 00-05.

As the makers of the original resolution (Item 05-09 from the 222nd General Assembly (2016)) to Ensure Approval and Implementation of Child/Youth Protection Policies and Resources in the PC(USA) and Rrsolution (Item 11-09 from the 223rd General Assembly (2018)) on Sexual Misconduct in the PC(USA), the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns has long been on the forefront of advocating for policy changes that will prevent sexual abuse within the PC(USA).

Because all sexual abuse is an abuse of power, certain populations—such as children and youth, and developmentally disabled adults—are more vulnerable to abuse and are often the targets of sexual misconduct within the church. To the extent that the church of Jesus Christ is grounded in white supremacy and patriarchy, it also creates situations that leave women vulnerable to sexual misconduct from clergy as well as from male members of their congregations.

ACWC is particularly appreciative that the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly worked cooperatively with ACWC for input on these important policy changes. It is of utmost importance that the PC(USA) approve these policies to protect the vulnerable.

Item 00-06

Approved with amendment. (See pp. 23, 25.)

On Amending Standing Rule B.3.a. Regarding Corresponding Members—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) amend Standing Rule B.3.a. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“a. The following persons shall be corresponding members: Moderators of earlier General Assemblies; the Stated Clerk, Associate and Assistant Stated Clerks, and other members of the staff of the Office of the General Assembly as designated by the Stated Clerk; the members of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly; the members of the ~~PMA Executive~~ *PMAB Coordinating Committee* and staff of the Presbyterian Mission Agency *designated by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board*, and of the ~~divisions~~ *ministry areas* and related entities designated by the council; *the chair (or co-chairs) of the Board of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, and other persons designated by the Board*; all members of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution; the executives *or, when there is no executive, the stated clerks* of synods; one person designated by each entity reporting directly to the General Assembly, including permanent, special, and advisory committees (additional persons may be designated by such bodies if authorized by the Moderator of the preceding General Assembly in consultation with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly); the moderator of Presbyterian Women in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc. or her designee; and the presidents (or their designee) of the theological institutions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and seminaries related by covenant agreement.”

Rationale

After the shift in governance of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, to an independent board as approved by the 223rd General Assembly (2018), staff and elected leadership realized that there may be lack of clarity in the Standing Rules regarding who would appoint certain persons with corporate responsibility as corresponding members of the General Assembly so that they might be available to support the discernment work of assembly committees and plenary sessions. Recommendation 1 utilizes an existing provision of Standing Rule B.3.a. to have these persons seated as corresponding members by action of the Co-Moderators of the previous assembly in consultation with COGA. Recommendation 2 offers an amendment to the Standing Rules of the General Assembly to resolve this situation for the longer term by giving the Board of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, the authority to name its own corresponding members. This recommendation also cleans up other outdated language related to corresponding members from the Presbyterian Mission Agency and its board.

Item 00-07

Approved with amendment. (For amendments, see pp. 21–22, 26.)

Revision of the Bylaws of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation—From the Administrative Services Group.

The Administrative Services Group recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve the revised Bylaws of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

BYLAWS of the PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.), A CORPORATION

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation (“Corporation”), is the principal Corporation of and established by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (hereinafter sometimes referred to as the “General Assembly”) to facilitate the management of its corporate affairs, as provided in the Form of Government of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and was¹ originally formed on March 28, 1799 by Act of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation is subject to the Constitution of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the direction of the General Assembly. The General Assembly may alter, amend, expand, revoke or otherwise change any authority granted to ~~The the~~ Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation. No amendment or change to the bylaws of ~~The the~~ Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation shall be effective until approved ~~and ratified~~ by the General Assembly.²

Office and Fiscal Year

Section 1.01. Offices. The Corporation may have offices at such places within or without the United States of America as the Board of Directors may from time to time appoint or the business of the Corporation requires.

Section 1.02. Fiscal Year. The fiscal year of the Corporation shall begin on the first day of January in each year.

¹ Pursuant to an action of the 223rd General Assembly (2018), a partial sentence, referencing the Corporation tracing its origin to Trustees of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, was deleted.

² This paragraph was added pursuant to an action of the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

Board of Directors**Section 2.01. Selection and Term of Directors.**

(a) The Board of Directors of the Corporation shall be ~~fourteen~~ **eleven** in number. Any vacancies in such number between General Assemblies shall be filled promptly, pursuant to the procedures of Section 2.03 of these bylaws, subject to the person or persons filling such vacancy or vacancies having been first recommended by the relevant council, agency, or office of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) with respect to the Directors in Section 2.01(b) below, and subject in all cases to the Board of Directors of the Corporation first consulting with the General Assembly Committee on Representation and the General Assembly Nominating Committee.

(b) The governing board of directors, trustees, or committee of the following councils, agencies, committees, or offices of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall, in consultation with the General Assembly Committee on Representation and the General Assembly Nominating Committee, each recommend to the General Assembly Nominating Committee three persons (not an employee of such council, agency, or office), to serve as a Director of the Corporation, from which the General Assembly Nominating Committee would choose one:

(1) The Office of the General Assembly: one person to serve as a Director of the Corporation;

(2) The Presbyterian Mission Agency: one person to serve as a Director of the Corporation;

(3) The ~~Foundation of the~~ Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) **Foundation**: one person to serve as a Director of the Corporation;

(4) The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan ~~Program Corporation~~, Inc.: one person to serve as a Director of the Corporation;

(5) The Presbyterian Publishing Corporation: one person to serve as a Director of the Corporation;

~~(5)~~**(6)** Presbyterian Women *in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc.*: (not also a member of any of the councils, agencies, committees, or offices of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in (1) through (5) above or (7) or (8) below): one person to serve as Director of the Corporation;

~~(6)~~**(7)** The *Racial Equity* Advocacy Committee³ ~~for Racial Ethnic Concerns~~ of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (not also ~~to be~~ a member of any of the councils, agencies, committees, or offices of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in (1) through (6) ~~or~~ above or (8) below): one person to serve as a Director of the Corporation; ~~and~~

~~(7)~~**(8)** The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (not also ~~to be~~ a member of any of the councils, agencies, committees, or offices of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in (1) through (7) above): one person to serve as a Director of the Corporation; ~~and~~

(9) *The Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.): one person to serve as a Director of the Corporation.*

(10) Should the Board of Directors of the Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) not provide for the submission to the General Assembly Nominating Committee of persons from which the General Assembly Nominating Committee may choose a nominee by that committee's published deadline, this board member position shall become an additional at-large Director of the Corporation and shall be nominated as described in section 2.01(d) below. It is understood that, should the 224th General Assembly approve these revised Bylaws, the deadline for the Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to submit such persons shall be during the General Assembly at a time set by the General Assembly Nominating Committee.

(c) The General Assembly Nominating Committee shall nominate as Directors the persons recommended through the process of Section 2.01(b) of these bylaws unless, as to any person recommended, such person fails to satisfy the requirements of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) or these bylaws. In such case, the General Assembly Nominating Committee shall immediately request, and the governing board of directors or trustees of the relevant council, agency, or office of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall immediately provide, a new recommendation to the General Assembly Nominating Committee.

³ *The title of this Advocacy Committee was changed by action of the 223rd General Assembly (2018).*

(d) The General Assembly Nominating Committee shall, in addition, nominate **four three** at-large Directors to the Board of the Corporation. ~~For nominees for election at the 223rd General Assembly (2018), one such nominee shall be proposed by and selected from the members of the Way Forward Commission appointed by the 222nd General Assembly and one such nominee shall be proposed by and selected from the members of the Committee for the Review of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (the "All Agency Review Committee").~~

(e) Nominations from the floor of the General Assembly shall be permitted only as to the **four three** at-large Directors of the Corporation.

(f) *The General Assembly, by a majority vote, shall elect the Board of Directors from among those recommended or nominated pursuant to Sections 2.01 (b)-(e) above.* Each Director of the Corporation shall serve a term of four (4) years, except that:

(1) A Director shall be eligible if recommended, nominated, and elected to serve a second four (4) year term as a Director of the Corporation; and

(2) No Director shall serve as a Director of the Corporation for more than eight (8) years in total.⁴

2.(g) The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly shall serve ex officio as a member of the Board of Directors, with voice but not vote, at all meetings of the Board of Directors and its committees, whether in open or closed session. It is understood that the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly is employed by Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation.

Section 2.02. Directors of the Corporation's Constituent Corporations. The persons from time to time serving as Directors of the Corporation shall, by virtue of their offices, constitute the directors or trustees of each corporation listed in Annex A hereto (which corporations so listed are referred to collectively in these bylaws as "Constituent Corporations").

Section 2.03. Resignations of Directors; Other Vacancies.

(a) Resignation. Any Director of the Corporation may resign at any time by giving written notice of such resignation to the Secretary of the Corporation, to be effective upon receipt or at a later time stated therein.

(b) Disability. If a Director is unable to perform substantially all of his or her duties and responsibilities by reason of illness, injury, or incapacity for a period exceeding six months, such Director shall tender, or shall be deemed to have tendered, his or her resignation to the Secretary of the Corporation. As soon as practicable thereafter (but in any event not later than at its next regularly scheduled meeting), the Board of Directors shall determine whether to accept such resignation.

(c) Vacancies. In case of a vacancy on the Board of Directors by death, disability, or resignation, a successor to fill the unexpired term shall be nominated by the entity which nominated the former Director in the same manner as provided in Section 2.01 of these bylaws for the selection of Directors, subject to approval by the General Assembly at its next meeting but with full authority as a Director pending such meeting. [For clarification, this requires the identification of three (3) nominees in the manner described in (revised) 2.01(b), with a single nominee selected by the **General Assembly Nominating Committee GANC** and appointed by the (Co-)Moderator(s) **of the General Assembly.**]

Section 2.04. Meetings of Directors. Every meeting of the Board of Directors of the Corporation shall be, without further notice or action, a meeting of the board of directors or trustees of each of the Constituent Corporations, as to matters concerning such Constituent Corporation.

Section 2.05. Powers; Liability.

(a) The Board of Directors shall have full power to conduct, manage, and direct the business and affairs of the Corporation. All powers of the Corporation are hereby granted to and vested in the Board of Directors **in accordance with the Articles of Incorporation, these Bylaws, and applicable law and subject to the direction of the General Assembly so far as such direction shall be lawful and in accordance with the constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and of the United States of America.**

(b) A Director of the Corporation shall not be personally liable for monetary damages as such for any action taken, or any failure to take any action, unless the Director has breached or failed to perform the duties of his or her office as may be defined under applicable law and the breach or failure to perform constitutes self-dealing, willful misconduct or recklessness.

⁴ Section 2.01 was amended pursuant to an action of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) by deleting the original language of Section 2.01 and adding Sections 2.01(a) through (f).

The provisions of this subsection shall not apply to the responsibility or liability of a Director pursuant to any criminal statute or the liability of a Director for the payment of taxes pursuant to local, state or Federal law.

Section 2.06. Organization. The Board of Directors of the Corporation shall elect from among its members a Chair *or Co-Chairs* of the Board. The Chair *or Co-Chairs* shall serve a term of two years and may, at the discretion of the Board, be re-elected to up to two more two-year terms during such Director's tenure on the Board of Directors, for a maximum of six consecutive years. *If the Board of Directors elects a Chair rather than Co-Chairs, The the* Board of Directors may elect from among its members a Vice-Chair of the Board, subject to the same term limitations as the Chair, to serve as Chair in the absence of the Chair, but not to succeed the Chair automatically upon the expiration of the term of the Chair. At every meeting of the Board of Directors, the Chair *or Co-Chairs*, or, in the absence of the Chair, the Vice Chair, or in the absence of *both Co-Chairs or the Chair and* the Vice Chair, a Chair pro tem chosen by a majority vote of a quorum of Directors then present, shall preside. The Board of Directors shall appoint a Secretary of the Board, which may be the Secretary of the Corporation, to serve at the pleasure of the Board of Directors. The Secretary or, in the absence of the Secretary, Secretary pro tem chosen by a majority vote of a quorum of the Directors then present, shall act as secretary of the meeting and shall record the minutes of the meeting.⁵

Section 2.07. Place of Meeting. Meetings of the Board of Directors may be held at such place within or without the United States of America as the Board of Directors may from time to time appoint, or as may be designated in the notice of the meeting.

Section 2.08. Regular Meetings. Regular meetings of the Board of Directors shall be held at such time as shall be designated from time to time by resolution of the Board of Directors. One such meeting each year shall be designated as a meeting for organization, *and* election of officers ~~and election of members of the Executive Committee. Members of the Executive Committee and officers.~~ Officers may also be elected at any other meeting of the Board of Directors. At every regular meeting, the Board of Directors shall transact such business as may properly be brought before the meeting. Notice of regular meetings need not be given unless otherwise required by law or these bylaws.⁶

Section 2.09. Special Meetings. Special meetings of the Board of Directors shall be held whenever called by the Chair *or Co-Chairs* of the Board or by three or more Directors. Notice of each such meeting shall be given in person, by telephone, by email or by mail to each Director at least 24 hours (in the case of notice in person, by telephone, or by email), or 48 hours (in the case of notice by telephone or email with respect to any Ohio corporation), or five days (in the case of notice by mail) before the time at which the meeting is to be held. Every such notice shall state the time and place of the meeting.⁷

Section 2.10. Quorum, Manner of Acting, and Adjournment. Two-thirds (66.67%) of the Directors in office shall be present at each meeting in order to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. Every Director shall be entitled to one vote. Directors may not vote by proxy. Except as otherwise specified in the articles or these bylaws or provided by statute, the acts of a majority of the Directors present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the acts of the Board of Directors. In the absence of a quorum, a majority of the Directors present and voting may adjourn the meeting from time to time until a quorum is present. The Directors shall act only as a Board and the individual Directors shall have no power as such, except that any action which may be taken at a meeting of the Directors may be taken without a meeting by unanimous written consent, if a consent or consents in writing setting forth the action so taken shall be signed by all of the Directors in office and shall be filed with the Secretary in person, by mail, or by electronic communication.⁸

Section 2.11. Other Committees

(a) The ~~Committees of the Board shall be the Administrative Committees of the By like action the~~ Board of Directors may establish one or more ~~other~~ committees ~~or "body "other bodies" as such term is defined and used in 15 Pa. C.S. §§5103, and 5721,~~ with each such ~~other~~ committee ~~or other body~~ to consist of two or more Directors. The Chair *or Co-Chairs* of the Board may be, ex officio, a voting member(s) of each such ~~other~~ committee ~~or other body~~ except, a nominating committee; and shall designate or appoint the chair of each particular committee ~~or other body~~. The Board of Directors may designate one or more Directors as alternate members of any such committee ~~or other body~~, who may replace any absent or disqualified member at any meeting of the committee ~~or other body~~. In the absence or disqualification of a member and the alternate or alternates, if any, designated for such member of any such committee ~~or other body~~, the member or members thereof present at any meeting and not disqualified from voting, whether or not the member or members constitute a quorum, may unanimously appoint another Director to act at the meeting in the place of any such absent or disqualified member. Each committee ~~or other body~~ of the Board of Directors shall serve at the pleasure of the Board of Directors. Any member of such committee ~~or other body~~ may be removed, either for or without cause, by the Board of Directors.

⁵ Amended pursuant to an action by the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

⁶ Amended pursuant to an action by the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

⁷ Amended pursuant to an action by the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

⁸ Amended pursuant to an action by the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

(b) No committee of the Board of Directors, ~~other than the Executive Committee~~, shall, pursuant to resolution of the Board of Directors or otherwise, exercise any of the powers or authority vested by these bylaws, or other applicable law in the Board of Directors as such, but any other committee of the Board of Directors may make recommendations to the Board of Directors ~~or Executive Committee~~ concerning the exercise of such powers and authority.

(c) A majority of the Directors in office designated to a committee, or Directors designated to replace them as provided in this section, shall be present at each meeting to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business and the acts of a majority of the Directors in office designated to a committee or their replacements shall be the acts of the committee.

(d) Each committee shall keep regular minutes of its proceedings and report such proceedings periodically to the Board of Directors. Sections 2.07, 2.08, and 2.09 shall be applicable to committees of the Board of Directors.

(e) One half (50%) of the Directors of the Corporation in office assigned to a committee shall be present at each committee meeting in order to constitute a quorum for the doing of business.⁹

Section 2.12. Compensation and Expenses. Except as permitted by Section 4.15 of these bylaws, no compensation of any kind shall be paid directly or indirectly by the Corporation to, and no loan or other extension of credit shall be made for the benefit of, any Director, as such, or as an officer or employee of the Corporation. Directors may be reimbursed for expenses in a manner consistent with any applicable policy approved by the General Assembly for the Corporation or any other agency of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and thereafter adopted for such ~~purposed purposes~~ by the Board of Directors.¹⁰

Section 2.13. Authority to Delegate Powers to Other Body. The Board of Directors shall have the authority to appoint a specific person or persons, agency, or entity other than ~~of~~ the Board of Directors to act on its behalf as an “other body”, as such term is defined and used in 15 Pa. C.S. §§5103, and 5721, and to assume such governing body powers and responsibilities, and such other duties and responsibilities, as may be delegated to such other body by resolution of the Board of Directors, provided that such delegation shall be consistent with the directions from time to time of the General Assembly. ***An other body appointed by the Board of Directors under this section is not a Committee of the Board of Directors as described in Section 2.11.*** Such delegation of governing body powers and responsibilities shall not be exclusive ~~or permanent, and shall be for a specified period of time.~~ ~~and the~~ The Board of Directors shall continue to have the authority and power to act in lieu of such other body or to remove or limit the powers and authority granted to such other body, as necessary to fulfill the Board of Director’s fiduciary duties to the Corporation. ~~Unless otherwise provided in the delegation by the Board of Directors, when~~ ***When*** acting on behalf of the Corporation, such other body shall be governed by and subject to the applicable provisions of these bylaws, including without limitation provisions relating to fiduciary duties and conflicts of interest. Such other body shall report to the Board of Directors upon request and the report shall be recorded in the minutes of meetings of the Board of Directors.¹¹ ***Article V (relating to indemnification) shall apply to the other body and to the members of an other body individually.***

Notice - Waivers — Meetings

Section 3.01. Notice, What Constitutes. Whenever written notice is required to be given to any person under the provisions of the articles, these bylaws, or applicable law, it may be given to such person, either personally or by sending a copy thereof by first class mail, postage prepaid, or by email, to his or her address appearing on the books of the Corporation, or in the case of Directors of the Corporation, supplied by the Director to the Corporation for the purpose of notice. If the notice is sent by mail or by email, it shall be deemed to have been given to the person entitled thereto when deposited in the United States mail or upon transmission to such person. A notice of meeting shall specify the place, day and hour of the meeting and any other information required by law or these bylaws. When a meeting is adjourned, it shall not be necessary to give any notice of the adjourned meeting or of the business to be transacted at an adjourned meeting, other than by announcement, recorded in the minutes, at the meeting at which such adjournment is taken.¹²

Section 3.02. Waivers of Notice. Whenever any written notice is required to be given under the provisions of the articles, these bylaws, or applicable law, a waiver thereof in writing, signed by the person or persons entitled to such notice, whether before or after the time stated therein, shall be deemed equivalent to the giving of such notice. Except as otherwise required by this section and by Section 6.06 of these bylaws, neither the business to be transacted at nor the purpose of a meeting need be specified in the waiver of notice of such meeting. Attendance of a person at any meeting shall constitute a waiver of notice of such meeting, except where a person attends a meeting for the express purpose of objecting, at the beginning of the meeting, to the transaction of any business because the meeting was not lawfully called or convened.

⁹ Section 2.11 amendments were made pursuant to action of the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

¹⁰ Section 2.12 amended pursuant to action of the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

¹¹ Section 2.13 added pursuant to action of the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

¹² Amended pursuant to action of the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

Section 3.03. Modification of Proposal Contained in Notice. Whenever the language of a proposed resolution is included in a written notice of a meeting, the meeting considering the resolution may without further notice adopt it with such clarifying or other amendments as do not enlarge its original purpose.

Section 3.04. Conference Telephone Meetings. One or more persons may participate in a meeting of the Board of Directors or of a committee of the Board by means of conference telephone or other electronic communications equipment, by means of which all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other.

Participation in the meeting pursuant to this section shall constitute presence in person at such meeting. Conference and electronic meetings will follow procedures approved by Board of Directors from time to time.¹³

Officers

Section 4.01. Number, Qualifications and Designation. The officers of the Corporation shall be a President, a Chief Financial Officer, one or more Vice Presidents, (including but not limited to Executive Vice Presidents and Senior Vice Presidents), a Secretary, a Treasurer, a Controller, and such other officers as may be elected in accordance with the provisions of Section 4.02 of this Article. Any number of the offices may be held by the same person. Officers may, but need not be Directors, and shall be natural persons of full age. The Chair *or Co-Chairs* of the Board elected under Section 2.05 shall also be an officer *or officers* of the Corporation.¹⁴

Section 4.02. Selection and Term of Office. The officers of the Corporation shall be selected and their terms of office shall be determined as follows:

(a) The President shall be elected by the Board of Directors for a term of four years subject to confirmation by the General Assembly and shall be eligible for reelection. ***The Board of Directors shall consult with the Stated Clerk about any candidate for President or interim President before the candidate's name is brought to the Board of Directors for election.*** Other officers of the Corporation shall be nominated by a nominating committee of the Board of Directors in consultation with the President and elected by the Board annually.

(b) The Board of Directors may from time to time elect such other officers as the business of the Corporation may require, including a Secretary and one or more Assistant Secretaries, each of whom has such authority, and perform such duties as are provided in these bylaws, or as the Board of Directors may from time to time determine. The Board of Directors may delegate to any officer or committee of the Corporation the power to elect subordinate or other officers and to retain or appoint employees or other agents, or committees thereof, and to prescribe the authority and duties of such subordinate or other officers, committees, employees or other agents.¹⁵

Section 4.03. Resignations. Any officer or agent¹⁶ may resign at any time by giving written notice to the Board of Directors, or to the President or the Secretary of the Corporation. Any such resignation shall take effect at the date of the receipt of such notice, or at any later time specified therein, and, unless otherwise specified therein, the acceptance of such resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective.

Section 4.04. Removal. Any elected or appointed officer, may be removed, either for or without cause, by the Board of Directors or other authority which elected or appointed such officer. The term of any offices held by an employee ends the earlier of the employee's last day of employment or last day in the office.

Section 4.05. Vacancies. A vacancy in any elective office because of death, resignation, removal, disqualification, or any other cause, shall be filled by the Board of Directors (where appropriate, subject to confirmation by the General Assembly) or by the authority to which the power to fill such office has been delegated, pursuant to Section 4.02 of this Article, as the case may be, and if the office is one for which a term is prescribed by or pursuant to these bylaws, shall be filled for the unexpired portion of the term. The refusal of the General Assembly to confirm an election, where such confirmation is required by these bylaws, shall result in the creation of a vacancy in the office affected.

Section 4.06. General Powers. All officers of the Corporation, as between themselves and the Corporation, shall respectively have such authority and perform such duties in the management of the property and affairs of the Corporation as may be determined by resolutions or orders of the Board of Directors, or, in the absence of controlling provisions in resolutions or orders of the Board of Directors, as may be provided in these bylaws.

¹³ Section 3.04 amended pursuant to action of the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

¹⁴ Section 4.01 amended pursuant to action of the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

¹⁵ Section 4.02 amended pursuant to action of the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

¹⁶ Amended pursuant to action of the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

Section 4.07. The Chair or Co-Chairs of the Board. Generally, the Chair *or Co-Chairs* of the Board shall preside at all meetings of the members of the Board of Directors, and shall perform such other duties as may from time to time be requested by the Board of Directors ~~or the Executive Committee~~.

Section 4.08. The President. The President shall be the chief executive officer of the Corporation and shall have general supervision over the activities and operations of the Corporation, subject, however, to the control of the Board of Directors. The President shall be accountable to the Board of Directors. In the event of an extended absence of the President and the Chief Financial Officer, the President shall assign one of the other senior officers of the Corporation to fulfill the duties of the office during the absence of the President. The President, or the President's designee pro tem, shall have voice but no vote at the meetings of the boards or governing committees of each of the six current national agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and such additional or successor agencies as may be created by the General Assembly. The President shall not, while holding such office, be a Director recommended pursuant to Section 2.01(b) or (c) above from any of the six current national agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); or the president, executive director, ~~stated clerk~~ *Stated Clerk*, or similar principal leader of any of those agencies.¹⁷

Section 4.09. Chief Financial Officer. The Chief Financial Officer shall be the chief financial officer of the Corporation responsible for corporate, financial, and accounting functions. The Chief Financial Officer shall perform the duties of the President in the absence of the President or as otherwise assigned by the Board of Directors or the President. The Chief Financial Officer shall sign, execute, and acknowledge, in the name of the Corporation, all deeds, mortgages, bonds, contracts, and other instruments authorized by the Board of Directors or by these bylaws. The Chief Financial Officer shall be accountable to the President.¹⁸

Section 4.10. The Vice Presidents. The Vice Presidents shall perform the duties of the Chief Financial Officer in the absence of the Chief Financial Officer and such other duties as may from time to time be assigned to them by the Board of Directors, the President, or the Chief Financial Officer. The Board of Directors of the Corporation shall cause the Vice Presidents to be accountable to the ~~Chief Financial Officer~~ *President* or to such other person as may succeed the functions of that position.¹⁹

Section 4.11. The Secretary. The Secretary or an Assistant Secretary shall attend all meetings of the Board of Directors and shall cause to be recorded personally or by an Assistant Secretary, or by the person designated by the ~~chair~~ *Chair or Co-Chairs* of the Board as secretary pro tem or secretary of the meeting, all votes of the Directors and the minutes of the meetings of the Board of Directors and of committees of the Board in a book or books to be kept for that purpose. The Secretary or Assistant Secretary shall ensure that notices are given and records and reports properly kept and filed by the Corporation as required by law. The Secretary or Assistant Secretary shall be the custodian of the seal of the Corporation and see that it is affixed to all documents to be executed on behalf of the Corporation under its seal. In general, the Secretary or Assistant Secretary shall perform all duties incident to the office of secretary, and such other duties as may from time to time be assigned to the Secretary by the Board of Directors, ~~or~~ the President, or the Chief Financial Officer. The Board of Directors of the Corporation shall cause the Secretary to be accountable to the ~~Chief Financial Officer~~ *President* or to such other person as may succeed the functions of that position.²⁰

Section 4.12. The Treasurer. The Treasurer shall have or provide for the custody of the funds or other property of the Corporation and shall keep a separate book account of the same to his or her credit as Treasurer. The Treasurer shall collect and receive, or provide for the collection and receipt of, moneys earned by or in any manner due to or received by the Corporation; shall deposit all funds in his or her custody as Treasurer in such banks or other places of deposit (including the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation (hereinafter the "Fiduciary Corporation")) as the Board of Directors may from time to time designate; shall, whenever so required by the Board of Directors, render an account showing his or her transactions as Treasurer, and, in general shall discharge such other duties as may from time to time be assigned to the Treasurer by the Board of Directors, the President, or the Chief Financial Officer. The Board of Directors of the Corporation shall cause the Treasurer to be accountable to the *President and* Chief Financial Officer or to such other person as may succeed to the functions of that position.²¹

Section 4.13. The Controller. The Controller ~~of the corporation~~ shall be responsible for maintaining the chart of accounts, accounting records, and accounting procedures of the Corporation; shall, whenever so required by the Board of Directors, render an accounting of the results of operations and financial condition of the Corporation (at least annually) and, in general

¹⁷ Section 4.08 amended pursuant to action of the 223rd General Assembly (2018). "Six agencies" is an unofficial term that refers to: Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation, Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Presbyterian Church Publishing Corporation, and Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc.

¹⁸ Section 4.09 amended pursuant to action of the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

¹⁹ Section 4.10 amended pursuant to action of the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

²⁰ Section 4.11 was amended pursuant to action of the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

²¹ Section 4.12 was amended pursuant to action of the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

shall discharge such other duties as may from time to time be assigned to the Controller by the Board of Directors, the President, or the Chief Financial Officer. The Board of Directors of the Corporation shall cause the Controller to be accountable to the ***President and*** Chief Financial Officer or to such other person as may succeed to the functions of that position.

Section 4.14. Officers' Bonds. Any officer shall give a bond for the faithful discharge of the duties of the office held by such officer in such sum, if any, and with such surety or sureties as the Board of Directors shall require, ***with*** the cost thereof to be paid by the Corporation.

Section 4.15. Compensation. The compensation of the officers, employees and other agents shall be determined from time to time by the Board of Directors, a committee of such Board, or any other body to which ***the*** power to retain or appoint such employees or other agents has been assigned or delegated pursuant to Sections ~~2.3~~, 2.11, **2.13** or 4.02 of this Article. The establishment and annual review of a consistent compensation structure for all such officers, employees, and other agents shall be the responsibility of the Board of Directors, or a committee of such Board (in either instance, in consultation with any other body or bodies to which a delegation of authority for retention or appointment of employees and agents has been made), which shall also annually review and approve the specific compensation of the five most highly-compensated such officers and employees. No full-time officer shall be prevented from receiving compensation by reason of the fact that he or she is also a Director of the Corporation. The Chair ***or Co-Chairs*** of the Board, as an officer(s), shall receive no salary or other compensation. (See also Section 2.12 of these bylaws.)²²

Section 4.16. Personnel Policies. All employees, including officer employees, shall be covered by the personnel policies, reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors, or any committee of such Board, or any other body or bodies to which a delegation of such authority has been made, which policies shall be set forth in an Employee Handbook.²³

Indemnification of Directors, Officers, etc.

Section 5.01. Scope of Indemnification.

(a) The Corporation shall indemnify an indemnified representative against any liability incurred in connection with any proceeding in which the indemnified representative may be involved as a party or otherwise, by reason of the fact that such person is or was serving in an indemnified capacity, including without limitation any liability resulting from any actual or alleged breach or neglect of duty, error, misstatement or misleading statement, negligence, gross negligence or act giving rise to strict or products liability, except:

(1) Where such indemnification is expressly prohibited by applicable law;

(2) Where the conduct of the indemnified representative has been finally determined pursuant to Section 5.06(d) or otherwise to constitute willful misconduct or recklessness as may be defined by applicable law or any other conduct sufficient in the circumstances to bar indemnification against liabilities arising from the conduct;

(3) To the extent the liability is finally determined pursuant to Section 5.06(d) or otherwise to be based upon or attributable to the indemnified representative gaining any personal pecuniary profit to which such indemnified representative was not legally entitled; or

(4) To the extent such indemnification has been finally determined in a final adjudication pursuant to Section 5.06(d) to be otherwise unlawful.

(b) If an indemnified representative is entitled to indemnification in respect of a portion, but not all, of any liabilities to which such person may be subject, the Corporation shall indemnify such indemnified representative to the maximum extent for such portion of the liabilities.

(c) The termination of a proceeding by judgment, order, settlement, conviction or upon a plea of nolo contendere or its equivalent shall not, of itself, create a presumption that the indemnified representative is not entitled to indemnification.

(d) For purposes of this Article:

(1) "Indemnified capacity" means any and all past, present and future service by an indemnified representative in one or more capacities as a Director, officer, employee or agent of the Corporation or a Constituent Corporation, or, at the request of the Corporation, as a Director, officer, employee, agent, fiduciary or trustee of another corporation, partnership, joint

²² Section 4.15 was amended pursuant to action of the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

²³ Section 4.16 was amended pursuant to action of the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

venture, trust, employee benefit plan or other entity or enterprise, *or as a member of any other body appointed by the Board pursuant to Section 2.13*;

(2) “Indemnified representative” means any and all Directors and officers of the Corporation, including any and all officers elected or committee members, employees or other agents appointed under Section 4.02(2) of these bylaws; “indemnified representative” also means any and all officers, committee members, employees and other agents elected or appointed under the power delegated to the General Assembly, or to any General Assembly agency under Section 4.02(2) of these bylaws; “indemnified representative” shall include any other person so designated by the Board of Directors.

(3) “Liability” means any damage, judgment, amount paid in settlement (provided, in the case of settlements, that the Corporation shall have given its consent to such settlement in advance of the payment thereof), fine, penalty, punitive damages, excise tax assessed with respect to an employee benefit plan, or cost or expense of any nature (including, without limitation, attorneys’ fees, costs, and disbursements); and

(4) “Proceeding” means any threatened, pending or completed action, suit, appeal or other proceeding of any nature, whether civil, criminal, administrative or investigative, whether formal or informal, and whether brought by or in the right of the Corporation, a class of its security holders, if any, or otherwise.

Section 5.02. Proceedings Initiated by Indemnified Representatives. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Article, the Corporation shall not indemnify under this Article an indemnified representative for any liability incurred in a proceeding initiated (which shall not be deemed to include counter-claims or affirmative defenses) or participated in as an intervener or amicus curiae by the person seeking indemnification unless such initiation of or participation in the proceeding is authorized, either before or after its commencement, by the affirmative vote of a majority of a quorum of the Directors of the Corporation. This section does not apply to reimbursement of expenses incurred in successfully prosecuting or defending an arbitration under Section 5.06(d) or otherwise successfully prosecuting or defending the rights of an indemnified representative granted by or pursuant to this Article.

Section 5.03. Advancing Expenses. The Corporation shall pay the expenses (including attorneys’ fees and disbursements) incurred in good faith by a Director or officer and may, by act of the Board of Directors (including the votes or consents of interested Directors), pay the expenses (including attorneys’ fees and disbursements) incurred in good faith by any other indemnified representative in advance of the final disposition of a proceeding, described in Section 5.01 upon receipt of an undertaking by or on behalf of the indemnified representative to repay such amount if it shall ultimately be determined pursuant to Section 5.06(d) or otherwise that such person is not entitled to be indemnified by the Corporation pursuant to this Article. The financial ability of an indemnified representative to repay an advance shall not be a prerequisite to the making of such advance.

Section 5.04. Securing of Indemnification Obligations. To further effect, satisfy or secure the indemnification obligations provided herein or otherwise, the Corporation may maintain insurance, obtain a letter of credit, act as self-insurer, create a reserve, trust, escrow, cash collateral or other fund or account, enter into indemnification agreements, pledge or grant a security interest in any assets or properties of the Corporation, or use any other mechanism or arrangement whatsoever in such amounts, at such costs, and upon such other terms and conditions as the Board of Directors shall deem appropriate. Absent fraud, the determination of the Board of Directors with respect to such amounts, costs, terms and conditions shall be conclusive against all security holders, if any, officers, and Directors, and shall not be subject to voidability.

Section 5.05. Payment of Indemnification. An indemnified representative who is entitled to indemnification shall be entitled thereto within 30 days after a written request for such indemnification has been delivered to the Secretary.

Section 5.06. Indemnification Procedure.

(a) An indemnified representative shall use such indemnified representative’s best efforts to notify promptly the Secretary of the commencement of any proceeding or the occurrence of any event which might give rise to a liability under this Article, but the failure so to notify the Corporation shall not relieve the Corporation of any liability which it may have to the indemnified representative under this Article or otherwise.

(b) The Corporation shall be entitled, upon notice to any such indemnified representative, to assume the defense of any proceeding with counsel reasonably satisfactory to the indemnified representative, or a majority of the indemnified representatives involved in such proceeding if there be more than one. If the Corporation notifies the indemnified representative of its election to defend the proceeding, the Corporation shall have no liability for the expenses (including attorneys’ fees and disbursements) of the indemnified representative incurred in connection with the defense of such proceeding subsequent to such notice, unless (i) such expenses (including attorneys’ fees and disbursements) have been authorized by the Corporation, (ii) the Corporation shall not in fact have employed counsel reasonably satisfactory to such indemnified representative or indemnified representatives to assume the defense of such proceeding, or (iii) it shall have been determined pursuant to Section

5.06(d) that the indemnified representative was entitled to indemnification for such expenses under this Article or otherwise. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the indemnified representative may elect to retain counsel at the indemnified representative's own cost and expense to participate in the defense of such proceeding.

(c) The Corporation shall not be required to obtain the consent of the indemnified representative to the settlement of any proceeding which the Corporation has undertaken to defend if the Corporation assumes full and sole responsibility for such settlement and the settlement grants the indemnified representative an unqualified release in respect of all liabilities at issue in the proceeding. Whether or not the Corporation has elected to assume the defense of any proceeding, no indemnified representative shall have any right to enter into any full or partial settlement of the proceeding without the prior written consent of the Corporation (which consent shall not be unreasonably withheld), nor shall the Corporation be liable for any amount paid by an indemnified representative pursuant to any settlement to which the Corporation has not so consented.

(d) Any dispute related to the right to indemnification as provided under this Article shall be decided only by arbitration in the metropolitan area in which the principal executive offices of the Corporation are located at the time, in accordance with the commercial arbitration rules then in effect of the American Arbitration Association, before a panel of three arbitrators, one of whom shall be selected by the Corporation, the second of whom shall be selected by the indemnified representative and the third of whom shall be selected by the other two arbitrators. In the absence of the American Arbitration Association, or if for any reason arbitration under the arbitration rules of the American Arbitration Association cannot be initiated, and if one of the parties fails or refuses to select an arbitrator, or the arbitrators selected by the Corporation and the indemnified representative cannot agree on the selection of the third arbitrator within 30 days after such time as the corporation and the indemnified representative have each been notified of the selection of the other's arbitrator, the necessary arbitrator or arbitrators shall be selected by the presiding judge of the court of general jurisdiction in such metropolitan area. The party or parties challenging the right of an indemnified representative to the benefits of this Article shall have the burden of proof. The Corporation shall reimburse an indemnified representative for the expenses (including attorneys' fees and disbursements) incurred in successfully prosecuting or defending such arbitration. Any award entered by the arbitrators shall be final, binding and nonappealable and judgment may be entered thereon by any party in accordance with applicable law in any court of competent jurisdiction, except that the corporation shall be entitled to interpose as a defense in any such judicial enforcement proceeding any prior final judicial determination adverse to the indemnified representative under Section 5.01(a)(2) or(3) in a proceeding not directly involving indemnification under this Article. This arbitration provision shall be specifically enforceable.

(e) Upon a payment to any indemnified representative under this Article, the Corporation shall be subrogated to the extent of such payment to all of the rights of the indemnified representative to recover against any person for such liability, and the indemnified representative shall execute all documents and instruments required and shall take such other action as may be necessary to secure such rights, including the execution of such documents as may be necessary for the Corporation to bring suit to enforce such rights.

Section 5.07. Discharge of Duty. An indemnified representative shall be deemed to have discharged such person's duty to the Corporation if he or she has relied in good faith on information, advice or an opinion, report or statement prepared by:

(a) One or more officers or employees of the Corporation whom such indemnified representative reasonably believes to be reliable and competent with respect to the matter presented;

(b) Legal counsel, public accountants or other persons as to matters that the indemnified representative reasonably believes are within the person's professional or expert competence; or

(c) A committee of the Board of Directors on which he or she does not serve as to matters within its area of designated authority, which committee he or she reasonably believes to merit confidence.

Section 5.08. Contract Rights: Amendment or Repeal. All rights to indemnification under this Article shall be deemed a contract between the Corporation and the indemnified representatives pursuant to which the Corporation and each indemnified representative intend to be legally bound. Any repeal, amendment or modification hereof shall be prospective only and shall not affect any rights or obligations then existing.

Section 5.09. Scope of Article. The indemnification of indemnified representatives, as authorized by this Article, shall not be deemed exclusive of any other rights to which those seeking indemnification or advancement of expenses may be entitled under any statute, agreement, vote of the General Assembly or disinterested Directors or otherwise, both as to action in an official capacity and as to action in any other capacity. The indemnification provided by or granted pursuant to this Article shall continue as to a person who has ceased to be an indemnified representative in respect of matters arising prior to such time, and shall inure to the benefit of the heirs, executors, administrators, and personal representatives of such a person.

Section 5.10. Reliance on Provisions. Each person who shall act as an indemnified representative of the Corporation shall be deemed to be doing so in reliance upon the rights of indemnification provided by this Article.²⁴

Miscellaneous

Section 6.01. Corporate Seal. The Corporation shall have a corporate seal in the form of a design adopted by the 197th General Assembly (1985) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), together with the words: “PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.), A CORPORATION--FOUNDED 1799 PENNSYLVANIA.”

Section 6.02. Checks. All checks, notes, bills of exchange or other orders in writing shall be signed by such person or persons as the Board of Directors may from time to time designate.

Section 6.03. Contracts. Except as otherwise provided in these bylaws, the Board of Directors may authorize any officer or officers, agent or agents, to enter into any contract or to execute or deliver any instrument on behalf of the Corporation, and such authority may be general or confined to specific instances.

Section 6.04. Deposits. All funds of the Corporation shall be deposited from time to time to the credit of the Corporation in such banks, trust companies, or other depositories as the Board of Directors may approve or designate, and all such funds shall be withdrawn only upon ~~the authority of the order or by~~ checks signed by, or bearing the authorized facsimile signature of such one or more officers, employees, or agents as the Board of Directors shall from time to time determine. The name or accounts to which such deposits are made, and the name of the Corporation on checks drawn against such accounts may be “Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)” and may include such other words including the name of the Corporation and an appropriate designation to identify by purpose or otherwise. Funds of the Corporation may also be deposited with the Fiduciary Corporation.

Section 6.05. Annual Report of Directors: Accounting System.

(a) The Board of Directors shall direct the President and the Chief Financial Officer to present at a regular meeting of the Board in every year a report, verified by such officer, showing in appropriate detail the following:

(1) The assets, liabilities and fund balances, including the trust funds, of the Corporation as of the end of the fiscal year immediately preceding the date of the report;

(2) The principal changes in assets, liabilities and fund balances, including trust funds, during the year immediately preceding the date of the report;

(3) The revenue and receipts of the Corporation, both unrestricted and restricted to particular purposes, for the year immediately preceding the date of the report, including separate data with respect to each trust fund held by or for the Corporation and

(4) The expenses or disbursements of the Corporation, for both general and restricted purposes, during the year immediately preceding the date of the report, including separate data with respect to each trust fund held by or for the Corporation.

(b) The annual report shall be filed with the minutes of the meeting of the Board and shall be transmitted to the General Assembly.

(c) Financial statements reported on by independent certified public accountants may be statements which have been combined with those of the Fiduciary Corporation.²⁵

Section 6.06. Amendment of Bylaws. These bylaws may be amended or repealed, or new bylaws may be adopted either (i) by the action of a majority of Directors present and voting at any regular or special meeting of the Board of Directors at which a quorum is present, if ten days’ written notice of such proposed amendment, repeal, or new bylaws is given to each Director, or (ii) by the action at any regular meeting of the Board of Directors of a majority of all of the Directors in office, where no notice of such proposed amendment, repeal or new bylaws has been given. Any such amendment, repeal, or new bylaws shall be consistent with the Form of Government of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and shall require approval by the General Assembly. [The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation is subject to the Constitution of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the direction of the General Assembly. The General Assembly may alter, amend, expand, revoke or otherwise change any authority granted to ~~The~~ the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation. No amendment or change to the bylaws

²⁴ Article V amended pursuant to action of the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

²⁵ Section 6.05 was amended pursuant to action of the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

of ~~The the~~ Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation shall be effective until approved ~~and ratified~~ by the General Assembly.²⁶

Section 6.07. Constituent Corporations. A list of Constituent Corporations is attached hereto as Appendix A. The bylaws of the Constituent Corporations shall conform to the laws of the state in which the Constituent Corporation is chartered and shall be, in so far as legally possible, consistent with these bylaws.

**ANNEX A
CONSTITUENT CORPORATIONS
OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.), A CORPORATION**

1. GENERAL ASSEMBLY MISSION BOARD OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.), INC. (Incorporated in Georgia)
2. THE HISTORICAL FOUNDATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN AND REFORMED CHURCHES, INC. (Incorporated in North Carolina)
3. THE HUBBARD PRESS (Incorporated in Ohio)
4. PEDCO, INC. (Incorporated in Delaware)
5. THE PRESBYTERIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY (Incorporated in Pennsylvania)
6. PRESBYTERIAN LIFE, INC. (Incorporated in Pennsylvania)
7. PRESBYTERIAN PUBLISHING HOUSE OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.), INC. (Incorporated in Georgia)
8. BOARD OF FOREIGN MISSIONS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.) (Incorporated in Pennsylvania)
9. COMMISSION ON ECUMENICAL MISSION AND RELATIONS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.) (Incorporated in New York)
10. THE WOMAN'S BOARD OF FOREIGN MISSIONS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.) (Incorporated in New York)

Rationale

The attached chart outlines recommended changes to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, bylaws from the A Corporation board of directors.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 00-07

Amendments to the A Corporation Bylaws

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) that Item 00-07 presents the following constitutional issues.

Section 2.01 Selection and Term of Directors: The amendments would expand the board to fourteen members from the current eleven members. Of these fourteen, nine shall be nominated and elected from persons proposed by entities of the General Assembly, and four shall be nominated and elected as at-large members of the board. (The proposed bylaws do not identify how the fourteenth member shall be nominated and elected.) The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advised the 223rd General Assembly (2018) regarding this section of the bylaws,

The high proportion of restricted nominees to at-large nominees (8 out of 11; 10 out of 11 in 2018), and the restriction on floor nominations for restricted nominees challenges the principle that persons are in fact governed by those they have chosen (2.02b, e). A higher number of truly at-large directors—at least equal in number to restricted directors—would both give at least equal voice to the larger church and allow for greater diversity on the Board consistent with our commitment to inclusion and diversity (F-1.0403). (Item 04-03)

²⁶ Section 6.06 was amended pursuant to action of the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

While the Advisory Committee on the Constitution welcomes the currently proposed amendment of Section 2.01 as a move towards a greater ecclesiastical voice on the A Corporation Board of Directors, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that a number of at-large directors at least equal to those proposed by entities of the General Assembly would more fully reflect the principles of our polity.

Section 2.13 Authority to Delegate Powers to Other Body: The amendments to this section clarify the authority of the board to delegate powers to an “other body” separate from the board, with the authority to act for the board. The existing language provides for the board to act in lieu of the other body, and to remove or limit the powers granted to the “other body.” There is no requirement that the “other body” consist of members of the board or other persons subject to the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). While those provisions have been previously approved by the General Assembly and are not subject to review by the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, they establish the context in which the proposed amendments are to be considered. In that context, the proposed amendment inserting the word “permanent” (“Such delegation of governing body powers and responsibilities shall not be exclusive *or permanent*...”) is a welcome restriction on the authority to delegate corporate powers. However, the principle of ecclesiastical oversight of the civil corporation (F-3.0209; G-3.0106; G-4.0101) is foundational; the Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that this principle would be strengthened by amending the relevant portion of the proposal to read, “Such delegation of governing body powers and responsibilities shall not be exclusive [~~or permanent~~], *and shall be for a specified period of time*. [~~and t~~] [T]he Board of Directors shall continue” An indefinitely constituted body is effectively a permanent one.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that the other proposed amendments to the bylaws do not present constitutional issues.

GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 00-07

General Assembly Committee on Representation Comment on Item 00-07: Revision of the Bylaws of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation—From the Administrative Services Group.

With attention to Article II, Section 2.01.(b) (10), (c), and (d); and Article II, Section 2.03 (c):

The General Assembly Committee on Representation commends to the assembly Standing Rule K.1.c, which lists GACOR with the General Assembly Nominating Committee (GANC) as consulting partners to the General Assembly Moderator (Co-Moderators) in appointing special committees and bodies created by General Assembly action.

The GACOR stands ready to advise actual and new bodies and advocate to ensure the widest participation, diversity, and representation so that God’s diversity is seen throughout the process and within the resulting nominating pools and finalized slates. The GACOR reminds the assembly that the GANC and the GACOR work together to fulfill F-1.0403 and that relationship is reflected in the Standing Rules and the Organization for Mission.

The GACOR stands ready to partner with and assist the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, and the Administrative Services Group. GACOR evaluates the impact of inclusion practices and advises and consults with bodies and agencies to ensure the widest participation of all persons in our denomination. GACOR has an official review role with regard to employment of personnel and receives regular reports on employment and supplier diversity.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation is made up of sixteen persons, elected by the General Assembly, who are drawn from members and elders, ruling and teaching, from across the church in accordance with F-1.0403. Its constitutional mandate and central functions are described in G-3.0103 of the Book of Order (Form of Government).

Item 00-08

Approved. (See pp. 23, 26.)

Report and Recommendation from the Administrative Commission Formed by the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to Address Disorder in the Synod of the Covenant.

The Administrative Commission to Address Disorder in the Synod of the Covenant recommends that the 224th extend the work of the administrative commission through the 225th General Assembly (2022) and that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve funding for administrative commission member travel during 2021 and 2022 as follows: 4 trips for 8 commissioners for 3 days per trip. Remaining 2020 budget is adequate and additional cost will be shared by the Synod of the Covenant.

Rationale

The mandate of the commission was set forth in the following alternative resolution of the 223rd General Assembly (2018):

That the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) form an administrative commission to address disorder in the Synod of the Covenant as provided in G-3.0109(b)(5) and in accordance with Standing Rule K.2.(a). The commission shall consist of not fewer than seven (7) persons appointed by the Co-Moderators and shall:

1. Honor the principles of *Seeking to Be Faithful Together* with the intent to restore trust and mutuality between the synod and its staff with its constituent presbyteries and their staff and elected leadership. All will:
 - a. Treat each other respectfully so as to build trust, believing that all desire to be faithful to Jesus Christ.
 - b. Share concerns directly with individuals or groups with whom there are disagreements in a spirit of love and respect in keeping with Jesus' teachings.
 - c. Seek to stay in community though the discussion may be vigorous and full of tension.
2. Conduct a Special Administrative Review (G-3.0108(b)) for the purpose of inquiring into and settling allegations of disorder:
 - a. To review and recommend revisions to synod procedures, to institute changes that are necessary to ensure the fulfillment of the PC(USA) principles of participation and representation as outlined in F-1.0403 and G-3.0103. This will include but is not limited to a review of records, bylaws, procedures, policies, and manuals of the synod.
 - b. To assure effective consultation with the synod committees and commissioners, synod staff, racial ethnic caucuses, Presbyterian Women, presbyteries, presbytery executives, and others as it may determine helpful to its tasks.
 - c. To assure adequate support for the ministry and mission of its presbyteries as they seek to support the witness of congregations (G-3.0401).
 - d. To assure adequate communication with and among its presbyteries, G-3.0401(a), through commissioners to synod, presbytery leadership, staff, and others as it may determine helpful to its task.
 - e. To assure pastoral care among its presbyteries in order that the synod may live in the unity represented in the Sacraments, G-3.0401(b).
 - f. To address conflicts in a pastoral manner that promotes reconciliation, healing, and restores unity between synod and its presbyteries using professional mediation services if necessary. They may use processes of D-1.0103 Conciliate and Mediate as needed.
 - g. To assume original jurisdiction if deemed necessary by the commission.
 - h. To have full authority to enforce the findings and recommendations with due process, granting fair notice and an opportunity to be heard by all parties.

This commission shall report to the 224th General Assembly (2020). (*Minutes*, 2018, Part I, pp. 23–24)

Having found significant systemic dysfunction with no apparent ability to resolve or mediate conflicts within the system, the commission assumed original jurisdiction of the Synod of the Covenant on February 12, 2020, and set in motion several other actions in order to restore order and seek reconciliation. The work is likely to take several years to complete.

The commission began its work on March 25, 2019. The commission conducted a special administrative review of the history and operations of the Synod of the Covenant and its relationship with its presbyteries and others within its boundaries. The commission reached out to and heard from interested persons and stakeholders (including current and former commissioners, committee and caucus leaders, and executive staff and its constituent presbytery staffs). The Office of General Assembly (“OGA”) established an email address ac.covenant@pcusa.org to which correspondence and documentation could be sent. OGA arranged for a shared folder to store records of the work of the commission along with documentation received by the commission. The commission met with senior leadership of the synod, both individually and collectively as the Moderators’ Committee of the Synod. The commission repeatedly reminded everyone of the mandate assigned to the commission by the 223rd General Assembly (2018) in the alternate resolution and of the authority granted to the commission. More information regarding administrative commissions and their authority can be found in the following advisory opinion: https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/advisory-opinion03.pdf. That opinion provides that General Assembly may entrust an administrative commission to “[v]isit particular councils ... over which they have immediate jurisdiction reported to be affected with disorder, and inquir[e] into and settl[e] the difficulties therein ”

The commission conducted individual listening sessions in Columbus, Ohio, on July 29–31, 2019, and in Baltimore on October 21, 2019. The commission was invited to and attended a gathering of the Synod Moderators’ Committee held on October 31, 2019, at the Synod of the Covenant offices. The commission attended the synod’s Annual Assembly on November 1–2, 2019. The commission’s co-moderators addressed the assembly and provided a handout that reminded all of the commission’s General Assembly mandate and constitutional authority. The handout was included as part of the assembly meeting records. The co-moderators invited anyone who wanted to be heard to respond to the email address. The commission met via video conference with the Synod Executive Forum on November 8, 2019, to hear from presbytery executive staff.

The commission reviewed several thousand pages of documents. Materials were provided to the commission for its review by the synod, presbyteries, and individuals, and included the synod bylaws, its manual of operations, the synod assembly minutes, minutes of the Moderators' Committee, and of some other committees of the synod, and internal and external correspondence and emails. The commission examined the materials provided to the 223rd General Assembly (2018) in support of an overture by the Presbytery of Cincinnati. The commission examined the synod website (<http://synodofthecovenant.org>) and its social media platforms on Facebook and Twitter.

In its proceedings the commission has been guided by "*Seeking to Be Faithful Together*," a process document approved by the 204th General Assembly (1992) and which serves as a resource for Presbyterians in times of disagreement (Appendix A). The commission commended this document to the synod and its constituencies, multiple times, as they collectively moved forward towards reconciliation and healing. A central aspect of *Seeking to Be Faithful Together* is for the parties to seek to stay in community with each other, even in the presence of tension and strongly held disagreements. This end—which must be held by all parties—is pursued through mutual respect and trust, and an openness to listening to each other seriously and with a focus on ideas and suggestions. The commission asked all individuals that wanted to be heard to agree to abide by the principles in "*Seeking to Be Faithful Together*."

The alternate resolution granted the commission "full authority to enforce its findings and recommendations with due process, granting fair notice and an opportunity to be heard by all parties." On January 17, 2020, the administrative commission issued a notice of a hearing to be held on February 12, 2020 (Appendix B). The notice set forth the commission's preliminary findings, and provided interested and affected persons the opportunity to be heard on the possible actions to be taken by the commission, including:

1. The administrative commission (AC) engages a professional mediator "*to promote reconciliation, healing, and restored unity between synod and its presbyteries.*"
2. The AC "*assumes original jurisdiction of the synod as deemed necessary by the commission.*"
3. The AC "*recommends revisions to synod procedures and institutes changes that are necessary to ensure fulfillment of the PC(USA) principles of participation and representation as outlined in F-1.0403 and G-3.0103.*" (The language in italics is drawn from the alternate resolution.)

The February 12, 2020, hearing in Toledo, Ohio, was attended by twenty-four people in person, plus four people via video conference. All eight commission members attended and were supported by two OGA staff members. Fourteen persons spoke in favor or against one or more actions being considered. The possible action of mediation drew favorable responses from all who spoke to it, with two conditioned responses relating to identification of the scope of the mediation and also the need for a mediator's experience in racially diverse situations. The possible action of the commission assuming original jurisdiction drew favorable responses from all but two speakers. The synod executive spoke in favor of the assumption of original jurisdiction. Two spoke against this action; one expressed the view that the synod is improving its operations and the other pointed to the difficult experience surrounding synod's assumption of original jurisdiction of the Presbytery of Mackinac. The third action being considered related to process/procedure changes to improve participation and representation. Most who spoke favored this action; one spoke against it, citing the racial ethnic make-up of synod commissioners and synod programs that impact diversity, such as the Mobile Health Fair and Mission to the USA. The hearing concluded with prayer and a reading of the entire 223rd General Assembly (2018) alternate resolution.

Following the hearing, and based on the hearing and the entirety of its special administrative review, the administrative commission made the following findings:

- Disharmony within the synod is systemic and long-standing.
- The synod and its presbyteries hold widely differing and inconsistent perspectives on their relationship and respective roles in common areas of ministry.
- There is a lack of clear, ample, honest, and loving communications.
- Relationships are strained.
- Work styles often clash.
- Policies and procedures are not widely accessible or understood and are unevenly applied.
- Affected parties do not share a common sense of purpose or vision.

- Divisions exist around deeply held organizational values and there is a lack of mutual trust.
- The parties in conflict have largely disengaged from each other; while this has reduced overt discord, it does not reflect the notion of healthy engagement of all members of the body of Christ.

These conclusions are not based on a weighing and conclusion of evidence and determination of “truth.” Rather, they consist of our observations of conflict and the inability of the respective constituencies to resolve the conflict. More detail regarding these findings can be found in Appendix C. The commission also considered and inquired of stakeholders regarding pathways to reconciliation, especially with the principles of *Seeking to Be Faithful Together* in mind. The commission examined several past instances in which efforts at reconciliation were unsuccessful in attempts to resolve disputes and grievances within the synod. Those incidents made clear to the commission the need for broad education and reform and for comprehensive and systematic assessment of common goals and building of trusting relationships. The commission concluded that in its current configuration, restoration and reconciliation were not possible.

Based on its findings and its conclusion that restoration and reconciliation were not possible within the synod’s current configuration, the administrative commission took the following specific actions at its meeting on February 12 and 13, 2020:

1. The administrative commission assumed original jurisdiction of the Synod of the Covenant. Therefore, the administrative commission became the Synod Assembly and removed the existing commissioners and officers.
2. New officers were elected by the administrative commission and a corporate resolution approved newly elected officers of the Synod of the Covenant. New synod committees and moderators were also elected from among the commission membership, acting as the newly configured Synod of the Covenant.
3. The administrative commission acting as the Synod of the Covenant will engage a professional mediation consultant in the near future to guide those impacted by the disorder toward healing and reconciliation in order to restore communion. The reconciliation process will likely be lengthy and extensive.
4. Staff members’ service to the Synod of the Covenant has concluded. The commission, acting as the Synod of the Covenant, has agreed to offer reasonable severance packages.
5. The synod continues to provide for judicial process and administrative review of the presbyteries. Programs and operations are temporarily suspended for a period of six months, through August 2020. That includes but is not limited to scheduled synod assemblies for March, August, and November 2020; and Mission to the USA, Mobile Health Fair, Grants and Scholarships, Cabinet on Ethnic Church Affairs (but not the caucuses that support People of Color and Indigenous People).
6. A meeting schedule of the newly constituted Synod Assembly will be published with a goal of transparency and welcome to all who desire unity of spirit and reconciliation.
7. Broad communications processes will be established to keep stakeholders informed as progress is made toward communion.

The administrative commission did not take these steps lightly or easily. The commission regards original jurisdiction as a temporary measure and desire that through healthy reconciliation, and operational stability, the Synod of the Covenant may become what God desires it to be. The commission will proceed carefully toward restoring governance of the synod back to those who will lead into the future, whatever God ordains that to be. The commission is also in the process of seeking to engage a transitional synod executive with particular skills and experience. The transitional synod executive will provide interim leadership of the Synod of the Covenant, focusing first on acknowledging the trauma resulting from years of systemic conflict and disharmony; establishing a safe environment in which all are welcome, and on stabilizing synod operations. This position will apply proven transitional ministry approaches to leading change in the synod. This position will focus on being the primary steward of health within the system. The commission, acting as the Synod Assembly, has elected a stated clerk.

The commission will work with the transitional synod executive to help the people of the synod discover and discern its future purpose and mission, so that a new synod structure may be applied and be in alignment with the new purpose. The commission envisions it will be prepared to return jurisdiction of synod operations to the people of the Synod of the Covenant by late 2020 or early 2021, while the work of reconciliation is underway and stability of the system and its processes gets underway, and once the system demonstrates a new ability to resolve conflicts and apply its processes. Once jurisdiction is returned to a newly constructed synod, the commission will continue to consult and monitor progress to true reconciliation and restoration.

The commission is grateful for all those who have participated in this process. Commission discernment in this process has included ceaseless prayers and reflection on scriptural texts, in particular Jeremiah 18:1–6 and 2 Corinthians 5:11–20. The

commission began its work in March 2019 with inclusion of the Confession of Belhar as a critical part of our worship, devotional study, and prayers. That intentional focus on the new confession, which centers our church’s focus on the importance of unity, reconciliation, and justice, was a continual guide to the work of the commission. “Thirty Days with the Belhar Confession” became the devotional guide, providing scriptural and prayerful foundations to our efforts.

Appendix A

**SEEKING TO BE FAITHFUL TOGETHER:
Guidelines for Presbyterians During Times of Disagreement**

Adopted by the 204th General Assembly (1992) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

In a spirit of trust and love, we promise we will:

1. Treat each other respectfully so as to build trust, believing that we all desire to be faithful to Jesus Christ:
 - we will keep our conversations and communications open for candid and forthright exchange;
 - we will not ask questions or make statements in a way that will intimidate or judge others.
2. Learn about various positions on the topic of disagreement.
3. State what we think we heard and ask for clarification before responding, in an effort to be sure we understand each other.
4. Share our concerns directly with individuals or groups with whom we have disagreements in a spirit of love and respect in keeping with Jesus’s teachings.

5. Focus on ideas and suggestions instead of questioning people’s motives, intelligence, or integrity; we will not engage in name-calling or labeling of others prior to, during, or following the discussion.

6. Share our personal experiences about the subject of disagreement so that others may more fully understand our concerns.

7. Indicate where we agree with those of other viewpoints as well as where we disagree.

8. Seek to stay in community with each other though the discussion may be vigorous and full of tension; we will be ready to forgive and be forgiven.

9. Follow these additional guidelines when we meet in decision-making bodies:

- urge persons of various points of view to speak and promise to listen to these positions seriously;
- seek conclusions informed by our points of agreement;
- be sensitive to the feelings and concerns of those who do not agree with the majority and respect their rights of conscience;
- abide by the decision of the majority, and if we disagree with it and wish to change it, work for that change in ways that are consistent with these guidelines.

10. Include our disagreements in our prayers, not praying for the triumph of our viewpoints, but seeking God’s grace to listen attentively, to speak clearly, and to remain open to the vision God holds for us all.

Appendix B

Dear people of the Synod of the Covenant and its constituent presbyteries,

We bring you greetings as Co-Moderators of the Administrative Commission for the Synod of the Covenant. This message is to invite your participation at a hearing on February 12 from 2-6pm at a venue in Toledo.

We remind you that the AC was created as result of 223rd General Assembly (2018) approval of an Alternate Resolution in response to both items 05-03 (from the Presbytery of Cincinnati) and 05-06 (from the Synod of the Covenant).

We are grateful to the many that have made themselves open and available to help us gather perspectives and documentation as we have “conducted a Special Administrative Review (G-3.0108b) for the purpose of inquiring into and settling allegations of disorder in the Synod of the Covenant.” As part of that administrative review, the AC has reached out to and heard from interested persons within the Synod and its constituent Presbyteries. The AC has met with most of the senior leadership of the Synod,

Speak the truth in love Ephesians 4:15
Maintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace Ephesians 4:3

00 PLENARY

both individually and collectively, as well as leaders in presbyteries of the Synod. Our administrative review has included examination of synod procedures and practices to the extent documents have been made available to us. We have reviewed correspondence and documents, including Synod minutes, by-laws, procedures, policies, and manuals. We also had the opportunity to attend the Synod Annual Meeting in November 2019. Thank you.

In meeting our charge to address disorder, we focused on highest impact areas that are essential to being in Christian community. Our preliminary findings include:

- Disharmony within the Synod is systemic and has existed for a long time;
- There is a lack of clear, ample, honest, and loving communications;
- Relationships are strained;
- Work styles often clash;
- Policies and procedures are not widely accessible or understood and are unevenly applied;
- Shared sense of purpose and vision is missing;
- Widely differing perspectives on the role and relationship between synod and presbyteries remain unresolved;
- Divisions have formed around deeply held organizational values; mutual trust in each other's intent is absent.

The Alternate Resolution granted the AC *"full authority to enforce its findings and recommendations with due process, granting fair notice and an opportunity to be heard by all parties."* As part of that due process, we invite you to attend a hearing at which interested persons will have an opportunity to be heard regarding the following action options under serious consideration by the AC:

1. The AC engages a Professional Mediator *"to promote reconciliation, healing, and restored unity between synod and its presbyteries."*
2. The *"AC assumes original jurisdiction of the Synod as deemed necessary by the commission."*
3. The AC *"recommends revisions to Synod procedures and institutes changes that are necessary to ensure fulfillment of the PC(USA) principles of participation and representation as outlined in F-1.0403 and G-3.0103."*

The hearing will be held on Wednesday February 12 beginning at 2pm and concluding by 6pm. The location will be at a venue in Toledo to be announced. It will be important for us to know of your intent to be present for the hearing so we may register your participation and arrange for adequate meeting space. We will conduct this hearing as an open forum, and may need to assign time limits to speakers, depending on the number who sign up to speak. The deadline to register your intent to participate is February 5.

You are encouraged to focus your comments on the options being considered as articulated above. Intemperate language will be considered out of order. Language of reconciliation, humility, and restoration is encouraged. This hearing is not about taking sides or defending a position. It is not a judicial process. It is about finding the most productive and helpful path forward for the good of the kingdom of God. [Click here to register your intent to participate.](#) If you are unable to travel to Toledo, we will attempt to accommodate your participation via video teleconference.

We hope the new year brings new blessings in your lives and ministries,

Patrice Hatley and Brady Radford

Co-Moderators of the Administrative Commission for the Synod of the Covenant

Appendix C

Summary information regarding findings.

As noted in the report, the Commission's conclusions are not based on a weighing and conclusion of evidence and determination of "truth." Rather, they consist of our observations of conflict and the inability of the respective constituencies to resolve the conflict.

A strong example of the conflict within the Synod relates to bylaw modifications. Synod leaders believed the bylaws needed to be updated achieve improved efficiency and to comply with PC(USA) polity; those who resisted the changes saw them as racially motivated exclusion of persons of color and indigenous persons and an attempt to consolidate power in the hands of a few individuals. Neither side appeared to trust the *bona fides* of the other. Accusations of racism are still being spoken about on all sides of the bylaws debate. The Synod

leadership has made strong statement about inclusion and intercultural diversity, and has implemented several programs to expand opportunity to understand needs of various cultures, even supporting the Mission to the USA and Mobile Health Fair and Cabinet on Ethic Church Affairs. While there are admirable numbers of racially diverse persons elected by presbyteries to serve as commissioners, there remains a lack of confidence that those diverse points of view are heard or have influence.

The Commission noted strongly held and differing opinions regarding the proper role of the Synod, i.e., whether it should function as a heavily programming-oriented ministry or as a minimally functioning body.

In its review of records, the Commission noted repeated use of intemperate language by a number of stakeholders. The accusatory tenor of the communications made resolution of the controversies between the parties difficult. A key marker of the irreconcilability of the conflict within the Synod was a repeated pattern of attempts to blame other individuals or groups for the conflicts and disclaiming of personal responsibility for the conflicts. People did not feel heard; the Commission was left to ponder whether, at the same time, they were willing to listen. Whatever the cause, some within the Synod suggested that conflict had been present for over ten years.

Even without regard to the tone of the communications, the Synod's operations were characterized by a lack of full and transparent sharing and information. For instance, at the 2019 Synod Annual Meeting, a proposal to increase *per capita* was not transmitted to the Commissioners and presbytery stated clerks until just before the meeting. This did not allow time for consultation and assessment of the impact of the proposal on all concerned. Further, the budget information provided for the meeting provided little year to date actual information, which also made assessment of the request difficult. The Synod website contains little information regarding the dates or locations of meetings or other future activities of the Synod. Information appears to be restricted to those whom the Synod determines have an appropriate need to know. The Administrative Commission experienced this in its own review. Throughout the course of its review, the Commission experienced significant resistance to answering requests for un-redacted documentation, with repeated claims that the Commission did not have authority to receive requested information and was failing to provide the Synod with 'due process.' The Commission reminded the staff and Moderators' committee that the Administrative Commission is adhering to the Alternate Resolution which approved the formation and authorities of the Commission and to the Constitutional authority articulated in G-3.0109.

The Commission noted strong disagreements over the role and authority of the Synod Executive over the presbyteries of the Synod, especially related to presbytery personnel matters. At the 2019 Synod Annual Meeting, the Commission noted that the Synod executive spoke to nearly every item of business which was questioned or debated, and on a number of those matters asserted the views and proposals of others were out of order.

The Synod official policy is that the Synod Executive must be involved in all processes to replace Presbytery executives; Presbyteries largely decline to recognize this policy and conduct searches with little support or input from the Synod (or the Synod Executive). The Presbytery executive staff exclude the Synod Executive from their Forum gatherings. Because of this the Synod refuses to provide any support for the Forum gatherings.

Despite requests from some Presbytery executive staff for direct communication regarding the Synod and its affairs, the Synod largely restricts its information dissemination to Presbytery Stated Clerks and Commissioners. This limitation on the flow of information occasionally has the effect of blindsiding Presbyteries relating to matters significantly affecting them. For instance, the policy proposal requiring the Synod Executive's involvement in all Executive/General Presbyter search processes was not provided to Presbytery Executives. Recently, a proposal to increase *per capita* due from Presbyteries for 2021 was only provided to Commissioners and Stated Clerks days before the meeting at which it was to be voted on.

Committee structures within the Synod are so fluid that there are not regularly scheduled standing meetings of committees or caucuses, and the persons appointed or elected seem to come and go, with many vacancies left unfilled, or elected persons are absent or not available to participate. In some cases, such as the Personnel Services Committee, conflict led to it not holding a formal meeting for a year. Although the Personnel Services Committee members are supposedly elected to serve three-year terms, the position was taken that they were appointed in March and only served until the next annual meeting in November. This meant, that in the view of the Synod, there was no functioning Personnel Services Committee between November and March. One of the persons subject to review by the Personnel Services Committee objected to any carryover of committee members from the prior year. One Personnel Services Committee attempted to take action during the period between November and March and was held to be out of order.

Item 00-09

Approved. (See pp. 22, 26.)

Approve New Trustees Elected by Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Theological Institutions—From the Committee on Theological Education.

The Committee on Theological Education recommends the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve the new trustees elected by Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) theological institutions in 2018–2020:

Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary: Kelley Cooper Cameron, James A. DeMent Jr., Britta Martin Dukes, W. David Pardue, Stephen Rhoades, Sharon Risher.

Columbia Theological Seminary: John Oglesby, Claire Tate, Jane Fahey, Elizabeth Goodrich.

University of Dubuque Theological Seminary: no new trustees.

Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary: Lindsay Armstrong, Arreasha Bryant, Herb Codington, Julie Cox, Andrew Esqueda, Alisha Lola Jones, Dorothy Killian, Shanea Leonard, Keith Love, Eric Peltz, Henry Quillian III, Mary Newbern Williams.

Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary: Daniel Bradley, Wayne Kramer, Nikki R. Lanier, Edwin C. Sanders II, Polly Williams, John Willingham.

McCormick Theological Seminary: Timothy Hart-Andersen, Scott D. Anderson, Ronald Cruikshank, Stephanie Crumpton, Nicholas Pearce, La Tonja Ellis, Dominica McBride, Jenny McBride, Sam Paul, Mary Sanders, Carol Tsao, Jacqueline A. White.

Pittsburgh Theological Seminary: TJ Lucas, Kelsy Brown, Rob Peters.

Princeton Theological Seminary: Gordon Fowler, Shannon J. Kershner, Margaret Grun Kibben, Michael Fisch, Charles “Chip” Hardwick.

Union Presbyterian Seminary: Steve Allred, Mary Sue Donahue, Delano Douglas, Jenny McDevitt, Lori Archer Raible, Robert Taylor, Charlie Vaughters, Mimi Siff, James Wagner, John Mercer Woods, Courtald McBryde Young

Rationale

“A Plan for the Governance and Funding of the Theological Institutions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)” approved by the 198th General Assembly (1986) requires COTE to present presidents and trustees of PC(USA)-related theological institutions to the General Assembly for approval. This requirement remains in effect in the COTE Manual of Operations. A list of the entire board of trustees of each of the PC(USA)-related seminaries will be made available by COTE for review by the appropriate committee during the 224th General Assembly (2020). Similar information will also be available about those currently serving on the boards of Auburn Theological Seminary and the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico, which are related to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) through covenant agreements.

In addition, and as required by vote of the 209th General Assembly (1997), the following information is offered in regard to racial ethnic and gender representation on the various theological institution boards.

	Austin	Columbia	Dubuque	Johnson C. Smith	Louisville	McCormick	Pittsburgh	Princeton	Union
Total Trustees	30	35	30	20	24	37	35	31	36
Euro American	22	29	27	11	18	25	26	25	28
Hispanic	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
African American	5	5	3	7	5	9	7	3	6
Asian	0	1	0	1	0	2	1	2	2
Native American	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Multiracial	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
African	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Male	16	21	22	8	15	28	24	20	21
Female	14	14	8	12	9	8	11	11	15

Item 00-10

Approved. (See pp. 23, 26.)

Grant Permission to Theological Institutions to Celebrate the Lord's Supper—From the Committee on Theological Education.

The Committee on Theological Education recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) grant permission to the following theological institutions to celebrate the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in 2020–2022 [from January 2020 through to the conclusion of the 225th General Assembly (2022)]: Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Columbia Theological Seminary, University of Dubuque Theological Seminary, Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, McCormick Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, Princeton Theological Seminary, Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary, Union Presbyterian Seminary, Seminario Evangélico de Puerto Rico, and Auburn Theological Seminary.

Rationale

Beginning in 1989, the General Assembly became the governing body that grants permission to celebrate the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper at Presbyterian theological institutions. Each seminary is entrusted with identifying a governing group on campus to discern appropriate occasions and leaders to celebrate on each campus. The 223rd General Assembly (2018) granted permission for celebrations in 2018–2019.

COTE is presently in conversation with the leadership of the University of Redlands and its Graduate School of Religion seeking to clarify what institution would be the recipient of the General Assembly's permission to celebrate the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

Item 00-11

Approved. (See pp. 22, 26.)

Request to Docket an Item of Business for Consideration by the 224th General Assembly (2020) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.): Confirmation of Election of President of McCormick Theological Seminary—From the Committee on Theological Education.

The Committee on Theological Education recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) do the following:

1. Confirm the election of David Crawford as president of McCormick Theological Seminary.
2. Approve docket time in the plenary session for the president-elect to make brief remarks.

Rationale

The revisions to the *Organization for Mission* of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) proposed by the Committee on Theological Education (COTE) require General Assembly confirmation of the election of presidents of those theological institutions that relate to the PC(USA) as institutional members of the Committee on Theological Education.

Prior to this, General Assembly approval of the president-elect of seminaries related to the PC(USA) as institutional members was required by "A Plan for the Governance and Funding of the Theological Institutions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)," approved by the 198th General Assembly (1986).

David H. Crawford

David Crawford is the eleventh president of McCormick Theological Seminary. A graduate of Georgetown University Law Center and the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, David is a trusted leader, respected lawyer, colleague, and team-builder. Crawford is an ordained ruling elder in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and has served on the boards of McCormick Theological Seminary, Fourth Presbyterian Church of Chicago, Lifelink Housing Corporation, Allied Riser Communications Corporation (NASDAQ: ARCC), and several early stage businesses. He currently serves on the executive committee of the Council of Religious Leaders of Metropolitan Chicago and on the board of Friends of the Green Bay Trail.

Before joining McCormick's board of trustees, Crawford was principal and co-founder of Technology Advisors Group, LLC, a consulting firm specializing in early stage technology and environmentally sustainable businesses. Previously, he was chief executive officer of Allied Riser Communications Corporation, an Internet and data communications company he co-founded and grew from a handful of colleagues to become a public company with more than 900 employees in North America and Europe. He also served as senior vice president, administration and general counsel, property operations for Sam Zell's Equity Office Properties Trust, where he was part of the senior management team that lead Equity Office to become the largest, publicly traded owner of commercial office buildings in North America. Earlier in his career Crawford was an associate at the international law firm of Kirkland and Ellis and Chicago-based Gardner, Carton & Douglas. Before earning his J.D. from Georgetown, Crawford served as staff director for the Youth Policy Institute of the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial in Washington.

Prior to being named McCormick's eleventh president, Crawford served McCormick as interim president and as executive vice president and chief business officer. Crawford took on that role in 2008 at the height of the financial crisis while serving on McCormick's board of trustees. During his tenure, he has been a leader in the efforts to secure McCormick's mission for generations to come, implementing changes that have ensured McCormick's financial future as it approaches its third century of service. Over his many years at McCormick, Crawford has thoughtfully challenged the McCormick community to think creatively, and to envision a future beyond just what is or what was. He has helped lead and continues to foster with his McCormick family innovations that have allowed McCormick to expand its academic mission and programs, lower student tuition, lower student borrowing, and engage the wider Chicago community, the denomination, and the church in active, meaningful, and transformative ways.

Item 00-12

Approved. (See pp. 11, 26.)

Confirm Reelection of James G. Rissler to Office of President and Chief Executive Officer of the PC(USA) Investment and Loan Program, Inc.—From the Board of Directors of the PC(USA) Investment and Loan Program, Inc.

The Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc., recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) confirm the reelection of James G. Rissler to the office of president and chief executive officer of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc., for an additional four-year term.

Rationale

The 1995 Deliverance of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc. (ILP), as well as its bylaws, as amended, provide that its board of directors elect the president to a four-year term subject to confirmation by the General Assembly.

On October 25, 2014, the ILP Board of Directors elected James G. Rissler to serve a four-year term as president and chief executive officer of ILP, effective January 1, 2015, following the planned retirement of President/CEO James L. Hudson. The election was the culmination of a nine-month national search process that included nearly two hundred Presbyterian leaders from across the country. Rissler's election was confirmed by the 222nd General Assembly (2016) on June 23, 2016.

Rissler joined PILP in 1999 as vice president of finance and administration and was elected to the position of senior vice president in 2004. During his tenure as president, ILP has experienced a 39 percent growth in the loan portfolio and has continued to generate annual surpluses (nineteen consecutive years), important to both regulators and investors.

On November 10, 2018, the ILP Board of Directors reelected Rissler to an additional four-year term as president/CEO of ILP effective January 1, 2019.

James G. Rissler is a resident of Louisville, Kentucky, and worships as a member of the congregation at Harvey Browne Memorial Presbyterian Church. He was ordained as a ruling elder in 1983 and has served as a trustee of Harvey Browne multiple times. Rissler has served on a number of committees, mostly in the administrative, budget, and stewardship areas.

Prior to joining ILP, he spent seventeen years in the banking industry, most recently serving as a vice president with PNC Bank, N.A. Rissler earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Economics and Business Administration from Vanderbilt University.

Rissler served on the Board of the Presbyterian Homes & Services of Kentucky, Inc., as chair for three years, and on the Board of the Presbyterian Homes & Services Foundation, Inc. He currently serves on the Board of Spalding University, completing his second year as chair.

Item 00-13

Approved. (See pp. 12, 26.)

Confirmation of Election of Kathy M. Lueckert as President of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation—From the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) confirm the election of Katherine “Kathy” M. Lueckert to a four-year term as president of The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation.

Rationale

The A Corporation Search Committee conducted a wide-ranging national search for a president. The search committee was chaired by Bridget-Anne Hampden and included Christopher Mason, Sinthia Hernandez-Diaz, Thomas Priest, and Carol Winkler. Board member Cynthia Campbell and Human Resources Director Ruth Gardner also participated in the interviews. The committee worked with BoardWalk Consulting; a national nonprofit search firm based in Atlanta.

The search reached a diverse pool of more than 200 potential candidates and sources. The search committee reviewed the backgrounds of eleven candidates, interviewing six, and narrowing to three finalists. BoardWalk conducted comprehensive referencing of the finalists.

The leadership profile described the assets sought in a president;

- Leadership and customer service skills;
- Organizational management expertise, including broad range financial, people, and technology acumen;
- Strategic operational management;
- Ability to collaborate and build a positive, high-performance culture;
- Personal characteristics including unquestionable integrity, relationship and communication skills, and service orientation.

The search committee convened in early June and voted unanimously to recommend Kathy Lueckert for board consideration. The full A Corporation board then voted unanimously to elect Kathy to a four-year term as president of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, subject to confirmation by the 224th General Assembly (2020).

Kathy has led organization-wide budgets, Information Technology (IT), Human Resources (HR), legal, research, advocacy, communications, new initiatives, and strategic planning in nonprofit, faith-based, corporate, and public sector entities. Her background includes stints at Bell Atlantic, local governments (Virginia, Minnesota, Washington), and at global nonprofit World Vision. She was director of finance and administration at Village Presbyterian Church in Prairie Village, Kansas, a congregation of 4,800 members and three campuses. Kathy worked for the General Assembly Council from 1999–2004 as Deputy Executive Director. She holds degrees from Mary Washington College, George Washington University, and George Mason University.

Kathy is a 12th generation Presbyterian. She is a ruling elder and has served at the national level as an assembly assistant, staff to the 2016 Stated Clerk Nominating Committee, and on the Committee to Review Biennial Assemblies. She served the Presbytery of Seattle as stated clerk and was also active on the Presbytery of Heartland council and board of trustees.

A Village Presbyterian Church trustee said of Kathy “she is a very spiritual and faithful person. She has an ability to work in an environment with people of strong views, and to move people to consensus.”

Bridget-Anne Hampden, co-chair of the A Corporation board, stated, “it is a blessing to find someone like Kathy, who not only has the collaborative skills necessary to run a complex organization, but also a deep love for the Presbyterian church.”

Stated Clerk J. Herbert Nelson, II, said, “Kathy is a familiar face around here, and the gifts she brings can lead us to a new way of thinking about how the church might work together with a renewed spirit of collaboration.”

Item 00-14

Approved. (See pp. 12, 26.)

Confirm the Election of Jihyun Oh as Stated Clerk Designee Director of New Covenant Trust Co., N.A.—From the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) confirm the following director of its subsidiary, New Covenant Trust Company, N.A., who was elected subsequent to the submission of the report to the 223rd General Assembly (2018), consistent with the Deliverance for New Covenant Trust Company, N.A., as approved by the 211th General Assembly (1999) and amended by the 212th and 214th General Assemblies (2000) and (2002), and subject to applicable law: Stated Clerk Designee Jihyun Oh, PC(USA) Director of Mid Council Ministries, Asian, Female, Single, Clergy, Under 50, Synod of the South Atlantic.

Rationale

Jihyun Oh was elected on May 8, 2018, for the year 2018–2019, and reelected May 16, 2019, for the year 2019–2020 as the designee of the Stated Clerk.

Item 00-15

Approved. (See pp. 13, 26.)

Churches to Invite to Send Ecumenical Advisory Delegates to the 225th General Assembly (2022)—From the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations.

The General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations nominates the following churches to the 224th General Assembly (2020) to invite to the 225th General Assembly (2022):

International: The Presbyterian Church of Trinidad and Tobago, Iglesia Reformada Calvinista de El Salvador (Reformed Calvinist Church of El Salvador), Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu, Christian Church of Fiji and Samoa, Gereja Masehi Injili di Minahasa (Indonesia), Spanish Evangelical Church, National Evangelical Synod of Syrian and Lebanon, Presbyterian Church of Rwanda, Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar, South Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church.

United States and/or Canada Churches: Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Progressive National Baptist, Inc., Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch, Reformed Church in America, Korean Presbyterian Church in America.

Rationale

The General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations nominates to each General Assembly churches to be invited to send ecumenical advisory delegates to the subsequent assembly (Standing Rule B.2.g.). Ten overseas churches and five churches from within the United States are recommended. Of the overseas churches, we recommend at least one church from each area staffed by the World Mission area. Of the churches within the United States, we recommend at least one church from full communion and/or covenant relationships, and at least one church in our conciliar relationships.

Item 00-16

Approved. (See pp. 12, 26.)

Report of the Eighth Round of Dialogue between Reformed Churches in the U.S. and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops—From the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations.

The General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) do the following:

1. Receive the report of the Eighth Round of Dialogue Between Reformed Churches in the U.S. and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops: “The One Body of Christ: Ministry in Service to the Church and the World” and commend the report for study. [See attached report: GACEIR-ref-churches-catholic-bishops-dialogue-rpt-round8-one-body.pdf.]

2. Express its gratitude to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) representatives on the dialogue: The Reverend Cynthia Campbell, Ph.D., and the Reverend David Gambrell, Ph.D., for their leadership and service on the dialogue team.

3. Approve the Prospectus for the Ninth Round of Dialogue Between Reformed Churches in the United States and United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and request a report to the 226th General Assembly (2024).

Prospectus for the Catholic-Reformed Dialogue

Round Nine

The ecumenical officers (or their designees) of the Christian Reformed Church in North America, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Reformed Church in America, the United Church of Christ, and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) met via video conference on February 5 and 9, 2018, to review the eighth round of dialogue and consider proposals for the ninth round. The following prospectus is offered to our churches for consideration and approval of a ninth round of dialogue. It is expected that each church will review and authorize through the appropriate ecclesiastical channels a ninth round of dialogue based upon this prospectus.

Reformed Churches in the United States and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (and their predecessor bodies) have been in formal dialogue for more than fifty years. The last twenty years have focused on theological convergences and divergences around Baptism, Eucharist, and ministry. Three significant papers were produced from Rounds Seven and Eight—*These Living Waters*; *This Bread of Life*, and *The One Body of Christ: Ministry in Service to the Church and the World*. Round Seven also produced an Agreement of Mutual Recognition of Baptism between the USCCB and the participating Reformed churches.

A major achievement of the most recent round of dialogue was the mutual acknowledgement of each other’s ministries and the affirmation that we “recognize in one another the work of God, the presence of Jesus Christ, the movement of the Holy Spirit, our mutual service to a broken world, and our fidelity to the gospel that we all profess” (*The One Body*, 70). The mutual acknowledgement of ministry presents a historically significant moment and a germane occasion to consider anew how our ministry to the church and the world is informed by our understandings of justification and justice. It presents an opportunity to build upon the immediately previous rounds of national dialogue on the sacraments and ecclesiology by considering the relationship between Baptism, Eucharist, and ministry, and our commitments to justification and justice.

Furthermore, turning our attention to the relationship between justification and justice presents an opportunity for this national dialogue to connect with the international dialogue. The Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the World Communion of Reformed Churches’ most recent dialogue focused on “Justification and Sacramentality: The Christian Community as an Agent for Justice” (2011–2015). In July 2017, the World Communion of Reformed Churches signed an Association with the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification. We intend to “build upon the faithful labors of these dialogues to discern and claim the gifts and challenges of our current situation” by continuing conversation around “church unity, ministry, the sacraments, and the relation between justification and social ethics” (*The One Body*, 65, 67).

It is the expectation that signs of hope for visible unity might be found as we turn our focus to our mutual calling to live as a people justified by faith giving witness to God’s intention of a world marked by justice.

We envision that the proposed dialogue will begin in the fall of 2020 and conclude no later than 2025. Among the tasks that the dialogue will carry out are the following:

1. Review the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (JDDJ) and the WCRC Association with JDDJ and consider the implications for our churches within the context of the United States.

2. Building on the work accomplished in the previous rounds of our dialogues, explore how justification and justice are related to the Sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist, and to mission and ministry.

3. Examine the ways in which the discovery of new areas of convergence and our joint work in justice offer fresh possibilities for understanding unity. What are the implications for ecclesiology?

Rationale

This recommendation is in response to the following referral: *2012 Referral: Item 09-04, Recommendation 1. Authorize Participation in the Eighth Round of Reform/Catholic Dialogue, Which Will Begin in the Fall of 2012, and Request a Report to the 223rd General Assembly (2018) (Minutes, 2012, Part I, pp. 9, 778–79).*

Item 00-17

Approved. (See pp. 12, 26.)

Amendments to the Board of Pensions Articles of Incorporation—From the Board of Pensions.

The Board of Pensions recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve the following amendments to its Articles of Incorporation, which require the prior approval of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to be effective: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“SECOND: The purposes for which the corporation shall exist are exclusively charitable and shall consist of the following:

“(a) To acquire, receive and hold, directly or in trust, by gift, legacy, devise, purchase or otherwise, money, securities, income and property, real and personal, in whatever form, in any state, territory or country, for and about the general objects and purposes of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), including pensions, benefits and relief for ~~ministers teaching elders~~ (as defined in the Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)), missionaries and non-ordained employees of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) as well as to collect and receive all interest and income therefrom, and to grant, bargain, sell and otherwise dispose of personal properties and real estate when necessary, required or expedient.

“(b) To pay pension and other benefits to those entitled to receive the same in accordance with rules adopted by the corporation and approved by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

“(c) To make grants to such eligible ~~ministers teaching elders~~, missionaries and non-ordained employees of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and/or its predecessors, and their surviving spouses and dependents, as may be entitled in accordance with rules adopted by the corporation.

“(d) To own and operate such homes as have been or may be established for the care of such eligible ~~ministers teaching elders~~ and missionaries of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and/or its predecessors, and their surviving spouses and dependents, and such other persons as may be entitled in accordance with rules adopted by the corporation.

“(e) To engage in and conduct such business as may be authorized by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and which is permitted under the Pennsylvania Nonprofit Corporation Law.

“The purposes identified in paragraphs (a) through (e) may not be altered, amended or repealed without the prior approval of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Rationale

At the 220th General Assembly (2012), with Item 20-05, the General Assembly acted to amend the Articles of Incorporation of the Board of Pensions to align the language to the new Form of Government, replacing references to ministers with teaching elders (*Minutes*, 2012, Part I, pp. 36, 37, 1631–32). At the 222nd General Assembly (2016), with Item 06-08, the General Assembly acted to return to the original language of minister. In 2018 the Board of Pensions started a thorough review of all documents, which was not completed in time for the 223rd General Assembly (2018). Therefore, the Board of Pensions recommends the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve the amendments to the Articles of Incorporation to align with the *Book of Order*.

Item 00-18

Approved. (See pp. 12, 26.)

Confirmation of the Persons to Serve on the Presbyterian Historical Society Board—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) requests the 224th General Assembly (2020) to confirm the following persons to serve on the Presbyterian Historical Society Board:

Class of 2021:

Nominees to fill unexpired vacancies:

Deborah Block—White female teaching elder, Over 65, Milwaukee Presbytery, Synod of Lakes and Prairies

Joanna Kim—Asian American female, Mid Council Leader, 51–65, Grace Presbytery, Synod of the Sun

Class of 2024:

Nominee for a first term:

Jerry Van Marter—White male teaching elder, Over 65, Mid Kentucky Presbytery, Synod of Living Waters

Nominees for a second term:

Perzavia Praylow—African American female teaching elder, 35–50, National Capital Presbytery, Synod of the Mid-Atlantic

Cheryl Thurber—White female ruling elder, Over 65, Baltimore Presbytery, Synod of the Mid-Atlantic

Item 00-19

Approved. (See pp. 13, 27.)

On Establishing a General Assembly Administrative Commission on Mid Councils—From the Synod of the Northeast.

The Synod of the Northeast overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) to establish a General Assembly Commission on Mid Councils for the purpose of deliberation and approval of mid council business that has significant time pressures such that it cannot wait for action or would suffer severely from having to wait for action until the 225th General Assembly (2022).

By direction of the 224th General Assembly (2020), upon a majority affirmative vote of the affected presbytery or presbyteries or a majority affirmative vote of the presbyteries in the affected synod or synods, the commission is authorized to act as the General Assembly upon requests of synods and presbyteries, with the authority of the General Assembly by “approving the acts of synods to organize, divide, unite, or combine presbyteries or portions of presbyteries” according to G-3.0502e. The actions of the commission shall require a two-thirds majority for approval.

Rationale

Since May 2017, members of the seven presbyteries in New Jersey have been meeting to envision new missional communities that remain responsive to the changing contextual realities of the church and presbyteries and to the leading of the Spirit. For decades congregations, and thus presbyteries in New Jersey, have been declining in membership until, like a tiny congregation in a huge old building, time, energy, and resources are spent maintaining outdated and inefficient structures and systems, to the detriment of presbyteries’ mission as the body of Christ in the world.

Through listening sessions in each of the New Jersey presbyteries, there was constant confirmation that now is the time to radically change the structure and function of these presbyteries to embrace an understanding of mid councils as spiritual communities rather than legal and administrative organizations. This is not to diminish the work of the current presbytery structure. The old wineskins have been wonderful containers for the old wine, but the new movement of the Spirit in this *kairos* moment calls for a new sort of structure.

The visioning group discerned that God’s provision for ministry is taking a new form: fewer separate entities and greater collaboration, bringing about a new, statewide missional community. The visioning group was commissioned to explore several considerations as they imagined ways of redrawing the boundaries of seven presbyteries. In the end they produced a map of four presbyteries. The boundaries are soft, and presbyteries will have time to determine the final boundaries based on what will maximize health and effectiveness. The group envisions that shortly after the four new presbyteries are initially established, they will cooperate in a New Jersey missional community to accomplish goals no single presbytery can achieve on its own.

Currently, four of the seven presbyteries have voted unanimously to accept the invitation to participate in the New Jersey New Missional Communities. The three remaining presbyteries will be voting over this fall and winter. Once the votes are taken, a design and transition group will be assembled that will consider among other items legal and financial implications of redrawing presbytery boundaries, its impact on restricted funds, particular organizations that currently are within a presbytery, etc. This group will ultimately be authorized as an administrative commission of the synod to work through the issues that need attention before the proposed boundary changes can be brought to General Assembly.*

Clearly, this work will not be completed by the 224th General Assembly (2020). However, given the desire of presbytery members to move into new missional communities as quickly as possible, once the work has been completed it will be to the detriment of the current presbyteries and the dreams and visions of their members to have to wait until the 225th General Assembly (2022) in order to make the changes people eagerly await.

The Synod of the Northeast is aware that other presbyteries and synods around the country are in the midst of transformation and can also benefit from a General Assembly Commission on Mid Councils that allows those who are pressing forward to begin the work they are called to do in the 21st century.*

*Most of the rationale is taken from *Invitation to Participate in New Jersey New Missional Communities*, written by the New Jersey Mission Structures Working Group. It was approved by the Synod Mission and Ministries Commission on September 28, 2019, per the Reverend Nancy Talbot, Synod Stated Clerk.

Note: The synod stated clerk consulted with Laurie Griffith, Associate Stated Clerk, Associate Director for Constitutional Interpretation, and Kerry Rice, Deputy Stated Clerk, concerning this overture since there are budget implications.

Concurrence to Item 00-19 from the Presbyteries of Cristo, Grand Canyon, Kiskiminetas, Newark, Newton, and Utica.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE CONSTITUTION ADVICE ON ITEM 00-19

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) to approve Item 00-19 with amendment.

The overture would create a commission with authority to “act as the General Assembly upon requests of synods and presbyteries” in matters related to “acts of synods to organize, divide, unite, or combine presbyteries or portions of presbyteries.”

The General Assembly clearly has the authority to create such an administrative commission and delegate that specific authority to it. The 219th General Assembly (2010) and the 220th General Assembly (2012) both granted similar authority to mid council commissions, and the ACC raised no constitutional issues at that time.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution had initially intended to advise the 224th General Assembly (2020) to limit the commission’s authority to actions relating to the Synod of the Northeast. The 219th and 220th General Assemblies (2010 and 2012) considered general realignments of synod boundaries and ultimately no changes were made. In contrast to the overtures before prior assemblies, the rationale for Item 00-19 focused only on the Synod of the Northeast. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution intended to note that it was not aware of any other situations for which waiting until the 225th General Assembly (2022) would be problematic.

The situation has changed. Items that were to have come to the 224th General Assembly (2020) dealing with council boundaries have been determined to be non-critical and will not be considered at this assembly, but could be taken up by the commission. For that reason, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that the creation of a commission with general authority related to council boundaries is now appropriate.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution notes that the *Book of Order* lists the approval of “acts of synods to organize, divide, unite, or combine presbyteries or portions of presbyteries” (G-3.0502) as one of the five specific ways that the General Assembly maintains relationships with presbyteries and synods. Such actions should not be taken lightly or without serious consideration of the interests of the whole church.

Furthermore, when a council of the church chooses to delegate its authority, it must ensure that the authority is delegated to an appropriate and representative commission of presbyters with parity between ministers of the Word and Sacrament and ruling elders (G-3.0109). To accomplish this, the *Manual of the General Assembly* states that when moderators appoint the membership of commissions they are to do so “in collaboration with the General Assembly Nominating Committee and the General Assembly Committee on Representation” (*Manual of the General Assembly*, K.1.c).

Finally, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds no parliamentary or constitutional support for requiring a two-thirds vote of the commission, a voting requirement that is reserved for matters that somehow restrict rights of members, or that amend or rescind previous actions of an assembly. Since a General Assembly's responsibility to approve the act of a synod to organize, divide, unite, or combine presbyteries or portions of presbyteries (G-3.0502e) does not require a two-thirds vote, neither should the same action taken by an administrative commission when that authority has been delegated to it.

The ACC advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) to amend the second paragraph of Item 00-19 as follows:

“By direction of the 224th General Assembly (2020), upon a majority affirmative vote of the affected presbytery or presbyteries or a majority affirmative vote of the presbyteries in the affected synod or synods, the commission is authorized to act as the General Assembly upon requests of synods and presbyteries, with the authority of the General Assembly by ‘approving the acts of synods to organize, divide, unite, or combine presbyteries or portions of presbyteries’ according to G-3.0502e. ~~[The actions of the commission shall require a two-thirds majority for approval.]”~~

COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 00-19

The Committee on the General Assembly respectfully asks the 224th General Assembly (2020) to consider an alternative to the formation of a General Assembly commission, which this overture suggests: to authorize the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) to assume those responsibilities on behalf of the General Assembly. COGA consists of fifteen elected members created “to carry out the assembly’s oversight of the Stated Clerk . . .” (*Organization for Mission*, IV.C.2.). It also regularly reviews the Standing Rules of the General Assembly. Additionally, COGA is tasked with reviewing the work of special committees and reporting to each session of the General Assembly a summary of the work being carried out by special committees, including recommendations to transfer the work assigned to a special committee elsewhere or to dismiss the committee (Standing Rules B.8.b and E.9.a).

If commissioners discern that this alternative is the way to move forward, we suggest the following as a possible resolution:

“The 224th General Assembly (2020) authorizes the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) to act on behalf of the General Assembly until the convening of the 225th General Assembly (2022) to approve the acts of synods to organize, divide, unite, or combine presbyteries or portions of presbyteries (G-3.0502e) when the affected presbyteries have also acted to do so.”

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA), in this time of COVID-19, stands at a unique place. As a standing committee, COGA is a ready-made entity of the General Assembly, costing no additional time, tools, talents, or treasure that a newly formed commission would. COGA traditionally works with synods and presbyteries. No time will be lost to the nominating and forming process, nor to training members regarding the relationships between synods and presbyteries. The use of COGA will address synod desires without the administrative burdens of building a new commission.

The Synod of the Northeast’s overture seeks to establish a responsive relationship, one that acknowledges this *kairos* moment for mission within the synod, and the rare, bold immediacy of their need for action and sound counsel, now. The synod seeks “to establish a General Assembly Commission on Mid Councils for the purpose of deliberation and approval of mid council business that has significant time pressures such that it cannot wait for action or would suffer severely from having to wait for action until the 225th General Assembly (2022).”

The times undeniably call for flexible responses to an age that can only be described as transformational for the church and all within it. This approach, though novel, hearkens back to the notion of one connectional church, one gospel, one love, with all working together to usher in a new thing that God is doing, the new wine and wineskin. “No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch will pull away from the garment, making the tear worse. Neither do people pour new wine into old wineskins. If they do, the skins will burst; the wine will run out, and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved” *Matthew 9:16-17 (NIV)* [Invitation to Participate in New Jersey New Missional Communities, February 2019].

GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 00-19

General Assembly Committee on Representation Comment on Item 00-19. On Establishing a General Assembly Administrative Commission on Mid Councils

The GACOR stands ready to advise new bodies and advocate to ensure the widest participation, diversity, and representation so that God’s diversity is seen throughout the process and within the resulting nominating pools and finalized slates. The GACOR reminds the assembly that the GANC and the GACOR work together to fulfill F-1.0403 and that relationship is reflected in the Standing Rules and the Organization for Mission.

The GACOR always stands ready to partner with and assist in nomination processes. GACOR evaluates the impact of inclusion practices and advises and consults with bodies and agencies to ensure the widest participation of all persons in our denomination.

Regarding the comment from COGA asking for this task to be referred to them, an assembly should exercise caution when extending commission powers. The circumstances provide uncertainty for many mid councils and the measure would allow those who have mutually agreed to changes to get them done. Circumstances of pandemic exacerbate challenges and anxieties in already struggling systems anticipating crises before the 225th General Assembly (2022); without clear guidelines as to when and how to approach the commission, it could be overly burdened with potential mid council mergers at varying stages of discernment.

Should they serve as this commission, we recommend the assembly be clear concerning the powers and decision-making role extended to COGA. Its membership does not include persons from every synod, highlighting potential gaps in understanding the different contexts and cultures of the regions to whom this body might make actions on behalf of the assembly.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation is made up of sixteen persons, elected by the General Assembly, who are drawn from members and elders, ruling and teaching, from across the church in accordance with F-1.0403. Its constitutional mandate and central functions are described in G-3.0103 of the Book of Order (Form of Government).

Item 00-20

Approved. (See pp. 23, 27.)

On Extending Special Committees, Teams, and Task Forces—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020):

1. Extend the terms of the following special committees, teams, and task forces until dismissal by the 225th General Assembly (2022):

Rules of Discipline Task Force

Survivors of Sexual Misconduct Task Force

Family Leave Policy Task Force.

LGBTQIA+ Advocacy Task Force

Jarvie Commonweal Endowment Reconciliation Team

Special Committee on Per Capita and Financial Sustainability

Safe and Sacred Space Task Force Report

2020 Vision Team

Special Committee to Study the Reformed Perspective of Christian Education in the 21st Century

Disparities Experienced by Black Women and Girls Task Force

A Study of Socioeconomic and Political Realities of Central America

2. Convert the Moving Forward Implementation Commission to a special committee, and extend its term until dismissal by the 225th General Assembly (2022).

3. Apply these conditions to these special committees, teams, and task forces:

a. Committees, teams, and task forces, should they meet, will utilize online tools and will not have in-person meetings. The financial implications of extending these groups will be limited to provisions for their leadership to attend the 225th General Assembly (2022) to present their reports.

b. Committees are encouraged to review their reports and recommendations, in light of the pandemic and its emerging implications, to be resubmitted to the 225th General Assembly (2020).

c. Ordinarily, should vacancies be created, those vacancies will not be filled.

Rationale

The reports and recommendations of the special committees that were submitted to the assembly for consideration are important in the life of the church and require deep and careful discernment. Unfortunately, the context in which those recommendations were created has changed significantly—COVID-19 has changed our world and our church in some known and yet unknown ways.

Extending the terms of these hard-working groups will allow them to examine and possibly refine their recommendations in light of the pandemic and its implications. The extension also allows for committee leadership to present their reports to the 225th General Assembly (2022) in an official capacity.

Standing Rule K.1.d: “Special committees or commissions shall normally complete their work within two years. Requests for an extension of work shall be referred to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. An extension shall require a two-thirds vote of the assembly.”

Item 00-21

Approved. (See pp. 22, 27.)

General Assembly Nominating Committee Report of Nomination Recommendations

The General Assembly Nominating Committee places in nomination the following persons:

General Assembly Nominating Committee 2020 Nominations

Commissioners to the 224th General Assembly (2020) will vote to elect many people to positions on the various entities of the General Assembly. In accordance with the *Book of Order*, G-3.0111, and to ensure careful nominations of members to these entities, the General Assembly Nominating Committee proposes a slate of nominees for election. Positions to be filled are listed on the attached pages.

Inclusive Representation: The nominations made by the General Assembly Nominating Committee are responsive to and reflective of the principles of participation and representation expressed in the *Book of Order*, F-1.0403 and G-3.0103. This report provides diversity information following the name of each nominee, as well as a chart describing inclusiveness information for each committee to which the General Assembly is electing members.

Nominations Process: The process for nominations proposed to the General Assembly is a long and thorough one. As of May 20, 2020, the General Assembly Nominating Committee has on file approximately 145 Application for Nomination forms. The names of these persons were gathered through

- self-nomination;
- suggestions from sessions, presbyteries, and synods;
- and other Presbyterians who suggested the nominations of persons they knew or with whom they’ve worshipped and worked.

Application for Nomination forms are received by the General Assembly Nominations office and a copy of each form is shared with all members of the General Assembly Nominating Committee. In addition, a copy of the application is sent to the committee or entity itself.

Each applicant is asked to solicit references from three persons of their choosing. In response to the action of the 208th General Assembly (1996), an appraisal is also solicited from the applicant’s council of membership—presbytery for teaching elders and session for ruling elders and church members. The General Assembly Nominating Committee will not nominate a person unless it has received two of three appraisals.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation has encouraged persons, particularly those in underrepresented categories, to consider serving the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) on General Assembly entities and to submit an application for nomination form for the General Assembly Nominating Committee consideration. The General Assembly Committee on Representation has reviewed the General Assembly Nominating Committee's nominations.

Although the majority of nominations are proposed for “at-large” positions, some people are nominated as representatives of specific presbyteries or synods to a particular entity. In these cases, the General Assembly Nominating Committee requests presbyteries and synods to send the names of no less than three persons for consideration. The General Assembly Nominating Committee may select only from the pool suggested by the synod or presbytery—through its regular nominating process—when filling a mid council representation slot in these instances.

This report lists the names of persons being proposed for nomination and distinguishes between those positions that are at-large (AL), those that are synod (S) or presbytery (P) representation slots, etc., and those that are filled by representatives from other General Assembly agencies or ecumenical bodies.

The General Assembly Nominating Committee also needs to take into account the people of color, geographic, physical, theological, and age diversity. The committee is also sensitive to the needs for expertise expressed by the entities themselves. It is a balancing act that the General Assembly Nominating Committee takes seriously and faithfully as it attempts to discern the call of Presbyterians to service on committees at the General Assembly level.

Persons who are elected to service on General Assembly committees and entities are, in most cases, eligible to be reelected to a second term. The 219th General Assembly (2010) urged “General Assembly entities to consider re-nominations as the exception, rather than the rule and applied only to those members whose continued service is clearly beneficial to ongoing or projected work in order to assist the GANC in making its careful nominations.” However, many of the persons who are proposed in the report are re-nominations.

Descriptions for each committee have been developed by the entity and adapted from the Entity Lists and Descriptions page of the General Assembly nominations website—pcusa.org/nominations.

Procedure for nominations from the floor: The procedure for nominations from the floor is described in the Standing Rules of the General Assembly, F. General Assembly Plenary Meeting, 6.c. Nominating from the Floor:

When any nomination for service on a General Assembly committee, council, or board comes from the floor of the assembly, the commissioner making the nomination will provide the General Assembly Nominating Committee, no later than 48 hours after the convening of the General Assembly, with pertinent information about the person whose name is being presented, as well as the name of the particular person nominated by the nominating committee whose nomination is being challenged. Such information shall be provided on the “Nomination by Commissioner Form” provided for use at the assembly and available from the Stated Clerk. The availability of the pertinent information provided by the person challenging the nominating committee's nominee shall be announced to the assembly at least twenty-four hours in advance of the nomination being made from the floor.

제224회 총회 (2020년) 총대 양식에 의한 공천

224ª Asamblea General (2020) — Formulario de nominación por comisionados(as)

224th General Assembly (2020) Nomination by Commissioner Forms in English: <https://bit.ly/2ARswQU>

The name of the specific person being challenged must be stated on the “Nomination by Commissioner” form. Please return this form, completed in full, to Assistant Stated Clerk Valerie Izumi no later than 7:00 p.m. on Sunday, June 21, 2020, so that it may be verified for eligibility and the Stated Clerk may prepare for a ballot. Thank you.

Key for the General Assembly Nominating Committee Report

Mariana Pardo (D) (YA) HFR 26-35 Milwaukee LAK AL NEW
 ③ ④ ② ① ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨

means

Mariana Pardo (person living with a disability) (Young Adult) Hispanic/Latina, Female, Ruling Elder, 26-35 years old, Milwaukee Presbytery, Synod of Lakes and Prairies, At-large position, New (first term) nomination.

Key:

① Gender and Ordination designation:

FT—Female Teaching, Minister of the Word and Sacrament
FR—Female Ruling Elder
FL—Female Church Member
FD—Female Deacon
FC—Female Minister (non-Presbyterian)
MT—Male Teaching Elder, Minister of the Word and Sacrament
MR—Male Ruling Elder **ML**—
 Male Church Member **MD**—Male
 Deacon
MC—Male Minister (non-Presbyterian)

② Racial Ethnic designation:

A—Asian American **B**—
 African American **H**—
 Hispanic/Latina/Latino **M**—
 Middle Eastern **N**—Native
 American

O—Other (*will further specify)
W—Caucasian

Combination of letter codes may be used when applicant indicates more than one racial/ethnic category (bi-racial or multi-racial) i.e. B/N = African American and Native American.

③ Person living with disability designation:

D—Disability (persons with self-identified disability)

④ Youth/Young Adult designation:

YA—Young Adult (35 years and younger when nominated)

⑤ Age Range:

25- (25 years old and younger); **26+** =26–35 years old; **36+** =36–45 years old; **46+** =46–55 years old; **56+** =56–65 years old; **66+** = 66–75 years old; and **75+** = over 75 years old

⑥ Presbytery

⑦ Synod:

ANW—Alaska Northwest; **BPR**—Borinquen en Puerto Rico | Puerto Rico; **COV**—Covenant; **LAK**—Lakes and Prairies; **LIN**—Lincoln Trails; **LW**—Living Waters; **MAM**—Mid-America; **MAT**—Mid-Atlantic; **NE**—North-east; **PAC**—Pacific; **ROC**—Rocky Mountains; **SA**—South Atlantic; **SCH**—Southern California and Hawaii; **SUN**—Sun; **SW**—Southwest; **TRI**—Trinity

⑧ Membership:

AA =Asian American At-Large
AC =Asian American Caucus
ACE =Associate Pastor of Christian Education
AL =At-Large
BA =African American At-large
COGA =Committee on the Office of the General Assembly
COMM = Commissioner
DCE =Director of Christian Education
ELCA = Evangelical Lutheran Church of America
FND =Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation
HC =Hispanic/Latina/Latino Caucus
MC =Middle Eastern Caucus
NC =Native American Caucus
P =Presbytery
PMAB =Presbyterian Mission Agency Board
RE Comm = Ruling Elder Commissioner

S =Synod
TE Comm = Teaching Elder Commissioner
UCC =United Church of Christ
WCL =Woman Church Lay Employee

ⓄNomination Category:

NEW =New Nomination
REN =Re-nominated
† =Appointed by General Assembly Moderator

Diversity Chart

FR	MR	FT	MT	FL	ML	FD	MD	FC	MC
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FR =Female Ruling Elder
MR =Male Ruling Elder
FT =Female Teaching Elder
MT =Male Teaching Elder
FL =Female Lay
ML =Male Lay
FD =Female Deacon
MD =Male Deacon
FC =Female Minister (non-Presbyterian)
MC =Male Minister (non-Presbyterian)

A. Advisory Committee on the Constitution

GANC Nomination—Class of 2026

1. Christian Boyd WMT 36-45 Milwaukee LAK AL REN
 2. Barbara Bundick WFT 56-65 Chicago LIN AL NEW
 3. Paige McRight WFT 66-75 Central Florida SA AL NEW

Class	FL/R	ML/R	FT	MT	A	B	H	M	N	O	W	D	YA
2022	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0
2024	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0
2026	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0
Total	2	0	3	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	0	0

B. Advisory Committee on Litigation

GANC Nomination—Class of 2026

1. Bennet McConaughy WMR 66-75 Seattle ANW AL NEW
 2. Pending AL NEW

Class	FL/R	ML/R	FT	MT	A	B	H	M	N	O	W	D	YA
2022	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
2024	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
2026	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Total	2	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0

C. Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy

GANC Nomination—Class of 2022

1. Jacob Douylliez WMT 26-35 Western North Carolina MAT AL REN

GANC Nomination—Class of 2024

2. Beverly Brewster WFT 56-65 Redwoods PAC AL REN
 3. Yenny Delgado H/NFR 36-45 National Capital MAT AL NEW
 4. Jeff DeYoe WMT 56-65 Peace River SA AL NEW
 5. Mark Douglas WMT 46-55 Greater Atlanta SA AL NEW
 6. Jeromey Howard N/WMT 36-45 Hudson River NE AL NEW

00 PLENARY

7. Sue Trigger WFT 56-65 Heartland MAM AL NEW

Class	FL/R	ML/R	FT	MT	A	B	H	H/N	M	N/W	W	D	YA
2022	2	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	1
2024	1	0	2	3	0	0	0	1	0	1	4	0	0
Total	3	2	2	5	0	0	0	1	0	1	10	0	1

D. Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns

GANC Nomination—Class of 2022

1. Raquel Ramirez Torres HFL 25- Noroeste BPR AL NEW

GANC Nomination—Class of 2024

- 2. Kamal Hassan BMT 56-65 San Francisco PAC AL NEW
- 3. Hailey V. Malcolm N/WFT 26-35 Tres Rios SUN AL NEW
- 4. James Potts WML 36-45 Middle Tennessee LW AL NEW
- 5. Iris Santoni HFT 46-55 Noroeste BPR AL NEW
- 6. Courtney Steininger WFD 25- National Capital MAT AL REN

Class	FL/D/R	ML/R	FT	MT	A	B	H	M	N	N/W	W	D	YA
2021/2022	5	0	2	0	0	2	1	0	1	0	3	0	2
2023	1	1	2	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	2	0	2
Total	6	1	4	1	0	3	2	0	1	1	5	0	4

E. Board of Pensions

GANC Nomination—Class of 2022

- 1. Amy Williams Fowler WFT 56-65 Genesee Valley NE AL REN
- 2. Arlene Gordon BFT 75+ Tropical Florida SA AL REN
- 3. Patsy Smith BFR 56-65 Indian Nations SUN PMAB NEW

GANC Nomination—Class of 2024

- 4. Wick Alexander WMR 46-55 Mission SUN AL NEW
- 5. Isaac Baah BMR 46-35 Philadelphia TRI AL NEW
- 6. Jerry Cannon BMT 56-65 Charlotte MAT AL NEW
- 7. Adam Ceteznik WMR 36-45 Seattle ANW AL REN
- 8. Catherine Cuellar H/WFR 46-55 Grace SUN AL NEW
- 9. Margaret Fox WFT 36-45 Maumee Valley COV AL REN
- 10. David McBride WML 66-75 New Castle MAT AL REN
- 11. Gladys Nwabah O*FT 56-65 Grace SUN AL NEW
- 12. S. Bradley Perkins WMR 36-45 San Francisco PAC AL NEW
- 13. Gregory Slonaker WMR 56-65 New Brunswick NE AL NEW
- 14. Suzanne Welsh WFL 56-65 Philadelphia TRI AL REN
- 15. Floyd White BMT 46-55 West Jersey NE AL REN

*African

Class	FL/R	ML/R	FT	MT	A	B	H	H/W	M	N	O	W	D	YA
2022	2	12	2	2	0	4	1	0	0	0	0	13	0	0
2024	3	6	1	2	0	3	0	1	0	0	1	7	0	0
Total	5	18	3	4	0	7	1	1	0	0	1	20	0	0

F. Committee on the Office of the General Assembly

GANC Nomination—Class of 2022

- 1. Luci Duckson- Bramble BFR 56-65 Long Island NE AL NEW
- 2. Pending GA ModNEW

GANC Nomination—Class of 2024

- 3. Stephanie Anthony WFT 36-45 Blackhawk LIN AL REN
- 4. David Davis WMT 56-65 New Brunswick NE AL NEW

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5. Lynn Hargrove	WFT	56-65	New Covenant	SUN	AL REN
6. Clayton (Andy) James	WMT	36-45	New Hope	MAT	AL REN
7. Blythe Kieffer	WFT	56-65	Great Rivers	LIN	AL NEW
8. Eliana Maxim	HFT	46-55	Seattle	ANW	AL REN
9. Robin Pugh	WFR	46-55	San Francisco	PAC	AL NEW

Class	FL/R	MD/R	FT	MT	A	B	H	M	N	O	W	D	YA
2022	1	2	2	2	0	3	1	0	0	0	3	0	1
2024	1	0	4	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	6	0	0
Total	2	2	6	4	0	3	2	0	0	0	9	0	1

G. Committee on Theological Education

GANC Nomination—Class of 2022

1. April Campbell Davis	WFT	46-55	Twin Cities Area	LAK	AL NEW
2. Nicholas Piccolo	WMR	66-75	Lake Huron	COV	AL NEW

GANC Nomination—Class of 2024

3. Jodi Craiglow	WFR	36-45	Chicago	LIN	AL REN
4. A. Vanessa Hawkins	BFT	46-55	New Hope	MAT	AL REN
5. Katherine Smith	WFT	36-46	New Hope	MAT	AL REN
6. Michael E. Williams	WMT	66-75	Northeast Georgia	SA	AL REN

Class	FL/R	ML/R	FT	MT	A	B	H	M	N	O	W	D	YA
2022	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0
2024	1	0	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	0	0
Total	2	1	3	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	6	0	0

H. Educator Certification Committee

GANC Nomination—Class of 2022

1. Gregg Neel	WMT	56-65	Cascades	PAC	AL NEW+
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GANC Nomination—Class of 2024

2. Mary Taneti	AFL	36-45	New Hope	MAT	AL REN
3. Jennifer Pattee	WFT	36-45	John Knox	LAK	PTI NEW+
4. Brett Foote	WMT	26-35	Northern Waters	LAK	AL NEW
5. Sarah Hegar	WFT	35-45	East Iowa	LAK	AL NEW
6. Marilyn Johns	WFR	66-75	The James	MAT	AL NEW

+Moderator Appointment

Class	FL/R	ML/R	FT	MT	A	B	H	M	N	O	W	D	YA
2022	1	0	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	0	1
2024	2	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	1
Total	3	0	3	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	7	0	2

I. General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations

GANC Nomination—Class of 2024

1. Nanette Cagney	WFR	56-65	South Louisiana	SUN	AL NEW
2. Christian Choi	AMT	36-45	Great Rivers	LIN	AL NEW
3. Brian Merritt	WMT	46-55	Newton	NE	AL REN
4. Daniel Morales	HMT	36-45	Tropical Florida	SA	AL NEW
5. Scott Prouty	WMT	56-65	Minnesota Valley	LAK	AL NEW
6. Sabrina Slater	O*FT	36-45	Geneva	NE	AL NEW

*African American|Black, Native American|Indigenous, White

Class	FL/R	ML/R	FT	MT	A	B	H	M	N	O	W	D	YA
2022	1	0	4	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	4	0	0
2024	1	0	1	4	1	0	1	0	0	1	3	0	0
Total	2	0	5	5	1	2	1	0	0	1	7	0	0

J. General Assembly Committee on Representation**GANC Nominations—Class of 2022**

1. William Yoo AMT 36-45 Greater Atlanta SA AL NEW+
2. Treena Parvelo NFL 46-55 deCristo SW AL REN

GANC Nominations—Class of 2024

3. Edward (Byron) Elam BML 25- Mid-South LW AL REN
4. Catherine Knott WFT 36-45 Ohio Valley LIN AL REN
5. Eric Thomas BMT 46-55 New York City NE AL REN
6. Jamie Fiorino WFT 36-45 Plains and Peaks ROC AL NEW
7. David Rue AMR 75+ Sacramento PAC AL NEW
8. Adolfo Santana HMT 36-45 San Juan BPR AL NEW
9. Pending
10. Pending

Class	FL/R	ML/R	FT	MT	A	B	H	M	N	O	W	Multi	D	YA
2022	3	1	3	1	2	1	0	0	1	1*	1	2	1	1
2024	0	2	2	2	1	2	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
Total	3	3	5	3	3	3	1	0	1	1	3	2	1	3

K. General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission**GANC Nomination—Class of 2022**

1. Leah Ntuala WFT 36-45 Geneva NE AL NEW

GANC Nomination—Class of 2026

2. Mari Gonzalez HFR 36-45 San Juan BPR AL REN
3. Larry Hollar WMR 66-75 Miami Valley COV AL NEW
4. Wendy Tajima AFT 56-65 San Gabriel SCH AL NEW
5. Vince Thomas BMR 56-65 Twin Cities Area LAK AL NEW
6. Scott Clark WMT 46-55 Redwoods PAC AL NEW
7. Pending ANW AL NEW

Class	FL/R	ML/R	FT	MT	A	B	H	M	N	O	W	D	YA
2022	2	0	2	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	3	0	0
2024	1	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0
2026	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	0
Total	4	4	4	3	2	2	1	0	1	0	9	0	0

L. Mission Development Resources Committee**GANC Nomination—Class of 2022**

1. Bethany Fox WFT 36-45 Pacific SCH AL NEW

GANC Nomination—Class of 2024

2. Arthur Canada BMT 66-75 Charlotte MAT AL REN
3. Cecilia Moran HFR 66-75 Stockton PAC AL REN
4. Perzavia Praylow BFT 36-45 National Capital MAT AL REN
5. Karen Rohrer WFT 26-35 Pittsburgh TRI AL NEW
6. David Zimmerman WMR 46-55 San Francisco PAC FDN REN

Class	FL/R	ML/R	FT	MT	A	B	H	M	N	O	W	D	YA
2022	1	2	2	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	3	0	0
2024	1	1	2	1	0	2	1	0	0	0	2	0	1
Total	2	3	4	1	1	2	2	0	0	0	5	0	1

M. Mission Responsibility Through Investments**GANC Nomination—Class of 2024**

1. Elizabeth Hinson-Hasty WFT 46-55 Mid-Kentucky LW AL REN

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Class	FL/R	ML/R	FT	MT	A	B	H	M	N	O	W	D	YA
2022	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2024	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Total	0	1	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0

N. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation

GANC Nomination—Class of 2024

1. Bridget-Anne Hampden BFR 56-65 Charlotte MAT FDN REN
2. Thomas McNeill BMR 66-75 Southern New England NE PILP REN
3. Christopher Mason WMR 56-65 New York City NE AL REN
4. Jason Micheli WMT 36-45 Los Ranchos SCH AL NEW
5. Joyce Rarumangkay AFL 56-65 National Capital MAT REAC NEW

*The 224th General Assembly (2020) will have before it Item 00-07 that recommends the assembly approve revisions to the Bylaws of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, Article II—Board of Directors, Section 2.01 (b) 9 and Section 2.01 (d). If approved by the General Assembly, the General Assembly Nominating Committee presents the following nominees for election:

- *6. Heidi Bolt WFT 36-45 Twin Cities Area LAK AL NEW
- *7. Mark Lu AML 46-55 Los Ranchos SCH BOP NEW

Class	FR/L	MR/L	FT	MT	A	B	H	M	N	O	W	D	YA
2022	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	3	0	0
2024	2	2	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
2024*	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Total	5	4	2	2	3	3	1	0	0	0	6	0	0

O. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation

GANC Nomination—Class of 2024

1. Steven Aeschbacher WMT 56-65 Utah ROC AL NEW
2. Wonjae Choi AFT 36-45 Philadelphia TRI AL REN
3. Bridget-Anne Hampden BFR 56-65 Charlotte MAT AL REN
4. Eric Osborne WML 26-35 Mid-South LW AL REN
5. George Philips AMR 66-75 Giddings-Lovejoy MAM AL NEW
6. Neal Presa AMT 36-45 San Diego SCH AL REN
7. Paul Roberts BMT 46-55 Greater Atlanta SA AL REN
8. Susan Rose WFL 56-65 Grand Canyon SW AL NEW
9. Corey Schlosser-Hall WMR 46-55 Northwest Coast ANW AL NEW

Class	FL/R	ML/R	FT	MT	A	B	H	M	N	O	W	D	YA
2022	3	3	1	3	1	1	2	0	0	0	6	0	1
2024	2	3	1	3	3	2	0	0	0	0	4	0	1
Total	5	6	2	6	4	3	2	0	0	0	10	0	2

P. Presbyterian Committee on the Self Development of People

GANC Nomination—Class of 2024

1. Karen Brown BFT 46-55 Baltimore MAT AL REN
2. Susan Dobkins WFL 46-55 Tacoma, Washington NP AL REN
3. Phyllis Edwards BFL 56-65 Detroit, Michigan NP AL REN
4. Maria Marroquin HF 56-65 San Francisco, California NP AL NEW
5. Phyllis Sanders BFR 66-75 Trinity SA AL NEW
6. Wayne Steele BMT 56-65 Mid-Kentucky LW AL REN

Class	FL/R	ML/R	FT	MT	A	B	H	M	N	O	W	D	YA
2022	3	3	2	2	2	4	0	0	0	1	3	1	1
2024	4	0	1	1	0	4	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
Total	7	3	3	3	2	8	1	0	0	1	4	1	1

Q. Presbyterian Council on Chaplains and Military Personnel**GANC Nomination—Class of 2024**

1. Dale Barber	WMR	66-75	Lackawanna	TRI	AL NEW
2. Anders Pedersen	WMT	56-65	Northern New York	NE	AL NEW
3. Kelly Wadsworth	WFT	36-45	Seattle	ANW	AL REN

Class	FL/R	ML/R	FT	MT	A	B	H	M	N	O	W	D	YA
2022	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0
2024	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0
Total	0	1	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0

R. Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Program**GANC Nomination—Class of 2024**

1. Laura Mariko Cheifetz	AFT	36-45	Middle Tennessee	LW	AL NEW
2. Karen Finney	BFR	66-75	Greater Atlanta	SA	AL REN
3. Jerrod Lowry	BMT	36-45	Coastal Carolina	MAT	AL NEW
4. Kenneth G. Page	WMT	46-55	Grand Canyon	SW	AL REN

Class	FL/R	ML/R	FT	MT	A	B	H	M	N	O	W	D	YA
2022	2	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
2024	1	0	1	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Total	3	1	1	2	1	3	1	0	0	0	2	0	0

S. Presbyterian Hunger Program**GANC Nomination—Class of 2022**

1. Ryan Atkinson	BMR	26-35	Charlotte	MAT	AL NEW
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GANC Nomination—Class of 2024

2. Neddy Astudillo	HFT	36-45	Milwaukee	LAK	AL REN
3. Eileen Best	WFR	56-65	Lake Michigan	COV	AL NEW
4. Frank Dew	WMT	66-75	Salem	MAT	AL REN
5. Sun (Sunny) Kang	AMT	56-65	Pacific	SCH	AL REN
6. Vince Patton	BMR	46-55	Mid-Kentucky	LW	AL NEW

Class	FL/R	ML/R	FT	MT	A	B	H	M	N	O	W	D	YA
2022	0	2	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	0	3
2024	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	0
Total	1	3	2	3	1	2	1	0	0	0	5	0	3

T. Presbyterian Mission Agency Board**GANC Nomination—Class of 2022**

1. Sallie Watson	WFT	56-65	Mission	SUN	COGA NEW
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GANC Nomination—Class of 2024

2. Rola Al Ashkar	MFL	26-35	Sacramento	PAC	AL	NEW
3. SanDawna Ashley	BFT	46-55	Minnesota Valley	LAK	AL	NEW
4. Beverly Brewster	WFT	56-65	Redwoods	PAC	ACSWP	NEW
5. Dee Cooper	WFT	56-65	Heartland	MAM	AL	NEW
6. Mary Jane Gordon	BFR	66-75	San Francisco	PAC	AL	NEW
7. Michelle Hwang	AFT	46-55	Blackhawk	IN	REAC	REN
8. Kevin Johnson	BMT	66-75	Detroit	COV	AL	REN
9. Kate Murphy	WFR	36-45	Charlotte	MAT	AL	NEW
10. Shannan Vance-Ocampo	WFT	36-45	Southern New England	NE	AL	REN

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Class	FL/R	ML/R	FT	MT	A	B	H	M	N	O	W	D	YA
2021	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2022	4	2	3	5	2	5	1	0	1	0	5	0	1
2024	3	0	5	1	1	3	0	0	0	0	4	0	0
Total	8	2	8	6	5	8	1	0	1	0	9	1	2

U. Presbyterian Publishing Corporation

GANC Nomination—Class of 2022

1. Lloyd Culbertson WMR 66-75 Chicago LIN AL NEW+

GANC Nomination—Class of 2024

- 2. Rebecca Davis WFR 36-45 National Capital MAT AL REN
- 3. Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri HFR 46-55 Tropical Florida SA AL NEW
- 4. Angela Cowser BFT 56-65 Mid-Kentucky LW AL NEW
- 5. Sunghye (Joanna) Kim AFL 46-55 Grace SUN AL REN
- 6. David Maltby WMR 56-65 Giddings-Lovejoy MAM AL NEW

Class	FL/R	ML/R	FT	MT	A	B	H	M	N	W/M	W	D	YA
2022	0	2	5	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	5	1	0
2024	3	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	0
Total	3	3	6	0	1	2	1	0	0	1	7	1	0

V. Presbyteries' Cooperative Committee on Examinations

GANC Nomination—Class of 2024

- 1. David Bush WMR 46-55 Mid-Kentucky LW AL NEW
- 2. Christianne Chase WFR 66-75 Cimarron SUN AL NEW
- 3. James Davis WMT 36-45 Albany NE ACAD REN
- 4. R. Ward Holder WMT 56-65 Boston NE ACAD NEW
- 5. Leeann Scarbrough WFT 56-65 Sheppards and Lapsley LW AL REN
- 6. Linda Steele WFR 56-65 Homestead LAK AL NEW

Class	FL/R	ML/R	FT	MT	A	B	H	M	N	O	W	D	YA
2022	1	0	2	3	1	0	1	0	0	0	4	0	0
2024	2	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0
Total	3	1	3	5	1	0	1	0	0	0	10	0	0

W. Racial Equity Advocacy Committee

GANC Nomination—Class of 2024

- 1. Jorge Abdala HMT 46-55 San Francisco PAC HA NEW
- 2. Holly Haile Thompson NFT 66-75 Long Island NE NA REN
- 3. Sarang Kang AFL 36-45 Detroit COV AC REN
- 4. Sameh Shaker MMT 36-45 Philadelphia TRI MC REN
- 5. Adebisi Shofu O*FR 56-65 New Brunswick NE AL REN
- 6. Pending BC NEW

*African

Class	FL/R	ML/R	FT	MT	A	B	H	M	N	O	W	D	YA
2022	1	0	3	2	2	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1
2024	2	1	0	2	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0
Total	3	1	3	4	3	1	2	2	2	1	0	0	1

Item 00-22

Approved. (See pp. 25, 27.)

Joint Recommendation Regarding the Apportionment Rate for 2022—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency recommend that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve the apportionment rate of \$8.98 for 2021 and \$8.98 for 2022.

Rationale

The recommended apportionment rates for 2021 and 2022 are unchanged from the approved apportionment rates for 2019 and 2020.

Item 00-23

Approved. (See pp. 19, 27.)

Nomination of the Reverend Dr. J. Herbert Nelson to Serve a Four-Year Term as Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the PC(USA)—From the Stated Clerk Nomination Committee.

With gratitude to God and in hope, the Stated Clerk Nomination Committee nominates to the 224th General Assembly (2020) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) the Reverend Dr. J. Herbert Nelson to serve a four-year term as Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Rationale

The Stated Clerk Nomination Committee was elected by the 223rd General Assembly (2016) and charged to bring to the 224th General Assembly (2020) a single nomination for the office of Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the PC(USA). The committee began its work in early 2019. We met in two, face-to-face meetings and by multiple Zoom calls. We received two inquiries and one completed application. We had two conversations with the candidate, including an extensive conversation in early April via Zoom, due to the travel restrictions caused by the pandemic. Our conversations focused on a look back on the previous four years as well as what the candidate has learned and hopes and dreams for the coming four years. A full report of the committee's process is available on PC-Biz in the "Resources" section, as Stated Clerk Nomination Committee Process Report.

After the final interview and prayerful discernment, the committee enthusiastically and with gratitude selected J. Herbert Nelson as its nominee.

The Stated Clerk Nomination Committee will offer an oral report to the 224th General Assembly (2020) on Sunday, June 27th, and, at that time, will place in nomination the name of J. Herbert Nelson for the office of Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Additional Resources:

Language-Spanish

Language-Korean

stated clerks nomination spanish version.pdf

stated clerks nomination Korean version. pdf

Item 00-24

Approved as amended. (For amendment, see pp. 24–25, 27.)

Joint Report from the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation Board, and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board to the 224th General Assembly (2020).

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation Board, and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board recommend that the 224th General Assembly (2020):

1. Approve the 2021–2022 Unified Budget of \$80,146,587 for 2021 and \$83,405,879 for 2022.
2. Authorize the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation Board, and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board to spend amounts in excess of, or less than, amounts budgeted

for a specific line item as a result of emerging situations. Any variance from the approved budgets shall be reported to the 225th General Assembly (2022)

Rationale

The 2021–2022 Unified Budget reflects the activity of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, and reflects the combined revenue and expenses of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, including the budget of the Administrative Services Group, the General Assembly Mission Budget, the General Assembly Per Capita Budget, and the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) Designated Budget. The details of those separate budgets comprise the Unified Budget.

The full financial implications of the COVID-19 pandemic are not yet fully understood. Therefore, the boards and committee are requesting authorization from the 224th General Assembly (2020) to amend the various budgets as necessary. The authorization is intended for the board and committees to respond to continuing and emerging impacts to ensure the financial well-being of the vital work over which they have authority. The action does not include the authorization for increasing the per capita apportionment rate—only a council above the session, in this case the General Assembly, may set its own apportionment rate.

Each individual budget encompasses all financial activity including the support given and support received from the other budgeted entities included in the unified budget; because of this, the sum of the three budgets is less than the total unified budget.

Additional background and rationale are attached.

Item 00-25

Approved. (See pp. 12, 27.)

Confirm Class of 2024 of PILP Board of Directors—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) confirm the following named individuals to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc., Board of Directors, Class of 2024:

1. **Thomas McNeill, African American Male, Ruling Elder, 56–65, Presbytery of Southern New England, Synod of the Northeast, At-large position.**
2. **Olivia Smith, African American Female, Teaching Elder, 66–75, Presbytery of Denver, Synod of the Rocky Mountains, At-large position.**
3. **Steven Bass, White Male, Ruling Elder, 56–65, Presbytery of Seattle, Synod of Alaska-Northwest, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation.**
4. **K. Nicholas Yoda, Asian American Male, Teaching Elder, 46–55, Presbytery of Cincinnati, Synod of the Covenant.**
5. **Jesse Hite, White Male, Ruling Elder, 75+, Presbytery of Charlotte, Synod of the Mid-Atlantic, At-large position.**
6. **Rafael Medina, Hispanic/Latino Male, Ruling Elder, 46–55, Presbiterio del Suroeste, Sinodo Presbiteriano Boriquén de Puerto Rico, PILP, At-large position.**

Item 00-26

Approved. (See pp. 12, 27.)

Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri and Cindy Kohlmann, Co-Moderators of the 223rd General Assembly (2018), place in nomination the following persons for election to the General Assembly Nominating Committee:

Nominee **Diversity** **Age** **Synod of Residence**

Class of 2024

1. Megan Acedo H/WFR 36–45 Philadelphia TRI AL NEW

Class of 2026

2. Charon A. Barconey BFR 46–55 Detroit COV AL NEW
 3. Alfred Graise MMT 36–45 Riverside SCH AL NEW
 4. Satoe Soga AFT 46–55 Grace SUN AL NEW
 5. Arenys A. Torres-Vélez HFR 25– Noroeste BPR AL NEW
 6. Lilia Ramirez HFT 36–45 Midle Tenn LW AL NEW

Class	FL/R	MD/R	FT	MT	A	B	H	M	N	H/W	W	D	YA
2022	1	2	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	3	0	1
2024	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	3	0	0
2026	2	0	2	1	1	1	2	1	0	1	0	0	1
Total	5	3	4	4	2	4	3	1	0	1	6	0	2

First letter is racial ethnic designation: **A**—Asian American|Pacific Islander **B**—African American|Black **H**—Hispanic/Latina/Latino **M**—Middle Eastern **N**—Native American
O—Other (*will further specify) **W**—Caucasian|White

Second and third letters are gender and ordination designation:

FL—Female Church Member
FR—Female Ruling Elder
ML—Male Church Member
MR—Male Ruling Elder
FT—Female Teaching Elder
MT—Male Teaching Elder

Item 00-27

Approved. (See pp. 24, 27.)

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board recommends for approval by the 224th General Assembly (2020) the allocation of annual income realized in 2019 and projected for 2020 from the John C. Lord and Edmund P. Dwight Funds in support of the budget for the general mission work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

Rationale

Current practice is to recommend to each General Assembly the allocation of annual income from these two funds in light of wording in the donors' wills, which requires this annual process.

Portion of the Will of Edmund P. Dwight (May 23, 1903):

I will and bequeath to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of America, to be used for the establishment of the Christian Religion, that the light of the gospel may be made to join more perfectly. ...

Portion of the Will of John C. Lord (January 2, 1873):

... to the Trustees of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., for religious and charitable uses, to be called the John C. Lord Fund, the annual interest of which is to be disposed of and distributed by the said General Assembly at each annual meeting for the furtherance of the Gospel of our Blessed Saviour, at home or abroad, as the Assembly may deem best ...

The applicable provisions of the two wills facilitate allocation of annual income realized from these funds for the purposes of the General Assembly Mission Budget.

Together these funds, held at the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation, currently generate about \$20,000 each year.

Item 00-28

Approved. (See pp. 13, 27.)

Nominations to the 11th Assembly of the World Council of Churches—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

Upon the recommendation of the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations, the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve the nomination of the following individuals to be elected to serve as delegates to the 11th Assembly of The World Council of Churches.

1. The Reverend Amantha Barbee, Pastor, Oakhurst Presbyterian Church, Atlanta Georgia
2. The Reverend Dr. Neal Presa, Associate Pastor for Family, Connecting, & Communications, Village Community Presbyterian Church, San Diego California

The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly (by virtue of office) and the Director of Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations (by virtue of office) are also invited as part of the delegation.

Rationale

The 11th Assembly of The World Council of Churches will meet September 8–17, 2021, in Karlsruhe, Germany. The PC(USA) has been allocated two delegates in addition to the two participants by virtue of office.

Item 00-29

Approved as amended. (For amendments, see pp. 14–17, 27.)

On the Church in This Moment in History—Responding to the Sin of Racism and a Call to Action

“Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt;
you shall raise up the foundations of many generations;
you shall be called the repairer of the breach,
the restorer of streets to live in.”
-Isaiah 58:12 (NRSV)

This 224th General Assembly (2020) of the PC(USA) declares that Black lives matter; that our country’s most important institutions have been built to sustain white privilege, to protect white lives and white property at the expense of our siblings of color; and that the church, through ignorance, denial, and in some cases deliberate action, has participated in this injustice. We have been slow to face the reality of systemic racism. We have been slow to acknowledge the pain of our fellow Presbyterians, of our fellow Christians, of our fellow citizens, and of those who have come to America for a better life, whose value has been judged by the color of their skin. We pledge to join hands and hearts with our BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) siblings to actively confront and dismantle systemic racism in our church and in society at large, and to work for a more just, merciful, and peaceful country that allows all of God’s children to flourish.]

“The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020)

1. Call all Presbyterians to hear and heed the Gospel imperative to love God, neighbor, and self by living out a deeper commitment to active participation with Jesus Christ in the work of building God’s kingdom through
 - a. Personal and corporate repentance, spiritual renewal, and devotion to the Great Ends of the Church. Repenting, both personally and corporately, for the role we as individuals and as a predominantly White-dominated church played in history and continue to perpetuate today, even if unknowingly, in systemic racism and White Supremacy, especially in terms of our own local silence, silencing those who attempt to speak or act, and our failure to act regarding police brutality, voter suppression, educational and healthcare inequality, and other acts of systemic racism on federal, state, and local levels.

- b. **Listening and responding to the voices of peoples long silenced, through participation in programs such as Hands and Feet: Presbyterians Engaging in Communities, and the Poor People’s Campaign, and Freedom Rising, approved by the 222nd General Assembly (2016).**
- c. **Energetic, intelligent, imaginative, and loving involvement in the Matthew 25 Initiative and its intertwined foci: building congregational vitality, dismantling structural racism, and eradicating systemic poverty.**
2. **Direct the Co-Moderators of the 224th General Assembly (2020) to facilitate a time of silent vigil of 8 minutes and 46 seconds as a symbolic representation in solidarity with our BIPOC siblings, and of corporate lament and personal introspection of our complicity in perpetuating systemic racism and racial injustice before the adjourning of the 224th General Assembly (2020).**
3. **Direct the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency to review all items of business referred from the 224th General Assembly (2020) to the 225th General Assembly (2022) to consider prayerfully whether the recommendations could be enacted under current social witness policy or the authority of agencies and their boards to make programmatic decisions between assemblies.**
4. **Call congregations, sessions, presbyteries, and synods to review items of business referred from the 224th General Assembly (2020) to the 225th General Assembly (2022) and prayerfully consider the call of God to work and witness for the goals and values expressed therein, in particular the following items as starting points for developing plans for action in dismantling structural racism at every level of the PC(USA):**
- a. **02-020, “Disparities Experienced by Black Women and Girls Task Force Report”**
 - b. **02-034-INFO, “Special Committee on Racism, Truth, and Reconciliation Progress Report with Recommendation”**
 - c. **02-041, “Lazarus Is Walking in Baltimore—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy”**
 - d. **02-084, “A Resolution Addressing the Lack of Installed Pastoral Leadership in People of Color Congregations in the PC(USA) - From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee”**
 - e. **02-100, “Approval of Part 1 of the 2021–2022 Mission Work Plan for the Presbyterian Mission Agency—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board,” especially the sections on dismantling structural racism**
5. **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.” This work can be done now at all levels, even in advance of the 225th General Assembly (2022), at which time that General Assembly can act on setting a constitutional requirement to do so if it chooses.**
6. **Honoring the spirit of Item 02-034-INFO—the Progress Report from the Special Committee on Racism, Truth, and Reconciliation and its conclusions regarding the need to address “institutional racism and oppression within the church” and “to call the church to do the hard work of repair necessary for reconciliation,” we direct the Special Committee on Racism, Truth, and Reconciliation to prepare for the 225th General Assembly (2022) a report deconstructing white privilege within our own denomination’s (and predecessor denominations’) history of involvement in the colonization, enslavement, oppression, and genocide of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), including theological support and benefits to our institutions. The report should also include a study of our denomination’s history of prophetic witness, resistance and abolition, and make recommendations towards proposed amends, reparations, and reconciliation.**
7. **Thank the Stated Clerk for adding his signature to the Open Letter of the Poor People’s campaign and direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to commend the use of the learning resources and the Open Letter of the Poor People’s campaign as educational tools for congregations.**
8. **Commend to the entirety of the PC(USA), its members, congregations, presbyteries, synods, and the General Assembly entities the poem included in the rationale and retyped here for reading, reflection, meditation.**

A knee on a neck
laying bare for all to see
the evil of
callous

00 PLENARY

soulless
entitled
power
choking the life from
God's beloved
just because.

We know what must change.
Will we, church?

We have written many
true, significant,
sometimes even sincere
words.

We have confessed:
Belhar, C'67, Barmen...

Enough words?
Never enough witness.

We know we must change.
Will we, church?

Kairos.

We believe that the work of attending to the pain, suffering, and long-standing oppression of our BIPOC siblings in Christ is central to our work of proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ. When Black Americans are killed at twice the rate of white Americans (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/investigations/police-shootings-database/>) we have much to lament. We, in particular white people, and as a predominantly white denomination, must confess our complicity in perpetuating systems of oppression against our BIPOC siblings. The church must be the first place seeking racial justice and reconciliation, the dismantling of structural racism, and the healing of our marginalized communities. It has, unfortunately, not often been so. We must have our own denominational and congregational houses in order. We must dare to be an image of hope for those around us.

While we recognize and honor the work towards justice that has been happening and continues at every level of the PC(USA), we also name that in this time it is not enough. We must become actively antiracist in our theology, policy, and praxis. When our colleagues, siblings, and neighbors protest in the streets to say that being Black should never be an excuse to be targeted and killed, when so many stand in solidarity to say #BlackLivesMatter, and when our own communities are weighed down in grief and anger, it is the time to stand alongside our BIPOC siblings in voice and in action.

bell hooks, an American author and social activist says this, 'Love is an action, never simply a feeling.' If we claim to love our neighbor, especially our BIPOC neighbors, we are called to action. We have said a lot and not done enough. Acknowledging the grief of our siblings in Christ and naming that the church has a primary calling to be repairers of the breach means nothing without moving towards action. We cannot wait until the 225th General Assembly (2022) to begin again to take action.]”

Rationale

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Kairos.

The Great Ends of the Church

The great ends of the Church are:

- the proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of humankind;
- the shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship of the children of God;
- the maintenance of divine worship;
- the preservation of the truth;
- the promotion of social righteousness; and
- the exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the world—*Book of Order*, F-1.0304

Hands and Feet Initiative: <https://handsandfeet-pcusa.org/>

Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival: <https://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/>

Matthew 25 Initiative: <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/matthew-25/>

PC(USA) racial justice resources: <https://www.pcusa.org/racial-justice-resources/>

Item 00-30

Approved as amended. (For amendments see pp. 17, 18, 27.)

The Assembly Committee on Business Referrals recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve the following resolution:

ON RESPONDING TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

*Why have you forgotten us completely? Why have you forsaken us these many days?
Restore us to yourself, O Lord, that we may be restored; renew our days as of old.
Lamentations 5:20-21*

From the moment of Creation to today's unprecedented pandemic known as COVID-19, God has called the church to embody the Gospel of Jesus Christ, who is the Word made flesh. In this time of global catastrophe, the church must rise to answer the call, offering its life as witness in word and work, heart and hand, in prayer and practice for the healing of the world God so loves.

This is not an initiative for new action or a reordering of priorities. Doing the ministry and mission of Christ is what the church is already about. Rather, this moment requires a response from the church to a world drowning in a great flood of suffering, fear, deprivation, abandonment, and death, compounded by the pandemic. The challenge before us is not so much about adjusting to a *new normal* in the days ahead, but how we will continue to grow as *new humans* in

Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. In the context of a destructive virus, how will we say and show the great ends of the church?

We must declare ourselves to be a community of faith, of hope, of love and reconciliation, of Gospel witness. (F-1.03)

To that end we affirm that:

- **In responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, we are guided both by the evidence of science and our deepest values as a people of faith.**
- **We seek compassion and justice for the most vulnerable among us, especially those who have been further marginalized by the pandemic—older persons, BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color), the LGBTQIA+ community, immigrant communities, impoverished and working poor persons, homeless persons and those for whom home offers no safety, those who are ill, afflicted, or challenged in body, mind, and spirit, persons living with HIV, and all whose lives are threatened because of harmful social structures and discrimination, which have been made even more apparent during the COVID-19 outbreak. We repent of the role we have played in these injustices.**
- **We pray for hope, courage, and wisdom on behalf of children and youth who must now move forward into a future where dreams, stability, and the social fabric have been radically altered. We commit to dismantling disparities in education, and in access to nutrition, technology, and necessary resources.**
- **With gratitude, we support and advocate safety for those who cannot avoid risks, such as hospital and health care staff, public safety employees, grocery workers, funeral home employees and so many others whose lives and well-being are just as essential as their jobs.**
- **We pray for and seek help for all those facing economic hardship and loss of livelihood.**
- **We advocate for access to good medical care for all who are in need, and for opportunities to earn a living and have fair wages.**
- **We desire wisdom for world leaders, and for our national, state, and local leaders, who are called upon not only to develop effective responses to this medical and economic cataclysm, but to provide a sense of comfort and hope for all those enduring fear and loss at this time. We share a special concern for the plight of nations that already struggle with high levels of poverty, inequality, and exploitation of their resources.**
- **We mourn with those who mourn the loss of precious lives, for the disruption of human relationships, and for those who suffer the pain of isolation.**
- **As we continue the gospel journey into all the world, we urge prayer and care for neighbors near and far so that all may be accorded respect as those created in the image of God.**
- **We invite congregations and worshipping communities to come to a larger, wider, rounder table, prepared for us by Christ alone, to imagine creative ways to celebrate our life together with our Triune God, whose presence has never been dependent on physical buildings or human timetables.**
- **We thank God for all those who labored faithfully on overtures and reports dealing with critical social and theological issues that were scheduled for this 224th General Assembly (2020), and we lament the delay in addressing these profound challenges. We invite the church to join in ongoing study and discussion of these heartfelt, faithful matters.**
- **We unite in prayer for pastors and church staffs, congregations, seminaries, teachers, mission co-workers, mission agency personnel, evangelists, champions of justice, for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and for the church in the world, that the Spirit will be upon all and sustain them as they carry out the work to which they have been called.**
- **We call on our whole church to commit to continuous discernment of how to meet the social justice, economic, and spiritual challenges of the pandemic. We set aside Sunday, October 25, 2020, Reformation Sunday, as a day of prayer for responding to those challenges.**

As different parts of the church respond to the pandemic according to their gifts, may we bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ. We hold fast to the everlasting love of God in Christ that has sustained us through the ages, through war, famine, slavery, persecutions, and pestilence, with the sure and certain hope that God will never forsake us. We stand on God's holy word:

*For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord,
plans for your welfare and not for harm,
to give you a future with HOPE.*

Jeremiah 29:11

Item 00-95

Approved. (See pp. 17, 27.)

Native American Coordinating Council Report—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020):

1. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to extend the mandate of the Native American Coordinating Council, which was created by the 223rd General Assembly (2018), by four more years, until the 226th General Assembly (2024), providing financial support for meetings and providing staff from the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) and the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) in coordinating churchwide actions on the Doctrine of Discovery.

2. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly to create webpages on the PC(USA) website with comprehensive educational resources, guidance, news, and programming about work addressing the Doctrine of Discovery, as well as an interactive space for questions and responses.

3. Designate 2020–2030 as “The Decade of Confession and Repentance,” in which the PC(USA) “turns around and walks in the other direction” from the Doctrine of Discovery.

4. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly to:

a. Support the efforts of Indigenous Nations to gain local, state, and federal recognition as sovereign nations.

b. Encourage the return of Indigenous lands and territories, including access to and protection of sacred areas through denominational property sales including: research of the land’s acquisition from Indigenous nations and consideration of how PC(USA) properties can be returned to Indigenous tribes and return federal, state, and local land management to tribal authorities (i.e. Bear’s Ears National Park).

c. Encourage mid councils to disburse a portion of the proceeds to Native American ministries when buildings or property are sold, symbolic of good stewardship.

d. Continue to support the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, supporting Indigenous peoples and nations in exercising their right to freely pursue their economic, social, and cultural development, in coordination with the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through its Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations in New York.

e. Support Indigenous Nation’s full expression of their inherent legal sovereignty in civil and criminal spheres, including but not limited to Violence Against Women Act, Indian Child Welfare Act, state and federal actions aimed at abrogating or diminishing Indigenous sovereignty, legislative efforts to support their inherent sovereignty, local, state and federal actions that impact Indigenous peoples protection and control over their environment and sacred places.

f. Support the continuation and revitalization of Indigenous epistemologies and ceremonial ways; cease promotion of proselytizing efforts that denigrate and/or seek to replace Indigenous epistemologies; encourage and support Indigenous peoples in maintaining their Indigenous ceremonies and epistemologies, and reconsider theological positions that provoke and demonize Indigenous epistemologies.

g. Invest in the revitalization of Indigenous languages by committing resources to support tribal efforts to revitalize Indigenous languages as they see fit.

h. Advocate for the repatriation of Indigenous patrimony and ancestral remains by undertaking a rigorous program to: repatriate sensitive artifacts housed in Presbyterian-run or affiliated institutions; appeal to private collectors not under the jurisdiction of The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA)

to repatriate sensitive and ceremonial pieces advocating the return of Indigenous works housed in local, state, and national archives and institutions.

5. Encourage the congregations, mid councils, and other groups in the church to develop partnerships with organizations, universities (including PC(USA) seminaries), and Indigenous leaders, addressing key issues important to Indigenous peoples and nations, including:

- a. Effects of intergenerational trauma on Indigenous peoples and communities relating to boarding schools and other assimilationist programs with a particular emphasis on children;**
- b. The epidemic of missing and murdered Indigenous women (MMIW);**
- c. Indigenous food cultivation, preparation, and preservation;**
- d. Indigenous responses to environmental crises and environmental racism;**
- e. Creation of Native American centers, programs, and resources outside of reservations, particularly urban centers (Initiatives like Princeton Seminary has taken for students descended of slaves or from underrepresented groups).**

5. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to develop theology and worship resources raising awareness on how church and society has benefited at the expense of Native American peoples in light of the Doctrine of Discovery, including insight into how that privilege continues informing the denomination. Include current research on intergenerational trauma, toxic stress, and the Adverse Childhood Experiences Study (ACEs), as they apply to American Indian and Alaska Native peoples.

7. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to create Christian education curriculum, study guides, and audio video resources for congregations, mid councils, and committees, unmasking the idolatries and violence that emerged from colonial conquest as shaped by the Doctrine of Discovery and to reform structures that grew out of that worldview.

8. Direct the Board of Pensions to develop strategies for pastoral ministry and social advocacy that increase resilience, bringing healing, and changing systems that prolong oppression.

Rationale

These recommendations are in responses to the following referral: *2018 Referral: Item 10-12. Overture on Expanded Response to the Doctrine of Discovery. Recommendation 5. Direct the PMA to Form a Coordinating Council for the Purpose of Encouraging, Monitoring, and Sharing the Ongoing Responses by the National Church, Mid Councils, and Congregations to the Call to Action Issued by the Stated Clerk, as Listed in Recommendation 4, Above. The Council Will Also Have the Purpose of Making Recommendations to the 224th General Assembly (2020) on How the National Church, Mid Councils, and Congregations Can Support Native Americans in Their Ongoing Efforts for Sovereignty and Fundamental Human Rights—From the Presbytery of Yukon (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 28, 32–33, 293–95 of the print copy, pp. 838–41 of the electronic copy).*

Background

This report is in response to 2018 Referral: Item 10-12: Expanded Response to the Doctrine of Discovery, Recommendation 5, directed the Presbyterian Mission Agency to form a Native American Coordinating Council for the purpose of encouraging, monitoring, and sharing the ongoing responses by the national church, mid councils, and congregations to the call to action issued by the Stated Clerk on the repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery. The action reads, “The council will also have the purpose of making recommendations to the 224th General Assembly (2020) on how the national church, mid councils, and congregations can support Native Americans in their ongoing efforts for sovereignty and fundamental human rights.”

The Native American Coordinating Council members are: Fern Cloud (Sisseton-Wahpeton, Sioux) and Ron McKinney (Choctaw) of the Native American Consulting Committee; June L. Lorenzo (Laguna Pueblo/Diné) and Custer Lowe (Diné/Ute) at-large members; Elona Street Stewart (Delaware), Synod of Lakes & Prairies and Anthony Trujillo, seminarian, (Okhay Owingeh) mid council representatives; and Lucy Apataki (Yupik) representative from a congregation.

The task of the coordinating council is twofold:

- encouraging, monitoring, and sharing the ongoing responses by the national church, mid councils, and congregations to the call to action issued by the Stated Clerk, and
- making recommendations to the 224th General Assembly (2020) on how the national church, mid councils, and congregations can support Native Americans in their ongoing efforts for sovereignty and fundamental human rights.

Issues that the council discussed included:

- Understanding all the subtleties in which the doctrine of discovery has impacted Native American congregations and all Native peoples. Policies and laws that do not on their face appear to be related to the doctrine, in fact, are part of its enduring legacy.
- Publicizing the work of the Native American Coordinating Council in print, through Native American congregations, the Native American Consulting Committee, and organizations of the church and through their publications.
- Resource development—Native American Day downloads, information about the Doctrine of Discovery, Native American boarding school history, and the Church and Native American issues.
- Helping the denomination understand the Presbyterian missions with Native American people, its part in the boarding school era, and work toward reconciliation.
- Discussions about a confession being added to the *Book of Confessions* that speaks of the denomination’s relationship with indigenous peoples in North America and around the world, especially as it relates to “mission.” It should offer confession and repentance for assisting attempts to eradicate Native American culture, languages, and lifeways from existence, for a “more civilized way.”
- Helping PC(USA) congregations become aware of, and accountable for its relationship with Indigenous people in the past, present, and future.

An additional action of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) is Item 10-13: Doctrine of Discovery Report, Recommendation 5 directed the Presbyterian Mission Agency to create a speaker’s bureau on indigenous issues and publicize the list to the church. The listing has twenty-three names of Native American leaders who are available to serve as speakers, resources, and leadership for the church in various geographical areas where they reside. Issues include but not limited to:

- Water Rights
- Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women
- Boarding School era—history, intergenerational trauma
- Doctrine of Discovery
- Native American ministry
- Health concerns
- Stereotypes, mascots and other mythology about Native Americans
- Environmental and land issues

The coordinating council was supported by Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) staff: the Reverend Irvin Porter, associate for Native American Intercultural Congregational Support, Racial Equity & Women’s Intercultural Ministries; the Reverend Shanea Leonard, associate for Gender & Racial Justice, Racial Equity & Women’s Intercultural Ministries; and the Reverend Denise Anderson, coordinator for Racial & Intercultural Justice, joint ministry office in Racial Equity & Women’s Intercultural Ministries and Compassion, Peace and Justice. Given the great scope of the coordinating council’s task, it may be necessary to consider additional Office of the General Assembly staff to complete our work to share “the ongoing responses by the national church, mid councils, and congregations to the call to action issued by the Stated Clerk.”

Much of our work depends upon partnership between the office of the Stated Clerk and the Presbyterian Mission Agency. We emphasize the preparatory work that needs to be done in advance of such a “Call to Action,” so there will be greater potential for that “Call” to land like seed in good soil. We have been in communication with Stated Clerk J. Herbert Nelson, II, to initiate this action in 2020.

Racial Equity & Women's Intercultural Ministries staff have been instrumental in the planning and work for meetings of the council in Minneapolis during 2019 and their final meeting before the 224th General Assembly (2020) held at the Presbyterian Center in Louisville.

The General Assembly Task Force on Native American Ministries presented a report to the 212th General Assembly (2000) on the historic relationship between the Presbyterian church and Native American peoples. A key conclusion was that many of the, at that time, 110 Native American congregations in the PC(USA) had difficulty in forging relationships with mid councils, especially presbyteries, after Native American ministries was transferred from the Presbyterian national jurisdiction to presbyteries in the 1970s. These congregations, for most of their existence, had a direct relationship with the Board of National Missions. This ended abruptly with the transfer to local presbyteries. Except for Dakota Presbytery, it has not been a smooth transition for Native American congregations to coordinate with mid councils.

Moreover, Native American congregations historically had virtually no role in decisions regarding the structure of the Presbyterian church, and very limited roles in policies affecting Native American ministry. This means that an important part of the denomination's work will be examining structures and policies that ignored the world views of Native peoples.

A Call to Examine Presbyterian Theology/Theologies; Confession and Repentance

Theological understandings are central to any understanding of a denomination's repudiating of the doctrine of discovery. The coordinating council felt it important to offer some preliminary observations about theological understandings in this report. While the larger tasks have been assigned to the PMA and the rest of the church, we wish to highlight some guiding principles moving forward.

2018 Referral: Item 10-12: Expanded Response to the Doctrine of Discovery, Recommendation 1 directs the Presbyterian Mission Agency to

develop resources that aid members, congregations, mid councils, and the national church on the following areas of theological understanding:

1. Describe the Christian ethic presented by Scripture and the PC(USA) confessions for properly respecting people and communities from different cultures and worldviews,
2. Present framework for understanding how the PC(USA) strayed from those understandings such that it became complicit in a prevailing worldview of oppression and collusion through policies based on the doctrine of discovery, and
3. Describe the potential challenges and promises this theological exploration presents as we consider a multicultural church in a multicultural world that includes Indigenous peoples.

This is a monumental task for the PMA's Theology, Worship and Evangelism area, and not in the purview of this report. However, the coordinating council believes it can serve a very useful role as consultant in the process of developing these resources.

Item 10-12, Recommendation 4, directs the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly to issue a call for the engagement of mid councils and their congregational members to start a flow of ideas and information back and forth between mid councils and congregational members, directed at understanding how the Doctrine of Discovery has been present in our history and our theological positions, and continues to be present today.

The action suggests the following two-step process of confession and repentance, concepts that have always been central to Presbyterian theology:

1. Confession:
 - a. An exploration of the local history of how the land was acquired from Indigenous residents, and
 - b. The local history of how the community and the church formed, and how that community or church pursued relationships with the Indigenous people of the region.
2. Repentance:
 - a. Development and implementation of a beginning strategy for entering into dialogue and action with relevant local communities, and
 - b. Planned reflection over time on how on those efforts, to discern what God is revealing through these relationships, and what next steps are needed in this work.

Confession: In the Reformed Tradition, confessions of faith may result from a sense of urgent need to correct some distortion of the truth and claim of the gospel that threatens the integrity of the church's faith and life from within the church. Sometimes the urgency to confess comes from the church's conviction that it has a great new insight into the promises and demands of the gospel that is desperately needed by both church and world. The church writes confessions of faith when it faces a situation of life or a situation of death so urgent that it cannot remain silent but must speak, even at the cost of its own security, popularity, and success. All of these factors would describe the urgency for *confessing the sin* of embracing the Doctrine of Discovery and also developing a *confession of faith* that offers a different path forward.

1. Item 10-12, Recommendation 4: A call to action of this scope must be much more than a perfunctory statement; it must be made with great care and a tremendous appreciation for both the diagnostic power and immense gravity of such a statement. Such a call requires probing deep into the history, theology, and present life of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

2. One of the primary actions a call must initiate is a call to intense self-examination. It must be clearly and emphatically stated here that, as in recovery programs, it is the church's responsibility to undertake this deep soul work for itself; the burden of healing the church should not be shifted to Indigenous peoples.

3. Item 10-12, Recommendation 1: A robust theological and methodological framework is necessary to guide the church. We all wait with great eagerness and interest the report from the PMA describing the resources it has developed in response to General Assembly action on Item 10-12, Recommendation 1, so that we can offer a coordinated and conscientious call and response.

4. The PC(USA) continues to work in partnership with other denominations and organizations allied in the cause of redressing the wrongs caused by the Doctrine of Discovery. Forging alliances and partnerships in this effort is important, as any call to action reflects that the PC(USA) is not alone in undertaking an assessment of this magnitude. A call to action should show that it has made a commitment to developing strong external allies and partners who can come alongside the church as it follows the path of repentance and recovery.

5. The PC(USA) also is undertaking a study on relationships within our own denomination and describing the "acts of repentance, reconciliation, and justice" needed to improve relationships between the PC(USA) councils above the congregation level and the Native American congregations and tribal nations within the PC(USA). In order for a call to action to be meaningful, there must be both a critical evaluation of relationships between the PC (USA) and Indigenous peoples and nations within the church. The long-term aim is to initiate a process that lays the groundwork for reimagining and enacting healthy relationships with Indigenous peoples and nations.

Repentance: The Reformed motto, "the church reformed, always to be reformed in accord with the Word of God" commits the contemporary church to ask of itself whether we provide cheap grace, or "cut-rate forgiveness." Jesus said "Repent" [Mt. 4:17]. He also gave indications of what repentance was. Matthew follows Jesus' call for repentance with the Sermon on the Mount—a clear indication of the life of repentance that produces an outwardly different way of life. Repentance is the proper response to recognizing that one body/institution has sinned against another. *Metanoia*, the New Testament Greek word for repentance, is defined as "turning around and walking in a new direction." Therefore, repentance must be understood as a journey. The renunciation of any wrong act is a very good first step of repentance, but cannot be considered as adequate. The PC(USA)'s repentance from the Doctrine of Discovery must not be written or verbal statements that are forgotten or filed away after being issued, but must be demonstrated through ongoing, intentional, and tangible acts.

1. All levels of the PC(USA) need to explore what next steps might be taken in the provinces of their work as a part of the repentance of the whole church. This will require recognizing some injustices within the church that need to be rectified, whether it is as personal as discouraging ordination to a Native seminarian who professes to adhere to Indigenous epistemologies or redirecting funds intended for Native ministries.

2. Repentance also calls us to listen to the voices of Indigenous peoples worldwide. The PC(USA) has a presence in a number of continents. Indigenous peoples in every continent have articulated their concerns before the United Nations for decades. Perhaps we need to heed the words of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in calling for redress. For both Indigenous peoples and States, there are compelling reasons to go beyond repudiation. It is essential to replace the colonial Doctrine of Discovery with contemporary international human rights standards and engage in just and collaborative processes of redress.¹

3. It is time to recognize that our baptismal vows call us to move beyond studying oppression and take action to dismantle oppression (see Mt. 25:37–40 and Jas. 2:14–18). Indeed, since the PC(USA) has admitted its complicity with

the larger Western society in perpetrating the Doctrine of Discovery, it should be clear to us that acts of justice and wholeness are needed both within the church, and across the wider society. This will include joining with Indigenous peoples in their movements for justice, as well as clarifying our role as allies in this ongoing work.

4. Jesus made clear that healing is always integral to God’s salvation; healing ministries are an important part of the ministry of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), it is time to explore new approaches for healing ministry as a part of redressing the wrongs of the past. One of the most prominent legacies of colonial oppression is that of intergenerational trauma. This sociological awareness could help inspire new ministries of healing, in obedience to the biblical mandate to spread the Gospel in deed, as well as in word.

Related PC(USA) Policies and Actions Regarding Native Americans

The Native American Presbyterian community has worked within the denomination to advocate for the needs of Native peoples, as evidenced by the following documents:

1. *We May Be Brothers After All*, A Position Paper of the Presbyterian Indian Consulting Panel (1972)
2. Native American Ministry Churchwide Policy Statement, General Assembly (1979)
3. *Comprehensive Strategy for Ministry with Native Americans*, General Assembly (2000)
4. *Mission and Ministry with Native American Peoples: A Historical Survey of the Last Three Centuries*, 2000, General Assembly Task Force on Native American Ministries
5. 2002 Referral: Item 11:02, Report: *A Comprehensive Strategy for Ministries with Native Americans: 2002 Supplemental Recommendations of the General Assembly Special Task Force on Native American Ministries*, Recommendation 4.
6. Follow-Up Implementation Report to the 219th General Assembly (2010) Previous Reports deriving from this referral included:
 - a. A report on the Native American Churchwide Consultation—Albuquerque, New Mexico, 2005, and
 - b. Report from the Office of Native American Congregational Enhancement focused on pertinent statistics regarding Native Americans from PC(USA) and 2000 Census—both presented to the 217th General Assembly (2006).

Related PCUSA Policies and Actions

Social Witness policies—The PC(USA) has approved a social witness policy to support “Land based religions.” While Indigenous peoples do not refer to their religions as land-based religions, this policy understands the intimate relationship with place for many Indigenous peoples in their beliefs and very survival. Thus, land repatriation is intimately connected to the repatriation and protection of sacred sites.

Churchwide Antiracism Policy—The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, on behalf of the Churchwide Antiracism Policy Team, recommended revisions to the Churchwide Antiracism Policy at the 222nd General Assembly (2016), which included recommendations that could both support and complement the denomination’s work on the Doctrine of Discovery. Some of them include the following:

1. Direct the Stated Clerk to challenge the church through a direct communication to do a personal self-examination of its participation in structures that support and maintain racism regardless of the good intentions of individual Presbyterians.
2. Direct the Office of the General Assembly to make the revised policy and accompanying study guides available to congregations for study and discussion.
3. Direct the national church agencies to jointly formulate a communications plan to share antiracism resources and create an electronic campaign to send information on antiracism resources and trainings to mid councils, congregations, and Presbyterian-affiliated institutions.

4. Urge the Committee on Theological Education to encourage its affiliated seminaries to provide regular antiracism trainings for students, faculty, and staff, to integrate racially and culturally diverse voices in the curriculum, and to revisit hiring policies to ensure the faculty and staff are racially diverse.

5. Commend the various mission program areas that made antiracism a consistent part of their programming and encourage them to continue their efforts as a model to the church.

On Offering an Apology to Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians was an action of the 222nd General Assembly (2016). The boarding school system, in which the denomination participated, was part of an assimilation agenda for Native Americans. Native languages, traditions, cultures, and religions were discouraged and even prohibited by these schools that took some children as young as four and five-years of age, boarding them up to the age of eighteen-years old. For the Presbyterian church's participation in this harmful policy, the General Assembly in 2016 issued an apology.

PCUSA Structures/ Entities That Address Native American Issues

The Native American Coordinating Council also examined present PC(USA) structures that focus on Native American congregations and concerns as it is important to assess their respective roles in the work on the doctrine of discovery.

1. Office of Native American Intercultural Congregational Support: The job of the associate in this position, a thirty-hour a week position, is to develop leadership in Native American congregations, assist with Native American evangelism and church growth, and be a voice for Native American Presbyterians in the larger church. Given these responsibilities, among others, it may be unreasonable to expect that the associate would oversee a project of this scope while also providing the necessary support to Native congregations. The coordinating council is not a project management team with supervisory authority over PC(USA) staff; it is a volunteer body with a mandate to “encourage, monitor, and share” ongoing responses to the Stated Clerks’ call to action and to provide an evaluative/recommendation function.

2. Native American Consulting Committee (NACC): The Native American Consulting Committee (NACC) is one of the consulting bodies serving communities of color in the PC(USA). It was originally created with programming authority and so has a different history than other caucuses and councils serving communities of color. The by-laws of NACC provide that NACC is to do the following:

a. Provide an effective Native American leadership role in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) at the General Assembly level;

b. Be primarily responsible for the implementation of the Native American Ministry Churchwide Policy Statement including additions of October 1991 for use by General Assembly Council [now the Presbyterian Mission Agency] and related bodies, synods, and presbyteries;

c. Work with mid councils in the development and implementation of ministry efforts: and to address the issues and needs of concern within the broader Native American community, such as treaty rights, human and civil rights, the protection of land, water, and other natural resources, and the promotion of economic development.

While NACC is a key stakeholder in this work and should be involved in its development and implementation, NACC is not a project management body overseeing and implementing the work of the Expanded Response to the Doctrine of Discovery.

Endnote

1. Note 1, supra, para 4. UNPFII, “Study on the impacts of the Doctrine of Discovery on Indigenous peoples, including mechanisms, processes and instruments of redress,” February 20, 2014 (E/C.19/2014/3).

GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 00-95

General Assembly Committee on Representation Comment on Item 00-95. Native American Coordinating Council Report—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

This item has been recommended to be referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). However, should the assembly determine that this item of business needs to be considered by the 224th General Assembly (2020), GACOR provides this comment.

These recommendations from the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board are aimed to expand the response of the PC(USA) in its renunciation of the Doctrine of Discovery to include not only responses by congregations, but also responses from mid councils and the national church.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) seeks to help the church understand the inequitable impact of its actions on marginalized communities and its responsibilities for repair. Maturity in community is coming to a clear-eyed understanding of the good, bad, and ugly of life together.

When inequities are faced, the church is freed to unmask idolatries and listen to voices long silenced. The impact of the ongoing sin of operating in the doctrine of discovery still is present among us. Conscientizing all bodies in the PC(USA) efforts to address these long-ignored harms and peoples would be helpful and healing.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation is made up of sixteen persons, elected by the General Assembly, who are drawn from members and elders, ruling and teaching, from across the church in accordance with F-1.0403. Its constitutional mandate and central functions are described in G-3.0103 of the Book of Order (Form of Government).

REAC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 00-95

Advice and Counsel on Item 00-95—From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC).

The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 00-95.

REAC affirms “... directing the Presbyterian Mission Agency to extend the mandate of the Native American Coordinating Council ... for four more years until the 226th General Assembly, (2024).”

There remains a great need for the PC(USA) to take an adequate look at the Doctrine of Discovery because of the ongoing racial, genocidal, economic, environmental, and theological violence that it allows, perpetuates, and justifies in our society, in this nation, and in the world.

Various American Christian denominations as well as the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples have been vocal about the Doctrine of Discovery being the basis for the violation of human rights of Indigenous peoples, seizure of their land, exercising conquest, colonization, exploitation, physical, cultural, and spiritual genocide with impunity.

The PC(USA) must not only learn its own part and participation in the letter and in the spirit of this particular Christian Doctrine, it must decide whether or not to repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery and whether or not to begin honest confession and repentance for its participation in this violence.

As the Doctrine of Discovery is known to have become a rationale not only for ecclesiastical practices and traditions, it is also, dangerously, the basis for American law that relates to Native Americans in the United States.

As our own PC(USA) seeks to faithfully follow Jesus of Nazareth—The Prince of Peace—honest self-reflection must include hearing from Native people, as attested in our own 1983 A Brief Statement of Faith: “... the Spirit gives us courage ... to hear the voices of peoples long silenced ...”

Item 00-96

Approved. (See pp. 17–18, 28.)

Native American Church Property Report—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020):

1. Call upon mid councils with Native American churches and chapels in their bounds, as well as churches with partnerships with Native American congregations, to review this report and develop a process for repair and improvement of church properties.

2. Call upon mid councils with funds that they hold to improve Native American churches and chapels to engage in funds development for Native American church property repairs, and encourage support for the *Native American Church Property Fund* established by the Presbyterian Foundation in 2019. The 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the

PC(USA) directed the Presbyterian Foundation to create an ongoing fund for Native American Church property urgent and immediate repairs and improvements. To give to this fund, click on: <https://www.presbyterianfoundation.org/nativeamericanchurches/>.

Rationale

These recommendations are in response to the following referral: *2018 Referral: Item 10-01. On an Initiative to Repair Critical Infrastructure Needs of the Churches and Properties in the Historic Native American and Alaskan Native Mission Field of the PC(USA). Recommendation 2. Report—Findings of the Inventories Will Be Reported to All Responsible Parties During the Two Years Between Meetings of General Assembly and a Report Would Be Made to the 224th General Assembly (2020) in Baltimore, Maryland. To Be of Value, This Report Must Contain Estimates of the Identified Repairs and Improvements. Of Equal Value Is the Necessity to Provide a Mechanism to Prioritize the Repairs and Improvements and the Associated Estimated Costs—From the Presbytery of Grand Canyon (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 28, 29, 279 of the print copy, pp. 809–11 of the electronic copy).*

Background

This report is in response to 2018 Referral: Item 10-01: On an Initiative to Repair Critical Infrastructure Needs of the Churches and Properties in the Historic Native American and Alaskan Native Mission Field of the PC(USA), Recommendation 2. The 223rd General Assembly (2018) directed the Presbyterian Mission Agency to perform inventories of Native American church properties in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and to report its findings to the 224th General Assembly (2020). Some of the ninety-two churches and chapels in the Native American Intercultural Congregational Support Directory are no longer serving as worshipping communities or are uninhabited. Many are in need of repair.

Section G-3.0201 of the *Book of Order* (Part II of the Constitution) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) gives responsibility to the session of a church for “governing the congregation and guiding its witness to the sovereign activity of God in the world, so that the congregation is and becomes a community of faith, hope, love, and witness.” Section G-3.0201(c) of the *Book of Order* provides authority to the session of a local congregation in “managing the physical property of the congregation for the furtherance of its mission.” And, Section G-2.0202 entitled “Under Authority of the Session” also provides the local church with the responsibility of “overseeing the buildings and property of the congregation.”

Also, the presbytery, in whose bounds a local congregation resides, is the body that works with a congregation when it is unable to maintain its property or has property issues. The presbytery joins with and engages in ministry with the congregation. Some presbyteries have a resources committee, which receives requests and/or proposals for church maintenance and repairs and disburses funds, which have been set aside in a fund for Native American building repair.

Most Native American Presbyterian churches and chapels are on tribal lands. Most tribal lands (some, but not all) are referred to as reservations. Today, most native nations have their own bodies of law and enforcement mechanisms. In many cases, the property is leased to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) by a native nation or tribe. And while the church session has some degree of authority, they must be mindful of the fact that the land is generally not land owned by the church, so they are subject to tribal laws and policies.

Because of the complexity and differences in Native American churches and chapels throughout the denomination, it is recommended that mid councils with Native American churches and chapels in its bounds, as well as Native American Presbyterian churches, and also local mission committees of neighboring PC(USA) congregations work together to repair and maintain Native American church properties to build strong churches with faithful mission and ministry in Native American tradition.

Funds development and an appeal to Presbyterians to be a part of this vision and ministry is also recommended. Presbyterians are asked to support the Native American Church Property Fund. The fund was established by the Presbyterian Foundation in 2019, as mandated by the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the PC(USA). To give to this fund, click on: <https://www.presbyterianfoundation.org/nativeamericanchurches/>.

At present, the ninety-two Native American churches in the PC(USA) are located from Shinnecock on Long Island, New York, to Neah Bay, Washington, on the Makah tribal lands, and from the Alabama-Coushatta lands in Livingston, Texas, to the territory of the Inupiaq at Point Barrow, Alaska. There are two urban congregations: Anchor Presbyterian Church, Anchorage, Alaska, in the Presbytery of Yukon, and Central Presbyterian Church in Phoenix, Arizona, in the Presbytery of Grand Canyon.

Inventories

The coordinator for Native American Church Property, who began work in the Presbyterian Mission Agency in January 2019, performed eighty-six inventories of church properties and found some common needed repairs. Eighty-six of ninety-two

Native American churches and chapels in the PC(USA) were inventoried. One is no longer a congregation, and three are no longer PC(USA). Some of these churches and chapel requested that no visit be made. The churches and chapels are located in sixteen presbyteries, including:

Presbytery of Cascades, Presbytery of Dakota, Presbytery of De Cristo, Presbytery of Eastern Oklahoma, Presbytery of Eastern Oregon, Presbytery of Grand Canyon, Presbytery of Indian Nations, Presbytery of Inland Northwest, Presbytery of Long Island, Presbytery of Nevada, Presbytery of New Covenant, Presbytery of Northwest Coast, Presbytery of Olympia, Presbytery of Santa Fe, Presbytery of Western New York, and Presbytery of Yukon.

Twenty-four Native American churches and chapels (or 27 percent of the churches) are in the Presbytery of Grand Canyon. 19 Native American churches and chapels (or 21 percent of the churches) are in Presbytery of Dakota. Thirteen Native American worshiping communities (or 15 percent of the churches) are in the Presbytery of Eastern Oklahoma. 10 Native American worshiping communities (or 11 percent of the churches) are in the Presbytery of Yukon.

Findings of the Inventories

The Native American property inventories began in February 2019. The most common property issues are listed below. Some of the issues are more regionalized than others, but these are the most common.

Roofing. Regardless of property age, roofs tend to be one of the most common property issues. Most of the roofs, no matter if they are asphalt shingle, asphalt rolled roofing, or clay tile, will need to be replaced. Most of the roofs with minimal wear and tear have been constructed of metal. Once the roofs began failing, further damages occurred, such as rotting of roof decking, building structure and framing, siding, soffits, and windows, as well roof rafters, interior ceilings, walls, and floors. Some damaged roofs may be suspected to be constructed of asbestos.

Approximate/varied costs in different locations:

- Central Presbyterian, Phoenix, Arizona. Repair of clay roofing and rafters: \$67,500
- Tutuilla Presbyterian, Tutuilla, Oregib. Repair of electrical mast through roof: \$750
- Savoonga Presbyterian, Savoonga, Alaska. Repair of metal roofing: \$5,200 (Not including transport)

Exterior; paint, siding and trim. The properties inventoried were primarily constructed with wood siding and trim. The siding and trim on many of the properties are rotting and falling off, thus are in need of scraping and painting. (Many of these are suspected to be possibly lead paint). Some are in need of new siding and trim. Most of these are missing pieces, making element and pest intrusion probable. Almost all of these are in need of tuck pointing, mortar repairs, and wood trim repairs (flaking and paint of the wood trim may be suspected to be lead paint). Once the earthen like, light concrete material begins cracking, it falls away and begins damaging the wood structure, walls, and floors, as well as element and pest intrusion. A few of the inventoried properties are sided with metal. Many are in need of paint.

Approximate/varied costs in different locations:

- Central Presbyterian, Phoenix, Arizona. Trim and minor painting: \$2,500
- Tutuilla Presbyterian, Tutuilla, Oregon. Repair and painting of fellowship hall and sanctuary: \$15,000
- Savoonga Presbyterian, Savoonga, Alaska. Repair of siding and paint: \$11,050 (Not including transport).

Windows and doors. The majority of the properties are in need of window and door repairs, and in many cases, replacement. Wood window sashes and frames are rotted as well as their glazing is missing. Pre-1980s wood window paint carries a high possibility of lead content and need to be scraped and painted, inside and out. Doors are a main issue because of building egress. Many doors are rotted, rusted out, will not open or blocked off altogether, non-latching or inoperable.

Approximate/varied costs in different locations:

- Central Presbyterian, Phoenix, Arizona. Exterior door replacement and minor window repairs: \$4,825
- Tutuilla Presbyterian, Tutuilla, Oregon. Window replacement and minor door repairs of fellowship hall and sanctuary: \$14,250

- Savoonga Presbyterian, Savoonga, Alaska. Door and window replacement: \$27,000 (Not including transport).

Exit signs, emergency lights, fire extinguishers, smoke and CO2 detectors. There is either a deficiency or a total lack of exit signs and emergency lights in each property inventoried. When they are present, most have a repair issue or not enough installed. This is a fire and safety issue. There is either a deficiency of a total lack of smoke and CO₂ detectors in each property inventoried. The majority of properties have no smoke or CO₂ detectors and a few have them but are in need of batteries or proper wiring. A small handful do not need the CO₂ detectors because the properties have no fossil fuel furnaces or ovens. Each property needs fire extinguishers.

Approximate/varied costs in different locations:

- Central Presbyterian, Phoenix, Arizona. Exit sign/emergency light combos, smoke detectors: \$8,850
- Tutuilla Presbyterian, Tutuilla, Oregon. Exit sign/emergency light combos, smoke detectors: \$3,275
- Savoonga Presbyterian, Savoonga, Alaska. Exit sign/emergency light combos, smoke detectors: \$7,650 (not including transport).

Electrical panels, wiring, GFCI outlets. A large number of inventoried properties have overloaded, insufficient, or improperly installed electrical panels. These electrical panels need extensive maintenance or replacement, and many still have fuses. In these cases, a fire and safety hazard is present. Most of the inventoried properties had a lack of GFCI circuits that need to be installed, when an electrical outlet is outside or near water. This safety device lessens the chance of electrocution or electrical harm when water meets an electrical appliance.

Approximate/varied costs in different locations:

- Central Presbyterian, Phoenix, Arizona. New electrical panels and other electrical: \$12,550
- Tutuilla Presbyterian, Tutuilla, Oregon. Electrical: \$350
- Savoonga Presbyterian, Savoonga, Alaska. Electrical and ventilation fan: \$2,300

Heating and cooling. Most of the properties do not have adequate furnaces and air conditioners. There was limited heating or air coverage. Many properties were built at a time when they were heated by wood stoves, and the only heat came from where the replacement appliance was installed, often missing ductwork to carry the tempered air. This not only causes a lack of air flow but may damage the appliance. Many properties in extreme high temperature areas do not have air conditioners. And, the same is true for areas where there are low temperatures, they lack proper heating.

Approximate/varied costs in different locations:

- Central Presbyterian, Phoenix, Arizona. Heat pump and a/c needs and equipment in fellowship hall and sanctuary: \$22,500
- Savoonga Presbyterian, Savoonga, Alaska. \$2,000 (not including transport).

Structure and foundation. Many properties have structural and foundational deficiencies. For example, the Alaskan Yukon has a melting and then re-freezing permafrost as well as oceans and melting, pooling water that cause shifting issues with the post foundations. This causes the structure to heave. Sandy desert areas were built on sand that may shift. Lake, river, snowy, and rainy areas have flooding and grading problems. Each has its unique solutions.

Approximate/varied costs in different locations:

- Central Presbyterian, Phoenix, Arizona. Retaining wall and foundation needs: \$7,500
- Tutuilla Presbyterian, Tutuilla, Oregon. Foundation work in sanctuary and jacking and footers in foundation hall: \$7,500
- Savoonga Presbyterian, Savoonga, Alaska. Jacking, re-drilling and backfilling including backfilling equipment: \$14,400 (not including transport)

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Appendix 1
Urgent and Immediate Repairs

The list below shows urgent and immediate repairs to Native American churches and chapels that were inventoried, which church members can repair themselves. These needed repairs were reported to the church for church members or others to repair.

Native American Church/Chapel	Repairs to Be Made by Church	Contact Person
Achena Presbyterian Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install GFCI outlets in pumphouse • Install space heater 	Louis Fife
Ascension Presbyterian Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforce floor joists and cinderblock • Repair rotted flooring • Scrape, paint, and glaze windows 	Jr. Hemmenger
Atqusuk Presbyterian Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seal side of the building • Install transitions to the doorway 	Doug Whiteman
BdeCan Presbyterian Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace batteries in exit signs • Clean and check furnaces 	Joe Obermeyer
Black Water Presbyterian Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Block access to stairs because the landing is missing • Eventually remove and replace stairwell 	Yolanda Wilson
Buffalo Lake Presbyterian Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrape, glaze, and paint windows and sills • Paint front door • Remove warped and falling tiles in ceiling 	Floyd Dakota Jr. Hemminger
Canipa Presbyterian Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove vegetation, trees next to foundation completely including roots in front corner and back of building • Install space heaters to prevent freezing of incoming water line 	Sandra Lily
Cansuska Presbyterian Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean furnace • Grind off metal lintel sticking from the ground 	Dean Blount
Cedar Presbyterian Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-glaze and paint windows • Stain inside sashes • Replace jacks holding up viewing area • Close off basement until mold is remedied • Clean mold in sanctuary 	Rudy Cognen
Central Presbyterian Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repair broken sanctuary window and glaze other windows • Install outlet covers in office and classrooms and j-box cover in hallway • Replace window screens in fellowship hall • Support roof overhang • Investigate termite problem in sanctuary 	Martha Sadongei
Chapel in the Mountains Presbyterian Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make heating source accessible • Seal walls of the bathroom • Tarp over the small entry roof 	Curt Karns
Cheyahra Presbyterian Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cover open fascia • Reinforce joists, apply new fascia board and paint • Seal fireplace damper and aluminum roof flashing over fireplace • Replace outlet with GFCI 	Theodore and Juanita Tiger
Church of the Indian Fellowship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install small crock and sump pump • Reglaze steel windows • Maintain leaking gutters 	Tony Rios
Conkicaske Presbyterian Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move electrical wiring from the floor and tape along the wall 	Mike Horned Eagle
First Light United Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adhere low voltage wiring on both sides of sanctuary • Chalk grease trap in kitchen • Scrape off chalk and reapply above and around shower 	Faith McClellan
Flandreau Presbyterian Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bolt shut the fellowship hall • Install a handrail on the basement stairwell • Investigate water in the basement 	William Bean and Fred Olsen
Gila Crossing Presbyterian Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace extension cord 	Judy Wellington
Goodwill Presbyterian Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrape and paint exterior window surfaces • Close off the basement stairway 	Jr. Hemminger
Greenwood Presbyterian Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pump water out of basement 	Basil Herb
Indian Presbyterian Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adhere loose exterior vinyl siding • Move exterior A/C wiring from the ground 	Debbie Battiste Klein- man

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Native American Church/Chapel	Repairs to Be Made by Church	Contact Person
Jimmersontown Presbyterian Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scrape and paint windows Close off Men's bathroom until electrical panel can be moved 	Marvin Abrams
Hydaburg Presbyterian Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove side lock on bathroom door and install a privacy knob set Tack loose exterior siding where reachable 	Sonny Peele
Kaktovik First Presbyterian Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scrape and paint one window Connect heater to a permanent mounted receptacle 	Darlene Matz
Kamiah First Presbyterian Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add transitions to bind floors together in the bathroom Block access to the closet in outbuilding 	Gwen Carter
Kamiah Second Presbyterian Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prime and paint ceilings 	Marilyn Bowen
Ketchikan Presbyterian Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replace entry knob set with privacy or passage knob set on kitchen door Remove floor mounted door stopper and replace with hinge version 	Steve Kinney
Kuukpik Presbyterian Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replace switch covers Replace condensation pump on furnace 	Olivia Cabinboy Virge Kasek
Lake Traverse Presbyterian Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Properly adhere railings Scrape, prime, and paint building 	Jr. Hemminger
Lindsey Memorial Presbyterian Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Metal transom needs to be removed Gutter repair 	Sheila Spotted Bull
Long Hollow Presbyterian Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure exterior handrails Scrape and paint exterior windows Remove moldy drywall from kitchen before use 	Jr. and William Hemminger
Lower Santan Chapel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fill cracks in flooring and walls Call exterminator for termite issue 	Charlotte Farfard Richard Parsons
Makaicu Presbyterian Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scrape, prime, and paint exterior windows Screw down/replace handrails 	Leonard Crowbelt
Makasan Presbyterian Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shut off power to front furnace Re-nail gutters and properly secure downspouts 	Donavan Youngman
Maricopa First Presbyterian Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put tarp over the bathroom roof, until the roof can be replaced Remedy termite problem 	Randy Ruiz
Mayasan Presbyterian Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Congregation should demolish the building 	Fern Cloud
Metlakatla Presbyterian Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purchase and cover exterior surface drain or cover with plywood until one can be furnished Install missing knockouts on all electrical panels where missing 	Larry Emory
Neah Bay Presbyterian Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reconnect downspouts to drains Chalk all kitchen countertops to walls 	George Eastman
Northfolk Presbyterian Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add railing on rear steps Railing on ramp to be reinforced Fix loose stair Fix rear door light 	Corbett Wheeler
Olgoonik Presbyterian Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clean bathroom Remove carpet and parts of broken ceiling 	Ray Nageak
Papago United Presbyterian Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove all loose ceiling, drywall, and flooring in the classrooms Close off all classroom doors Test roofing for asbestos 	Larry Lewella
Parker Valley Presbyterian Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove deteriorating trellis Plug gas line that used to run to the water tank 	Calvin Laffoon Lawanda Martinez
Pejuhutazizi Presbyterian Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replace one of the steps Scrape and paint exterior of the sanctuary and windows 	Doak Cobenais and Fern Cloud
Pine Ridge Presbyterian Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow up on water line breakage issues Cover the basement windows with wire mesh Remove loose ceiling tiles in the crying room 	Violet Robinson
Porcupine Presbyterian Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove loose ceiling tiles Seal around the plumbing vent on roof 	Lavonne Looking Elk
Red Eagle Memorial Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have old church boarded up Scrape and paint exterior wood 	Darlene Left Hand
First Sacaton Presbyterian Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address gas leak in stove 	Gina Enos

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Native American Church/Chapel	Repairs to Be Made by Church	Contact Person
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove loose ceiling tiles 	
Sacaton Flats Chapel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate termite and pest control Cracks in walls and floors to be filled Scrape and paint on exterior windows 	Durenda
Salem Presbyterian Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scrape and paint exterior windows Have electricity turned on 	Adele Hopper
Savoonga Presbyterian Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tighten stair railings Put building skirting on 	Bradley Gologergen
Shinnecock Presbyterian Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure fuse panel cover so it stays shut Properly secure interior doors Scrape and paint exterior windows 	Mike Smith
Spalding First Presbyterian Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Install a sump system Scrape, glaze, and paint exterior windows Repair, trim, and paint pillars 	Marge Hyde
Tallahassee Presbyterian Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scrape and paint the exterior of buildings and windows Repair the drywall behind sink in the bathroom 	Lloyd Commander
Tutuilla Presbyterian Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scrape and paint the exterior of buildings and windows Repair the drywall behind sink in the bathroom 	Lloyd Commander
Upper Santan Chapel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replace smoke detectors Adhere roof with nail and tar 	Travis Pablo
Yakutat Presbyterian Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add boards where missing on front and back railings Chalk between where siding meets 	Cathy Wassillie

Appendix 2
Native American Churches and Chapels Repair Estimates

Church	Repairs Recommended	Repairs by General Contractor	Self-Contracted/Volunteer
Cascades Presbytery (Synod of the Pacific)			
Warm Springs Presbyterian Church	Structural/foundation, exit signs/emergency lights, misc. electrical, plumbing, roof, walls, ceilings and floor, windows and doors.	\$69,300.00	\$51,975.00
Dakota Presbytery (Synod of Lakes & Prairies)			
Ascension Presbyterian Church	Exit signs/emergency lights, misc. electrical, siding, structural/foundation, windows and doors, walls, ceilings and floor.	\$35,875.00	\$26,950.00
BdeCan Presbyterian Church	Exit signs/emergency lights, misc. electrical, structural/foundation, roof, siding, door and window repair, walls, ceilings and floor, heating.	\$48,020.00	\$36,040.00
Buffalo Lake Presbyterian Church	Structural/foundation, exit signs/emergency lights, windows, roof, siding, walls, ceilings and floor, heating.	\$51,300.00	\$38,475.00
Canipa Presbyterian Church	Structural/foundation, heating/air, walls, ceilings and floor, exit signs/emergency lights, misc. electrical, windows and doors, plumbing, roof, siding.	\$111,400.00	\$83,600.00
Cansuska Presbyterian Church	Exit signs/emergency lights, misc. electrical, heating and air, window and door repair, structural/foundation, walls, ceilings and floors, countertops.	\$28,100.00	\$23,500.00
Cedar Presbyterian Church	Structural/foundation, walls, ceilings and floor, siding, doors and windows, exit signs/emergency lights, misc. electrical, countertops, plumbing repairs.	\$85,575.00	\$64,200.00
Conkicaske Presbyterian Church	Structural/foundation, exit signs/emergency lights, misc. electrical repairs, roof, windows and doors, heating, walls, ceilings and floor.	\$60,200.00	\$45,450.00
First Presbyterian Church Flandreau	Windows and doors, structural/foundation, exit signs/emergency lights, misc. electrical, siding.	\$37,750.00	\$28,350.00
Goodwill Presbyterian Church	Structural/foundation, walls, ceiling and floor, exit signs/emergency lights, misc. electrical, siding, roof, windows and doors, plumbing.	\$59,675.00	\$44,825.00
Greenwood Presbyterian Church	Structural/foundation, walls, ceiling and floor, windows and doors, roof, siding, misc. electrical.	\$74,775.00	\$56,100.00
Lake Traverse Presbyterian Church	Siding, structural/foundation, exit signs/emergency lights, misc. electrical, walls, ceiling and floors, windows and doors, roof.	\$38,350.00	\$28,800.00

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Lindsey Memorial Presbyterian Church	Structural/foundation, exit signs/emergency lights, electrical panel, misc. electrical, windows and doors, walls, floors and ceiling, plumbing, siding, roof, heating, counter work.	\$74,975.00	\$56,275.00
Long Hollow Presbyterian Church	Roof, structural/foundation, windows and doors, walls, ceiling and floor, siding, exit signs/emergency lights, misc. electrical, heating, plumbing repairs.	\$73,750.00	\$55,350.00
Makaicu Presbyterian Church (River-side)	Siding, roof, heating, exit signs/emergency lights, misc. electrical, walls, ceiling and floor, structural/foundation, windows and doors, plumbing and cabinet repairs.	\$57,050.00	\$42,825.00
Makasan Presbyterian Church	Structural, heating, exit signs/emergency lights, misc. electrical, roof, windows and doors, walls, ceilings and floor, plumbing repairs.	\$47,750.00	\$35,850.00
Mayasan Presbyterian Church	<i>Not suitable for use, not fully inventoried.</i>	0.00	0.00
Pejuhutazizi Presbyterian Church	Structural/foundation, roof, windows and doors, siding, exit signs/emergency lights, misc. electrical, walls, ceilings and floor, plumbing repairs.	\$37,750.00	\$27,865.00
Pine Ridge Presbyterian Church	Exit signs/emergency lights, misc. electrical repairs, walls, ceilings and floor, structural/foundation, roof, window and door repairs, heating, plumbing repairs.	\$45,225.00	\$33,925.00
Porcupine Presbyterian Church	Structural/foundation, roof, exit signs/emergency lights, misc. electrical, electrical panels, heating, siding, walls, ceilings and floor, kitchen, plumbing repairs.	\$96,050.00	\$72,155.00
Red Eagle Memorial Church (Ft. Kipp)	Exit signs/emergency lights, misc. electrical repairs, structural/foundation, windows and doors, siding, heating, walls, ceilings and floor, plumbing repairs.	\$46,320.00	\$34,750.00
De Cristo Presbytery (Synod of the Southwest)			
Papago United Presbyterian Church	Roofing, Exit signs/emergency lights, electrical repairs/panels, structural/foundation, heating/cooling, doors and windows, ceilings and walls, siding and paint, plumbing repairs.	\$365,641.00	\$274,250.00
Eastern Oklahoma (Synod of the Sun)			
Big Lick Presbyterian Church	Structural/foundation, doors and windows, electrical panels/repairs, exit signs/emergency lights, kitchen cabinets/countertops, ceilings and walls, floors, exterior soffits.	\$75,150.00	\$55,575.00
Buffalo Presbyterian Church	Structural/foundation, heating, doors, electrical panel/repairs, exit signs/emergency lights, plumbing.	\$43,335.00	\$31,820.00
Good Spring Presbyterian Church	<i>Not inventoried</i>		
Oka Achukma Presbyterian Church	<i>Not inventoried</i>		
St. Matthew Presbyterian Church	<i>Not inventoried</i>		
Mountain Fork Presbyterian Church	<i>Not inventoried</i>		
Mt. Zion Presbyterian Church	<i>Not suitable for use, not fully inventoried.</i>	0.00	0.00
Nanah Chito Presbyterian Church	Structural/foundation, siding and trim, ceilings and walls, floors, cabinet repairs, roof repairs.	\$35,300.00	\$25,475.00
Kulli Tuklo Presbyterian Church	Siding and trim, structural/foundation, roof, doors, heating, flooring, ceiling and walls, electrical panels and repairs, exit signs/emergency lights, plumbing fixtures and repairs, cabinet repairs.	\$98,135.00	\$67,226.00
Sandy Creek Presbyterian Church	<i>Not inventoried</i>		
Kulli Chito Presbyterian Church	Structural/foundation, heating, siding and trim, roof repairs, flooring, ceilings and walls, exit signs/emergency lights, electrical repairs.	\$82,150.00	\$60,825.00
Spring Hill Presbyterian Church	Structural/foundation, doors and windows, siding and trim, heating, plumbing, electrical pane/repairs, exit signs/emergency lights, ceilings and walls, flooring.	\$69,650.00	\$51,525.00
St. John Presbyterian Church	<i>Not inventoried</i>		
Eastern Oregon Presbytery (Synod of the Pacific)			
Tutuilla Presbyterian Church	Doors and windows, siding, structural/foundation, exit signs/emergency lights, misc. electrical, walls, ceiling and floor, roof, plumbing repairs.	\$47,400.00	\$35,575.00
Grand Canyon Presbytery (Synod of the Southwest)			

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Black Water Presbyterian Church	Roof, structural/foundation, walls, ceiling and floor, windows and doors, exit signs/emergency lights, misc. electrical repairs, plumbing, siding.	\$49,100.00	\$36,850.00
Tseya-Bidaa Chapel (Canyon Chapel)	Heating, windows and doors, ceiling and walls, floors, structural/foundation, exit signs/emergency lighting,	\$54,875.00	\$40,650.00
Central Presbyterian Church	Roof, structural/foundation, heating/air, electrical panels, exit signs/emergency lights, misc. electrical, walls, ceiling and floor, plumbing, siding, windows and doors.	\$174,625.00	\$131,000.00
Dennehotsso Chapel	Structural/foundation, roofing, siding and trim, doors and windows, heating, plumbing, electrical repairs/panel. (Exterior only)	\$53,500.00	\$40,150.00
First Presbyterian Church-Leupp	Exit signs and emergency lights, electrical repairs, windows and doors, flooring.	\$39,950.00	\$28,325.00
First Presbyterian Church-Sacaton	Exit signs/emergency lights, electrical panels, misc. electrical, roof, siding, walls, ceiling and floors, appliances, structural/foundation, plumbing.	\$63,025.00	\$47,300.00
First Presbyterian Church-Tuba City	Roofing, siding and trim, windows/doors structural/foundation, exit signs/emergency lights, electrical repairs, ceilings/walls, flooring, heating.	\$89,555.00	\$65,385.00
Fort Defiance Presbyterian Church	Windows and doors, siding and trim. Structural/foundation, electrical panel/misc. electrical repairs, flooring, walls and ceilings, exit signs/emergency lights, heating.	\$106,125.00	\$85,250.00
Fort McDowell Presbyterian Church	Structural/foundation, electrical installation and repairs, exit signs/emergency lights, doors, roofing.	\$34,525.00	\$26,575.00
Ganado Presbyterian Church	Structural/foundation, windows/doors, exit signs/emergency lights, electrical repairs, Plumbing repairs, walls and ceilings, flooring, roofing repairs.	\$90,025.00	\$66,025.00
Gila Crossing Presbyterian Church	Structural/foundation, roof, exit signs/emergency lights, misc. electrical, window and door, siding. (Exterior only)	\$38,750.00	\$29,075.00
Indian Wells Presbyterian Church	Structural/foundation, siding and trim, electrical repairs, exit signs/emergency lights, plumbing repairs, walls and ceilings.	\$53,625.00	\$39,085.00
Kayenta Presbyterian Church	Structural/foundation, siding and trim, roofing, heating, exit signs/emergency lights, electrical repairs/panel, windows and doors, walls and ceiling, flooring.	\$139,020.00	\$103,410.00
Lehi Presbyterian Church	Roof, siding and trim, doors, electrical panel and repairs, exit signs/emergency lights.	\$40,300.00	\$29,625.00
Lower Santan Chapel	Roof, walls, ceilings and floor, structural, exit signs/emergency lights, misc. electrical, heating/air, windows and doors, siding, counter work.	\$31,725.00	\$23,825.00
Maricopa First Presbyterian Church	Walls, ceiling and floor, exit signs/emergency lights, misc. electrical, structural/foundation, siding, windows and doors, roof, plumbing.	\$53,825.00	\$40,400.00
Ojato Chapel-Utah	Structural/foundation, siding and trim, windows and doors, exit signs/emergency lights, electrical repairs/panel, flooring, walls and ceilings.	\$43,465.00	31,655.00
Parker Valley Presbyterian Church	Structural/foundation, roof, exit sign/emergency lights, windows and doors, misc. electrical, walls, ceiling and floor, plumbing, doors and windows, siding.	\$63,025.00	\$47,300.00
Salt River Presbyterian Church	Windows, siding and trim. (Exterior only).	\$1,100.00	\$750.00
Stotonic Chapel	Structural/foundation, siding and trim, ceilings and walls, electrical repairs, exit signs/emergency lights, roof repairs, flooring.	\$40,000.00	\$29,125.00
Trinity Presbyterian Church Chinle	Structural/foundation, siding and trim, windows, doors, electrical panels, exit signs/emergency lights, walls and ceilings, flooring, plumbing repairs.	\$78,200.00	\$57,275.00
Upper Santan Chapel	Structural/foundation, roof, exit signs/emergency lights, misc. electrical, heating/air, siding, plumbing, windows and doors, walls, ceilings and floor.	\$60,575.00	\$45,450.00
Vah-Ki Presbyterian Church	Walls, ceilings and floor, roof, siding, exit signs/emergency lights, misc. electrical, structural/foundation, plumbing, windows and doors (Exterior only).	\$31,950.00	\$23,975.00
Indian Nations Presbytery (Synod of the Sun)			
Achena Presbyterian Church	Structural/foundation, exit signs/emergency lights,	\$81,435.00	\$61,100.00

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	electrical panel, misc. electrical, heating/air, walls, ceilings and floor, siding, windows and doors, roof, vanity repairs.		
Cheyarha Presbyterian Church	Siding, structural/foundation, exit signs/emergency lights, misc. electrical, walls, ceilings, floor, roof, plumbing, counter work, window and door repair.	\$51,765.00	\$38,805.00
Salem Presbyterian Church	Roof, siding, heating/air, exit signs/emergency lights, electrical panel, misc. electrical repairs, structural/foundation, windows and doors, walls, ceiling and floor, plumbing.	\$66,175.00	\$48,675.00
Tallahassee Presbyterian Church	<i>Not suitable for use, not fully inventoried.</i>	0.00	0.00
Wewoka Indian Presbyterian Church (Hilltop)	Roof, siding, heating/air, exit signs/emergency lights, electrical panel, misc. electrical repairs, structural/foundation, windows and doors, walls, ceiling and floor, plumbing.	\$142,001.00	\$106,500.00
Inland Northwest Presbytery (Synod of Alaska–Northwest)			
Kamiah First Presbyterian Church	Electrical panel, exit signs/emergency lights, misc. electrical, structural/foundation, roof, walls, ceilings, flooring.	\$59,100.00	\$44,225.00
Kamiah Second Presbyterian Church	Exit signs/emergency lights, misc. electrical, walls, ceilings, flooring.	\$11,550.00	\$8,775.00
North Fork Presbyterian Church	Exit signs, emergency lights, misc. electrical, structural/foundation, walls, ceilings, flooring, door and window repair, siding repairs..	\$27,450.00	\$20,575.00
Spalding First Presbyterian Church	Electrical panel, exit signs/emergency lights, misc. electrical, window and door replacement, roof repairs, Structural/foundation, walls, ceilings, flooring.	\$74,200.00	\$55,650.00
Long Island Presbytery (Synod of the Northeast)			
Shinnecock Presbyterian Church	Exit signs/emergency lights, misc. electrical, doors and windows, siding, walls, ceilings and floor, structural/foundation, heating, roof, plumbing repairs.	\$92,075.00	\$69,075.00
Presbytery of Pacific (Synod of Southern California & Hawaii)			
Presbyterian Native American Fellowship	<i>Renting, not inventoried.</i>	0.00	0.00
Nevada Presbytery (Synod of the Pacific)			
Valley Presbyterian Church	Walls, ceilings and floor, windows and doors, exit signs/emergency lights, misc. electrical, structure/foundation, siding.	\$36,475.00	\$27,375.00
New Covenant Presbytery (Synod of the Sun)			
Indian Presbyterian Church	Siding and trim, windows and doors, exit signs/emergency lights, walls and ceilings, flooring, electrical panel and repairs, misc. plumbing and heating repairs.	\$100,026.00	\$74,725.00
Northwest Coast Presbytery (Synod of Alaska-Northwest)			
Hydaburg Presbyterian Church	Structural/foundation, windows and doors, siding and trim, exit signs/emergency lights, electrical repairs, walls and ceilings, flooring	\$96,151.00	\$72,125.00
Ketchikan Presbyterian Church	Structural/foundation, siding and trim, exit signs, emergency lights, minor repairs to: electrical, heating, flooring, ceilings and walls, roof.	\$46,076.00	\$34,575.00
Metlakatla Presbyterian Church	Siding and trim, Walls and ceilings, flooring, heating, electrical repairs/panels, exit signs/emergency lights, structural/foundation, windows and doors, roofing repairs.	\$89,601.00	\$67,200.00
Neah Bay Presbyterian Church	Roofing, windows and doors, structural/foundation,, exit signs/emergency lights, electrical panel/repairs, Plumbing, walls and ceilings, flooring.	\$62,051.00	\$46,475.00
Northern Light United Church	Exit signs/emergency lights, walls and ceilings, flooring, siding and trim, minor plumbing repairs.	\$31,901.00	\$23,950.00
Yakutat Presbyterian Church	Siding and trim, structural/foundation, windows and doors, flooring, heating, exit signs/emergency lights, electrical repairs.	\$54,400.00	\$41,600.00
Olympia Presbytery (Synod of Alaska-Northwest)			
Church of Indian Fellowship	Exit signs/emergency lights, misc. electrical, structural/foundation, roof, windows and doors, siding, heating, walls, ceilings and floors.	\$123,175.00	\$92,325.00
Santa Fe Presbytery (Synod of the Southwest)			
Laguna United Presbyterian Church	Structural/foundation, windows and doors, siding and trim, exit signs/emergency lights, electrical panel and	\$70,850.00	\$52,375.00

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	repairs, walls and ceilings, flooring.		
Seama Chapel	Structural/foundation, siding and trim, windows and doors, heating, roofing, exit signs/emergency lights, minor electrical repairs.	\$89,375.00	\$65,575.00
Paguete Chapel	Structural/foundation, siding and trim, heating, electrical panel and repairs, exit signs/emergency lights, windows and doors, walls and ceilings.	\$45,575.00	\$34,150.00
Western New York Presbytery (Synod of the Northeast)			
Jimersontown Presbyterian Church	Roof, structural/foundation, exit signs/emergency lights, misc. electrical, kitchen, doors and windows, siding, walls, ceiling and floor, plumbing repairs.	\$109,800.00	\$82,375.00
Wright Memorial Presbyterian Church	Windows and doors, siding and trim, structural/foundation, exit signs/emergency lights, electrical and roofing repairs, walls and ceilings, flooring, plumbing.	\$86,651.00	\$65,000.00
Yukon Presbytery (Synod of Alaska-Northwest)			
Kaktovik Presbyterian Church	Electrical panels, structural/foundation, walls, ceilings and floor, siding. Windows and door repair, plumbing.	\$29,925.00	\$21,450.00
Kuukpik Presbyterian Church	Structural/foundation, exit signs/emergency lights, misc. electrical, windows and doors, siding, roof, walls, ceilings and floor, heating.	\$72,150.00	\$54,275.00
Utkeagvik Presbyterian Church	Exit signs/emergency lights, misc. electrical, walls, ceilings and floor, structural/foundation, windows and doors, siding.	\$55,425.00	\$41,575.00
Atqasuk Chapel	Electrical panel, exit signs/emergency lights, misc. electrical, structural/foundation, siding, roof repairs, wall and ceiling, door and window repairs, plumbing repairs.	\$21,075.00	\$14,735.00
Olgoonik Presbyterian Church	Structural/foundation, electrical panel, exit signs/emergency lights, misc. electrical, windows and doors, siding, plumbing, walls, ceilings and floor.	\$87,525.00	\$65,650.00
Chapel in the Mountains	Electrical panels, exit signs/emergency lights, misc. electrical, structural/foundation, siding, walls, ceilings and floor, heating, roof, door and window repair.	\$60,300.00	\$45,250.00
Savoonga Presbyterian Church	Windows and doors, structural/foundation, exit signs/emergency lights, misc. electrical, roof, siding, plumbing, walls, ceilings and floors, countertops, heating.	\$92,975.00	\$69,775.00
Anchor Presbyterian Church	<i>Renting, not inventoried</i>	0.00	0.00
Gambell Presbyterian Church	<i>New Building, not inventoried.</i>	0.00	0.00
TOTAL:		\$5,494,049	\$4,103,906

GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 00-96

General Assembly Committee on Representation Comment on Item 00-96. Native American Church Property Report—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

This item has been recommended to be referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). However, should the assembly determine that this item of business needs to be considered by the 224th General Assembly (2020), GACOR provides this comment.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) supports these recommendations. If voted in the affirmative, they would be a living expression to this principle: “the church gives full expression to the rich diversity of the church’s membership and shall provide for full participation” (G-3.0103).

Native Americans and Alaskan Native Americans have suffered from the ongoing effects of colonization, both within and outside of the larger church. Now that we have the assessment of properties, infrastructure, and physical structure, we have the information to begin making reparations while lifting up the support needed from the denomination. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) encourages members to help members. These initiatives will uncover the necessary financial support for communities by encouraging the PC(USA) to assist the mid councils and their congregations so that all persons thrive in their local setting.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation is made up of sixteen persons, elected by the General Assembly, who are drawn from members and elders, ruling and teaching, from across the church in accordance with F-1.0403. Its constitutional mandate and central functions are described in G-3.0103 of the Book of Order (Form of Government).

REAC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 00-96

Advice and Counsel on Item 00-96—From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC).

The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 00-96.

REAC affirms the call upon mid councils to “develop a process for repair and improvement to (these) church properties ...”

Since the very beginnings of the Presbyterian presence in this hemisphere healthy, physical and spiritual neighborliness has NOT reflected the Christian characteristics of “loving neighbors.”

Hundreds of years have not provided enough time, however, for Native communities and their non-Native communities to build healthy, respectful, loving mutual ministries and this ongoing need—manifested in the physical challenge of deteriorating property.

Might this important issue become a “bridge-building” exercise among our Native churches and Presbyterians who want to repair premises but create relationships among divergent racial and economic congregations.

Item 00-97

Approved. (See pp. 28, 31.)

A Statement in Honor of Vicente Guna.

The 224th General Assembly (2020) recognizes Vicente Guna, manager of technology in the Office of the General Assembly, and congratulates and celebrates his completing all requirements to become a United States citizen in a ceremony to be held in the Federal Building here in Louisville, Kentucky, on July 8, 2020.

Item 00-Info-01

General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission Self-Study 2012–2019¹

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Self-Study: General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission

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CHAPTER I
THE UPRIGHT MINISTRY OF ECCLESIASTICAL DISCIPLINE

Christ gives to the Church its faith and life, its unity and mission, its order and discipline. Scripture teaches us of Christ's will for the Church, which is to be obeyed. In the worship and service of God and the government of the church, matters are to be ordered according to the Word by reason and sound judgment, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit (F-1.0203).

Where Christ is, there is the true Church. Since the earliest days of the Reformation, Reformed Christians have marked the presence of the true Church wherever:

- the Word of God is truly preached and heard,
- the Sacraments are rightly administered, and
- ecclesiastical discipline is uprightly ministered.... (F-1.0303)

...As it participates in God's mission, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) seeks ... a new openness to see both the possibilities and perils of institutional forms in order to ensure the faithfulness and usefulness of these forms to God's activity in the world...(F-1.0404).

...[E]very Christian Church, or union or association of particular churches, is entitled to declare the terms of admission into its communion, and the qualifications of its ministers and members, as well as the whole system of its internal government which Christ hath appointed... (Second Historic Principle of Church Order, F-3.0102).

A. Ecclesiastical Discipline

When sixteenth century Scottish Reformers sought a way to distinguish Reformed congregations from those with lingering Roman Catholic faith and practices, they settled on three characteristic actions that denoted the "true Kirk": the true preaching of the Word, the right administration of the (two) sacraments, and "the upright ministry of ecclesiastical discipline" (*Book of Confessions*, 3.18). All three were reactions to what the reformers considered abuses of the Roman church, or errors in its theology, or both. The first two were inherited from John Calvin, who had fought his own struggles with Rome. But the third was unique to the Scottish ecclesiastical landscape. Perhaps due to the wild terrain of the northern highlands, perhaps to the ferociously independent Scottish spirit, perhaps to the chaos of the times, this insistence on discipline became a hallmark of Scottish Presbyterianism.

Modern Americans think of discipline largely in negative or punitive terms, and the term thus naturally takes on an odious cast. Discipline is what happens to the wayward child or the civil miscreant, usually in the form of punishment. That, however, is a greatly impoverished field of meaning for the word.

The earliest church constitutions for the Kirk of Scotland bore the title, *The Book of Discipline*. In both the 1561 and 1578 editions, the first and second *Book of Discipline* were principally concerned with defining a system of governance, rather than with prescribing a process for adjudicating guilt or innocence, the latter task still largely understood as a civil responsibility. Only gradually did ecclesiastical jurisprudence diverge from civil, leading to the creation of "Rules of Discipline" such as appears in our current *Book of Order*.

"Discipline" in the parlance of our Scottish ecclesiastical forebears was not limited to punishment, nor even to jurisprudence, but was understood to apply to the whole life and governance of the Church. Drawing from its roots in the Latin *disciplina*, "instruction" or "knowledge," the core meaning of the term is closer to its use in modern academia to describe a field of knowledge or study. One who pursues a *disciplina* is a *discipulus/a*, or "learner"—a "disciple." Thus, the clarification of the language of the so-called "Reformation Notes" that appears in the current Foundations of Presbyterian Polity is both apt and historically accurate:

In our own time, we affirm that, in the power of the Spirit, the Church is faithful to the mission of Christ as it:

...Nurtures a covenant community of disciples of Christ,
living in the strength of God's promise and
giving itself in service to God's mission (F-1.0303).

In its purest and best sense, "discipline" is the work of following the way—and for Reformed Christians, the way of Jesus Christ—through the daily task of living in community and seeking the mind of Christ in the making of decisions.

Living in community is not a simple task, however, and often results in difference of opinion and intent. Disagreements among people of good character and principle over whether a practice or position is within the bounds of our covenantal agreement must be addressed and adjudicated, and "discipline" has taken on this meaning in modern Presbyterian language. In so understanding the term, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) does not diminish the true range of the meaning of discipline, but

rather expands the particular portion of that range having to do with “building up the body of Christ, not for destroying it, for redeeming, not for punishing” (D-1.0102). Discipline, as the Preamble to the Rules of Discipline insists, “exists not as a substitute for the secular judicial system, but to do what the secular judicial system cannot do,” namely, “to honor God by making clear the significance of membership in the body of Christ” (D-1.0101).

The General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (“GAPJC” or “the Commission”) is committed to the “upright ministry of ecclesiastical discipline” in this highest sense. Its principle aim in hearing and rendering decisions on those matters brought before it is clarifying the pathway to more faithful discipleship, especially in those moments where that path has become obscured as a result of disagreement over passionately-held ideas.

B. *Organization and General Responsibilities*

The Rules of Discipline describe the judicial processes of the Church, and the GAPJC seeks to follow and apply those Rules accurately, consistently, and fairly. The GAPJC has both original and appellate jurisdiction as prescribed in the Rules of Discipline. Primarily an appellate body, the Commission hears and decides both remedial and disciplinary cases; however, the GAPJC may conduct trials in cases of original jurisdiction in complaints against synods or entities of the General Assembly.

The membership of the Commission is composed of ministers and elders (as nearly equal as possible) from each of the synods (D-5.0100). There are sixteen commissioners from the sixteen synods; as of this writing, however, there is one vacancy. Members are elected by the General Assembly and ordinarily serve for six years (D-5.0103).

The Commission elects the following officers: Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Clerk, and Assistant Clerk. These persons compose the Executive Committee. Each is elected for a two-year term and may be re-elected.² Responsibilities for each office are defined in the Commission’s *Manual of Operations*, secs. 2.02.20–50.

The Commission is scheduled to meet three times a year, and each meeting is scheduled for up to five days (Thursday through Monday). This represents a change from previous years, when the Commission routinely met four times each year. The change is the result both of a somewhat lighter case load and reductions in available funding from the Office of the General Assembly. In the period covered by this review (2012-2019), the Commission met 14 times in person and three by teleconference.

C. *Recent Work of the Commission*

The Commission routinely hears and acts on cases involving both matters of constitutional interpretation and matters of fairness and due process. The strong emotions that underlie these cases are not always visible on the surface of testimony and record, but they are almost invariably present. The Commission is aware of the fact that those who bring cases before it are the children of God and siblings in Christ, and we endeavor in our decisions to communicate that awareness. In all our deliberations the Commission is reminded of the principles of church discipline, which have remained essentially unchanged since the Reformation:

Church discipline is the church’s exercise of authority given by Christ. . . . The purpose of discipline is to honor God by making clear the significance of membership in the body of Christ; to preserve the purity of the church by nourishing the individual within the life of the believing community; to achieve justice and compassion for all participants involved; to correct or restrain wrongdoing in order to bring members to repentance and restoration; to uphold the dignity of those who have been harmed by disciplinary offenses; to restore the unity of the church by removing the cause of discord and division; and to secure the just, speedy, and economical determination of proceedings (D-1.0101).

It is of no small moment that the Commission hears the words from the Preamble to the Rules of Discipline before every hearing and trial and that this paragraph heads the Commission’s Code of Ethics.

In every case before it, the Commission seeks to understand both the specific pleadings as well as the constitutional implications of the case. Because we are aware that our decisions set precedents which guide the whole Church, we undertake our work in a spirit of prayer and humility. During every meeting we worship together each morning and evening. On the morning of hearings or trials, we invite the parties to join our worship.

The issues alive in the church are reflected in the types of cases arriving before the Commission. Not surprisingly, over the period covered by this review, the Commission has observed a change in the subject matter of cases it has heard. At the beginning, the church was still in the process of sorting out matters of human sexuality and its implications for both ordination and marriage, and several cases reflected that process: *Larson, et al. v. Presbytery of Los Ranchos*, 221-04; *Presbytery of Newark v. McNeill*, 221-04; *Cherokee Presbytery, et al., v. ACC*, 222-03; *Session of Palmdale Presbyterian Church v. General Assembly Marriage and Civil Union Committee*, 222-02. However, after the amendments to G-2.0104b and W-4.0600, the

Commission has seen a sharp decline in cases of this sort, and no such cases have presented themselves in the last two hearing cycles of the Commission.

Related to the unrest over sexuality and ecclesiastical life is the number of cases involving matters of congregational property. Driven mostly by the exit of congregations first to the Evangelical Presbyterian Church and more recently to the Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians, these cases have mostly involved presbytery policies governing the dismissal of congregations with property (the so-called Gracious Dismissal Policies) or the application of those policies in particular instances: *Tom, et al., v. Presbytery of San Francisco*, 221-03; *Presbytery of New York v. McGee*, 221-08; *Smith v. Presbytery of the Peaks*, 221-04; *First Presbyterian of Hendersonville v. Presbytery of Western North Carolina*, 223-01; *Lewellen v. Presbytery of Los Ranchos*, 223-03.

Several cases have involved questions about the authority and scope of entities of presbyteries or synods, and concerns that such entities have overstepped their bounds or charges: *Priest v. Presbytery of Detroit*, 221-01; *Kim, et al., v. Administrative Commission of Synod of Lincoln Trails*, 221-07; *Session of Rutgers Presbyterian Church v. Presbyterian Foundation, et al.*, 222-08; *Murphy v. Session of Westminster Presbyterian Church, Des Moines*, 224-01; *Atlantic Korean American Presbytery v. Synod of Mid-Atlantic*, 224-02; *Presbytery of Newark v. Aquino, et al*, 224-04.

The Commission has heard cases involving the dissolution of pastoral or presbytery staff relationships or other ecclesiastical employment-related matters: *Buck v. Morrow Presbyterian Church*, 222-01; *Laney v. Presbytery of North Alabama*, 223-02; *Gaines v. Session of First Presbyterian Church Meridian Heights*, 224-03; *Jones v. Mission Presbytery*, 224-05, *An v. Atlantic Korean American Presbytery*, 224-06.

The Commission has also heard cases involving particular points of polity and discipline that are not conveniently categorized by the foregoing groups: *MacKellar v. Synod of Northeast*, 222-05 focused on whether persons not ordained as either ruling or teaching elders might serve as commissioners to synod or members of synod entities; and *Presbytery of Muskingum Valley v. Hauser*, 222-06 and *Handlson v. Middle Tennessee Presbytery*, 224-07, involved the removal of a censure of temporary exclusion from the practice of ordered ministry.

D. *Constitutional Mandate, Boundaries, Powers and Process*

Despite changes to the Form of Government (2011), the mandate, boundaries, and powers of the Commission have not changed throughout the period of this review. As of this writing, none appear contemplated in the revisions of the Rules of Discipline under consideration by this Assembly. It remains to be seen whether these latter revisions may bring about some changes in the Commission's process, but during the period of this review its processes have remained largely unchanged, as well.

Constitutional Mandate: The GAPJC is a constitutionally mandated commission of the General Assembly (D-5.0101), and it is the principal entity charged with "serving in judicial matters in accordance with the Rules of Discipline" and "deciding controversies brought before it and advising and instructing in cases submitted to it, in conformity with [the] Constitution" (G-3.0501c).

Constitutional Boundaries: As a commission, the GAPJC undertakes the judicial function of the General Assembly. Its decisions "consider and decide cases of process for the council... according to the Rules of Discipline" (G-3.0109a). Its commissioners are presbyters from each synod who are qualified to be commissioners to the General Assembly (D-5.0100).

Since the General Assembly is the highest governing body of the church, the decisions of the GAPJC are not subject to further review by appeal. Its decisions are authoritative interpretations of the *Book of Order*, and the "most recent interpretation of a provision of the *Book of Order* shall be binding" (G-3.0501c). The decisions of the GAPJC are reported to each General Assembly by the Stated Clerk as provided by D-7.0700.

Constitutional Powers and Process: "In the cases transmitted to it the [General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission] shall have only the powers prescribed by and conduct its proceedings according to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)" (D-5.0202).

CHAPTER II SELF STUDY PROCESS

In 2006 the General Assembly approved the following action: "Consistent with the action of the 216th General Assembly (2004) (*Minutes*, 2004, Part I, pp. 88, 339-41), the assembly committee's review will be limited to the following questions:

1. Is the GAPJC fulfilling its constitutional mandate as specified herein?

2. Is the GAPJC in compliance with the Constitutional Standards as described herein?
3. Is the GAPJC in compliance with the Non-Constitutional standards as described herein?"

The Commission has applied these questions in its review of its work through the designated period of review (2012-2019). It has examined both its decisions and the evaluations by its members of its meetings and process. It is our conviction that all the review questions above are answered strongly in the affirmative.

The standards of review indicated above are unique to the GAPJC, in part because this Commission is in unique relationship to the General Assembly. We are a *commission*, not a committee. The decisions and orders of this Commission carry the weight and authority of General Assembly Authoritative Interpretations and are final and beyond appeal. This places a significant burden on the Commission to ensure fairness in due process and compassion in treatment of those who appear before it, while also upholding the *Constitution* of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in all instances.

The Commission named a three-member study task force from its membership to assess all decisions within the review period, examine all feedback from evaluations of meetings by commissioners, and consider any input from persons who have had recent business before the Commission. The task force consisted of Deborah Little Cohn, Diana Moore, and Paul Hooker. It began the earliest phases of its work in 2018, with the majority of research and writing being done in 2019.

An electronic questionnaire covering the experience of persons with business before the Commission was emailed in July 2019 by Research Services to ten persons who had appeared before the Commission during 2018. Regrettably, only one of the ten questionnaires was returned. There were numerous follow-up emails in an attempt to elicit more feedback.

Progress reports were shared with the Commission's Executive Committee at various stages, and a draft of the completed report was shared with the whole Commission at its October 2019 meeting. On the basis of comments and suggestions from that discussion, a revised draft was approved by the commission on January 7, 2020, using the Commission's process for electronic meetings. The final draft was sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly in time to meet the 120-day deadline for such reports.

CHAPTER III COMPLIANCE WITH CONSTITUTIONAL STANDARDS

The General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission is a constitutionally mandated commission of the General Assembly (D-5.0101), charged to serve "in judicial matters in accordance with the Rules of Discipline" ... in a remedial or disciplinary case, with the most recent interpretation of the *Book of Order* being binding" (G-3.0501c). The Commission adopted constitutional standards in order to verify compliance with the overall constitutional mandate as well as the particulars defined by the *Book of Order*.

The following are the constitutional standards which the *Book of Order* requires, followed immediately by the findings of this committee as to the Commission's level of compliance:

1. *To open and close all meetings with prayer (G-3.0105).*

This standard was met without exception. For this Commission prayer is not simply a constitutional standard, but a deliberate practice and spiritual discipline.

2. *To secure the just, speedy, and economical determination of proceedings (D-1.0101).* The Commission established the guidelines defined below.

- a. *Time lapse between receipt of complaint or notice of appeal and final disposition of case should not exceed an average of one year.*

From 2014 through 2019, the Commission received a total of 21 appeals and complaints, 18 of which resulted in either a trial or a hearing before the Commission. During that time, the longest lapse between the receipt of a complaint or notice of appeal was 15 months, due to the Commission first conducting a hearing on a challenge to the preliminary order, followed some months later by a hearing on the appeal. The average time lapse for the 21 cases was seven months. This standard has been met. The Commission is well within the prescribed time frame.

- b. *GA PJC meeting arrangements should be made by staff in a manner that reflects the needs of the Commission to do its work, as well as reflecting the stewardship concerns of the church.*

From May 2014 through 2019, the GAPJC held eight of its fourteen in-person meetings in the Louisville area in order to reduce expenses. The other meeting locations were San Antonio, Nashville, Indianapolis, Long Beach and Atlanta. In January 2014, May 2017, and October 2017, the GAPJC met via teleconference to discuss administrative matters. Commissioners' meeting evaluations reflect that the commissioners were generally satisfied with the meeting locations. Teleconferences have been effective during periods when the Commission has no pending cases but needs an opportunity to discuss other matters.

3. *To accord procedural safeguards and due process (D-1.0101).*

Although the Task Force sent a survey and follow-up emails to the parties and the committees of counsel that appeared before the Commission in 2018, the committee only received back one completed survey. This response indicated satisfaction with the procedural safeguards. The Commission has not been made aware of any complaints concerning due process or fairness to the parties. It is the assessment of the Task Force, based upon the absence of data in this regard, that this requirement has been met.

4. *To examine papers promptly upon receipt to determine preliminary questions (D-6.0305, D-8.0301, D-13.0301).*

a. *Time between receipt of initial case filings by OGA and forwarding the same to the Executive Committee of the GAPJC for their determination on preliminary questions should not exceed an average of 14 days.*

Of the fifteen cases for which the Task Force had this information, OGA forwarded seven of those cases to the Executive Committee on the same day that it received the initial case filings. In one instance there was a time lapse of forty-seven days, due in part to OGA requesting an additional document before forwarding the materials on to the Executive Committee. The average time lapse for the 15 cases that the Task Force reviewed was 6.13 days from the date of receipt to a determination on the preliminary questions.

b. *Time between receipt of initial case filings by the Executive Committee from OGA and their determination on preliminary questions should not exceed an average of 30 days.*

Of the fifteen cases that the Task Force reviewed, the shortest amount of time in which the Executive Committee acted on the preliminary questions was two days while the longest was twenty-three days. The average time lapse was 7.9 days.

5. *To respond to stays of enforcement in a timely fashion. (D-6.0103).*

a. *Prompt determination of the preliminary matters as described in D-6.0103(b) following receipt by the Executive Committee of a request for a stay of enforcement from OGA.*

The Commission received requests for a stay of enforcement in three cases during the time period that this report addresses. In the first case, the Clerk completed the Preliminary Order for Hearing two days after the appeal was filed with OGA and forwarded on the stay of enforcement request to the Commission that same day. In the second case, the Clerk completed the Preliminary Order for Hearing within five days of the date that OGA received the filing documents and sent the stay of enforcement request to the Commission on the same day that she completed the Order. In the third case, the Clerk completed the Preliminary Order for Hearing two months after OGA received the filing documents (the date that OGA forwarded the documents to the Executive Committee is unknown) and forwarded the stay of enforcement request to the Commission the same day that she completed the Order.

b. *Time between the Executive Committee's determination of the preliminary matters described above and the forwarding of the request for a stay of enforcement accompanied by a communication from the Executive Committee regarding this determination to the Commissioners shall not exceed seven days in accordance with D-6.0103(c).*

In each of the three cases involving a stay of enforcement request, the Clerk forwarded the request along with a communication regarding it to the commissioners on the same day that he or she completed the Preliminary Order for Hearing.

6. *To decide challenges to the findings of the moderator and clerk (D-6.0306, D-8.0302); rulings of the moderator (D-7.0303a, D-11.0304a); and the composition of the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (D-7.0303b, D-7.0401a and b, D-11.0402).*

a. *In each applicable case, parties should be given the opportunity to present evidence and arguments on any challenges made to findings of the moderator and clerk on preliminary questions.*

In all cases this requirement was met. Preliminary question challenges are a significant part of the Commission's work and often necessitate a hearing.

b. *In each applicable case, parties should be given the opportunity to object to the composition of the Commission.*

Parties have been given the opportunity to object to the composition in all cases. There were no challenges to the composition of the Commission during the study period.

c. *In each applicable case, the GAPJC should address any challenges and/or objections raised by the parties.*

Not applicable.

7. *To issue citations as deemed necessary (D-7.0202, D-11.0201).*

None was requested.

8. *To appoint counsel when necessary (D-11.0302).*

None was requested.

9. *To conduct pretrial and pre-hearing conferences when necessary (D-6.0310, D-10.0405, D-13.0307).*

While pretrial conferences are common and at least several were conducted during the study period, data on how many were held does not exist because this duty is exercised primarily through case committee work. Reports to the full Commission are not made for reasons of confidentiality. None of the parties to any case for which a case committee conducted a pretrial (or hearing) conference raised any objections to the process followed during or substance of the conferences.

10. *To conduct trials and hear appeals in remedial cases, and to hear appeals in disciplinary cases (D-4.0202, D-7.0101, D-7.0102, D-8.0403, D-11.0101, D-13.0403).*

Trials and hearings should be conducted formally with full decorum in a neutral place suitable for the occasion.

Required trials or hearing have been conducted properly in each case before the Commission. In all cases full decorum was maintained; all locations were neutral.

11. *To read aloud D-1.0101 and D-1.0102 at the beginning of each trial (D-7.0401a and D-11.0402a).*

This requirement was met without exception.

12. *To control the conduct of trials and hearings (D-7.0303, D-11.0304a).*

Trials and hearings have been conducted efficiently and effectively by all of the moderators who presided over them during the study period and were conducted in compliance with the *Book of Order* and the Commission's *Manual of Operations*.

13. *To decide cases after private deliberation (D-7.0402, D-8.0404, D-11.0403, D-13.0404).*

In every case the Commission held private deliberations. The Commission follows a format whereby commissioners are given the opportunity to begin initial deliberations immediately following a hearing and before the next scheduled hearing begins. This provides an opportunity to begin that process while thoughts are fresh. After full deliberation, separate votes are taken on every specification of error; sometimes specifications of error are combined for efficiency and clarity. Decisions are always filed with the Stated Clerk immediately following the meeting of the Commission.

14. *To write, amend, proofread, and finalize written decisions with the signatures of the moderator and clerk while in session, and immediately disseminate and timely file those decisions (D-7.0402, D-8.0404, D-11.0403, and D-13.0404);*

For each case in which a decision has been rendered, a written decision should have been prepared while the commission was in session.

This criterion was met without exception.

(1) *A copy of the decision should have been delivered to the parties by personal service or certified mail.*

This requirement was met without exception.

(2) *The decision should have been filed with the Stated Clerk within thirty days of the hearing.*

This requirement was met without exception.

15. *To prepare and process records of proceedings following a trial before the GAPJC (D-7.0600, D-11.0600).*

Following a hearing or trial the records of the case are sent to the Presbyterian Historical Society where they are preserved.

CHAPTER FOUR COMPLIANCE WITH NON-CONSTITUTIONAL STANDARDS

In addition to the constitutional standards, the Commission has also adopted several non-constitutional standards that give shape and substance to its work, remind it of its function as a part of the body of Christ, and facilitate relationships among its member commissioners.

1. *To participate in daily corporate worship for the duration of GA PJC meetings.* The Commission adopted the practice of daily worship nearly two decades ago. The practice of daily worship and prayer has as its purpose the building up of the body and creation of community. Worship is offered every day the Commission is in session, typically in the morning and evening. Currently the vice-moderator oversees the development of and provides resources for daily worship and enlists other members of the commission, both teaching and ruling elder commissioners, to lead worship. Worship keeps the Commission grounded in an awareness that, as it gathers, it is the church at work. Evaluations after meetings reveal the depth of the Commissioners' appreciation of daily worship.

2. *To maintain and follow the Manual of the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission, including its Code of Ethics.* The Commission conducts its business in accord not only with the provisions of the church's *Constitution* but also of its *Manual of Operations*. The *Manual* is composed of nine sections:

- a. Sec. I Statement of Authority and Purpose
- b. Sec. II Members and Officers
- c. Sec. III Meetings
- d. Sec. IV Executive Committee
- e. Sec. V Case Committees
- f. Sec. VI Policies Related to the Work of the Commission
- g. Sec. VII Code of Ethics
- h. Sec. VIII Review and Evaluation
- i. Sec. IX Amendment or Suspension of the *Manual of Operations*

Additionally, there are appendices containing forms and style conventions used by the Commission in writing its decisions. The Code of Ethics, adopted in October 2004, deals with general expectations, public comment, conflicts of interest and appearance of impropriety, mutual accountability, and application. All new members of the Commission are given the *Manual of Operations* upon orientation to the work of the Commission and are expected to function within its parameters. The most recent version of the *Manual* is appended to this report.

3. *To build community among members of the GAPJC.* The criteria for this standard is that the Commission will include time for sharing of personal joys and concerns, time for intercessory prayer for one another, and time for fellowship. The Commission is diligent in community building as shown in Commission minutes. Meetings convene on Thursday night with a period in which commissioners share the joys and concerns of their lives since the last meeting. These occasions for sharing, fellowship, and mutual intercession are an essential foundation on which are built relationships among commissioners that develop during the Commission's work—relationships marked by mutual respect and genuine affection. Commissioners work 12-hour days (or longer) on complicated and potentially divisive issues in a spirit of cooperation. This simply would not be possible without a strong commitment to friendship and collegiality. The Commission seeks always to remember the duty incumbent on all commissioners of any council anywhere in the life of the church: "to seek together to find and represent the will of Christ" (F-3.0204).

4. *To orient newly elected commissioners.* The two criteria for this standard include letters sent by the GAPJC moderator to new commissioners and orientation at the first meeting following the election of new commissioners.

a. The Moderator of GAPJC welcomes new commissioners by mail or email. Throughout the period covered by this review, each entering class of commissioners has received mail or email contact welcoming them to the Commission.

b. Commission minutes show that orientation is conducted at the first meeting following the meeting of the General Assembly. Ordinarily the orientation is led by the Executive Committee, other commissioners, and the Manager of Judicial Process. The Moderator urges returning commissioners to arrive in time to participate in the orientation of new commissioners. All commissioners, no matter how long they have served, benefit from the orientation, which serves as continuing education.

5. *To communicate with the greater church by various means including writing headnotes for each decision; ensuring that decisions are disseminated in a timely manner.*

a. Beginning in 2002 the Commission wrote headnotes that summarize a decision. Headnotes were an attempt to communicate salient points of the decision in language understandable by all church members whether or not they have had legal training. However, in 2010 the Commission discontinued the practice of writing headnotes out of concern that they were being included in the *Annotated Book of Order* and were being treated as authoritative opinions. The Commission was concerned that even at best, headnotes were not a sufficiently full treatment of a case to serve as a basis for constitutional research. Additionally, annotations in the *Book of Order* are not formulated by the Commission and are not part of the official decisions.

b. Case decisions are disseminated so that they reach the parties within seven days after adjournment of each meeting. Decisions are proofread and signed before the Moderator and Clerk leave the meeting site; they are then given to the Manager of Judicial Process who distributes the decision to the parties by next-day air. Dates on the certification and transmittal forms attest that this standard is met.

c. The cases are transmitted to the OGA whose staff then post the decisions on the PC(USA) website, after the decisions have been received by the parties. The Commission has adopted a procedure by which the Clerk of the Commission will verify that the decisions have been posted on the website within the required time. The minutes of the following meeting reflect that the decisions were timely posted.

6. *To implement an ongoing self-evaluation program, which will include (a) completion of evaluation forms by Commissioners at the conclusion of each GAPJC meeting, and (b) a triennial self-study by the Self-Study Review Team conducted in accordance with the Standards for Review as approved by the General Assembly.*

a. Commissioners routinely complete evaluation forms which invite assessment of the flow of records, the work of case committees, conduct of hearings and trials, work of the moderator, meeting site (accommodations, food, meeting rooms, etc.), and worship. The Executive Committee reviews the evaluations and sometimes adjusts the work of the Commission or meeting arrangements. One copy of the compilation of each meeting's evaluation is kept on file by the Manager of Judicial Process.

b. The triennial review of the Commission's work was completed in 2017. It should be noted, however, that the Commission determined to discontinue the practice of the three-year review, because the study did not produce enough new information within the study period to justify the time expended in creating the report. In its place, the members of the Commission review the case logs at the end of each hearing cycle to determine whether the Commission is functioning within constitutional and non-constitutional standards.

7. *To engage in "continuing education" programs involving matters relevant to the work of GAPJC.* The criterion for this standard is that each meeting of the Commission will include time for continuing education "where feasible." Given the pressures of limited time and sizable agendas, it has not always been feasible to carve out large blocks of time for continuing education. However, the Commission understands that it works in the context of a changing church, and that it must be aware of how those changes impact the way it conducts hearings and writes its decisions. Twice in the current cycle, the Commission has invited resource people from OGA and PMA to lead the Commission in general cultural awareness training and training focused specifically on Korean culture (in preparation for hearing cases arising out of Korean-language presbyteries). Additionally, the Commission is blessed with the presence among its membership of several commissioners who are part of non-majority communities within the church; their insights have been invaluable in broadening the Commission's awareness and understanding of issues pertaining to these communities.

8. *Maximize GA PJC meeting attendance through several means.*

a. *All members should attend all GAPJC meetings unless excused.* Commissioners show a high degree of commitment to their work as part of the Commission. Statistics show that only once in the last hearing cycle were as many as three

commissioners absent for a hearing and deliberations (except in cases of mandatory recusal), and more commonly not more than one. Those who are unable to attend request excuses well ahead of the meeting date, unless, of course, unexpected events preclude their attendance at the last minute.

b. *All members should be present at the time when the meeting is initially convened.* Most Commissioners are present by dinner on Thursday evening; in one instance a commission arrived either while the evening meeting was in session, prior to any discussion of the hearing scheduled for the following morning.

c. *All members should remain in attendance until the meeting is adjourned and no members should leave before the meeting is concluded.* During the period of this review, no commissioner left the meeting prior to the vote finalizing any case.

The need to remain through the projected day and time of adjournment is not only emphasized at orientation but also included as a reminder with each invitation to schedule travel to and from an upcoming meeting. Commissioners, once gathered in the hearing room, do not leave until the hearing is concluded, and no one is permitted to enter the hearing/trial room during a hearing. Deliberations are also carefully guarded, and apart from scheduled or requested breaks, all commissioners remain in the room while deliberation is in process.

d. *The GAPJC meetings should be scheduled at least one year in advance in order to provide Commissioners with adequate time to arrange their schedules.* The Commission schedules its meetings one to two years in advance. Meeting dates are rarely changed once set. New commissioners are informed of upcoming meeting dates in the welcoming letter and at orientation.

e. *The GAPJC meetings should be held at locations that minimize commissioner travel time on a rotating basis while weighing the attendance or convenience of the parties and the funds available for meetings.* During the period of review, the Commission has met most often in Louisville, but has also met in Atlanta, Baltimore, San Antonio, San Diego, Indianapolis, Nashville, Long Beach, and via Zoom conference call. Louisville appears to be most convenient since it does not require travel on the part of staff, a considerable savings.

f. *Travel arrangements should be made to facilitate the work of the Commission, while accommodating the health, safety, and reasonable personal needs of commissioners.* Meeting evaluations show a general satisfaction with meeting sites and travel arrangements. At each meeting, however, there is a story of one commissioner or another who has had trouble making flight arrangements through the General Assembly's chosen travel service, usually either because of inconvenience of travel options available or because of the maximum allowable cost set by the travel service. Several members opt to make their own arrangements, and to pay out of pocket any difference between what the GA Meeting Service will pay and the actual cost of travel.

9. *Meeting minutes:* The Clerk keeps full and accurate minutes of all meetings; these are on file in the Office of the Stated Clerk.

CHAPTER FIVE EFFECTIVENESS IN SERVING THE CHURCH

The General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission is a reactive body; that is, the Commission responds to cases referred to it. Our constitutional mandate is "to serve in judicial matters in accordance with the Rules of Discipline," thus the Commission is not a body which proposes mission initiatives, plans programs, or generates strategies.

The Commission undertakes the judicial function of the General Assembly, in order that the other work of the General Assembly might move forward more expeditiously. Under antecedent polities, the entire General Assembly dealt with judicial matters as the highest court of the Presbyterian Church. Presently, the *Book of Order* assigns the judicial function solely to this Commission, and it is on the basis of that assignment that its effectiveness must be judged. In this chapter the Commission seeks to evaluate its effectiveness: that is, how well does it do that which it is assigned to do?

The Standards for Review list five areas of effectiveness of service within its constitutional mandate.

1. *The Commission has a defined and consistent process for completing its work.*

Much of the process for completing the work of a permanent judicial commission is outlined in the Rules of Discipline. When a case is referred to the Commission, the Moderator and Clerk, in consultation with the Executive Committee, make determinations on preliminary questions deciding whether the case is properly before the body (See D-8.0301 or D-13.0106 and D-13.0106). These findings are reported by a preliminary order (PO) issued to the parties and the full Commission. The PO either accepts the case for trial or hearing, or dismisses the case, citing the reason(s) for dismissal. Parties may challenge

these findings (see D-8.0302 or D-13.0302). If they are challenged, briefs may be received and a hearing held; then the Commission will make a decision on the preliminary questions. If the Commission answers all questions in the affirmative, the case is scheduled for hearing. The Commission will then conduct a hearing or a trial on the main issues of the case, pursuant to the appropriate sections of the Rules of Discipline.

Most cases before the Commission are on appeal from lower councils. When General Assembly entities or synods are parties to a judicial action, the Commission acts as the court of original jurisdiction.

Once a case has been received, the Moderator of the Commission appoints a case committee that analyzes the issues of the case, explores constitutional issues and issues of precedent, delineates the specifications of error, outlines its factual and litigative history, suggests lines of questioning for the hearing or trial, leads the questioning of parties, writes the first draft of the decision (after discussion in the full Commission), and rewrites until the decision is accepted by the Commission. Those dissenting from the decision may write a dissenting opinion and those concurring with the decision with comment may write a concurring opinion, both of which must be heard by the full Commission and must be declared “decorous” before inclusion in the decision (see *Manual of Operations of the GA PJC*, Sec. 5)

The work of the case committee is central to the quality and effectiveness of the Commission’s decisions. When the case committee has carefully analyzed the issues of the case, the rest of the Commission is better equipped to reach a decision. Because the cases before GAPJC are generally complex, clarity is not only desirable but necessary.

The Commission generally acts on two cases per meeting, although there have been numerous occasions in recent years when it dealt with three or more. Additionally, there are always motions, correspondence, and other issues with which to deal. The *Book of Order* requires that decisions be reached while the Commission is in session; therefore, commissioners sometimes experience time pressure or work well into the night as the time for adjournment approaches. Management of the docket is essential if each case is to be carefully decided and written and edited; the Moderator’s job in moving the business along requires a deft touch.

Essential to the effectiveness of the Commission’s process is the spirit of collegiality and cooperation among its commissioners. The Commission is careful to spend time at each meeting building community and sharing joys and concerns. The Commission is intentional about daily worship in the mornings and evenings and is regular in prayer for each other and the work before it. While there is not unanimity of opinion on issues before the body, there is unanimity that we are servants of the church and seek its upbuilding. Commissioners decide cases in light of the *Constitution* and on the basis of evidence and argument presented, and not on personal beliefs and views. The high personal regard with which commissioners hold each other enables us to disagree with grace. We work with an attitude of mutual trust. Commissioners depend on the leading of God’s Spirit, and “seek together to find and represent the will of Christ” (F-3.0204). Many commissioners have noted that their service on the GAPJC was the most fulfilling work they had done for the church.

In order to be effective, the Commission needs a careful balance of commissioners with vision and dedication to the church. A consistent practice of this Commission has been to meet with representatives of the General Assembly Nominating Committee before commissioners rotate off.

2. *The Commission has a regular process of self-evaluation of its services.*

At the conclusion of each meeting, commissioners complete an evaluation form covering the meeting arrangements, work of case committees, staff support, individual work before and during the meeting, conduct of the meeting, and worship. The staff uses the evaluations to judge the meeting sites and arrangements, and the Executive Committee uses their results to make minor adjustments in agenda and process.

The other dimension of the self-evaluation is the triennial self-study which were completed for the periods 2007-2010 and 2014-2017. The Moderator appointed a task force to conduct those triennial self-studies, and the task forces made reports to the full Commission. At least one of the members of the most recent triennial review task force served on the self-study task force for the present review (in this case, two: Deborah Little Cohn and Paul Hooker).

3. *The Commission employs a strategy for effective communication with the church-at-large.*

Following each meeting, members of the Executive Committee meet with the Stated Clerk. The Commission then formally forwards its decisions to the Clerk, who then posts them on the PC(USA) website within seven days of the conclusion of each meeting. The decisions are also sent by certified mail to the parties to each case immediately at the close of the meeting. Any other communication is out of the Commission’s hands and is not authoritative.

Beginning in 2002, the Commission adopted the practice of writing headnotes that summarized the major parts of the decision. Headnotes were designed to give readers the salient points of the decision. However, in 2010 the Commission discontinued this practice, out of concern that the headnotes might fail to communicate the nuances that may often be determinative of the outcome of a case or essential in understanding the full sense of the decision.

The Constitution requires that the deliberations of the GAPJC are closed and confidential. The Commission's Code of Ethics (see *Manual of Operations*, sec. VII) requires that commissioners not comment publicly on decisions; only the Moderator or his/her designee shall speak for the Commission. Commissioners are free to comment on the procedures of the Commission, including the atmosphere of collegiality and trust which mark our work.

4. *The Commission utilizes current and emerging technologies to enable it to fulfill its mission.*

Currently, and after using several other, less-satisfactory platforms, the Commission employs Microsoft One Drive to post, share, edit, and finalize its decisions. Commissioners all have access to the One Drive account, but no one outside the Commission and the Manager for Judicial Process may read the decision until it is finalized. The Commission has found that this software allows for far more expeditious and accurate editing of documents, while at the same time reducing the use of paper. It does require, however, that all commissioners have access to or be provided computer hardware and/or software capable of using One Drive, and that there be regular and adequate training in the software's use. At present, each new class of commissioners is trained on One Drive as part of new commissioner orientation, and this training is also made available as a refresher for experienced commissioners who desire it.

The Commission notes that an impediment is the fact that electronic resources such as the *Annotated Book of Order* are still not available for the Mac OS operating systems.

5. *The Commission has developed a vision and plans for its work in light of its historic mandate and the emerging issues before and the context of the PC(USA).*

This Commission is not mandated to “develop a vision”; we are mandated to be faithful in upholding the Constitution of the PC(USA). We await with great interest the work of the Rules of Discipline Task Force which will undoubtedly affect the work of permanent judicial commissions at many levels.

The Commission is aware of the limits of judicial process. In recent cases (*Murphy v. Session of Westminster Des Moines, 224-01; Gaines v. First Meridian Heights, 224-02*) this commission has pointed out that, had other avenues of redress been chosen, judicial process with all its attendant labor and expenditure of time and emotion could have been avoided. The biblical injunction “to conciliate, mediate, and adjust differences without strife” compels the church to seek alternatives to judicial process. (See D-1.0103.)

Changes in the church require that this Commission broaden its understanding of cultural contexts and their implications for the covenantal life of the church. This Commission has undertaken—and continues to undertake—training in cultural sensitivity, particularly as the number of cases involving Korean or Spanish language participants increases. In addition, changing gender roles requires both new vocabulary and new attitudes on the part of those who render judicial decisions. The Commission is committed to attending to these changes, and to assessing how they may change our practice in the future.

In one area, though, we remain as we have been, committed to the “upright ministry of ecclesiastical discipline.” We understand that “[t]he purpose of discipline is to honor God by making clear the significance of membership in the body of Christ; to preserve the purity of the church by nourishing the individual within the life of the believing community; to achieve justice and compassion for all participants involved; to correct or restrain wrongdoing in order to bring members to repentance and restoration; to uphold the dignity of those who have been harmed by disciplinary offenses; to restore the unity of the church by removing the cause of discord and division; and to secure the just, speedy, and economical determination of proceedings” (D-1.0101). Our intent is never to waver from the commitments implied in these words.

CHAPTER SIX LOOKING AHEAD

Each time the GAPJC conducts a review of its work, whether in its internal triennial review or in the present self-study for the General Assembly, the Commission finds areas of strength and areas for further development. Some of the areas for further development are ones that are mentioned in every self-study because they continue to be of importance for the Commission and for the church. As we look ahead, the areas for further development and our areas of strength will allow us to improve the way we work together for the strengthening of the church for work in the world.

We have identified four general areas for further development.

1. Continuing education

During the orientation of new commissioners, all commissioners are encouraged to attend the orientation as a continuing education event. All commissioners benefit from the orientation and can offer their expertise to the other commissioners.

As the Commission continues to review technology for continued improvement of its work, continuing education is offered on updates to the technology in use. Commissioners are also encouraged to become proficient in Microsoft One Drive and Zoom conferencing technology by utilizing the tutorials provided by the suppliers of the technology.

Based on the number of decisions in which preliminary question issues have been appealed to the Commission, it has become apparent that timeliness, standing, and subject matter jurisdiction are judicial concepts that are not widely understood. The research by the case committees on these topics assists the full Commission and is a form of continuing education.

The Commission is part of a changing church and it must be aware of how the changes in the greater church impact the way it conducts hearings and writes its decisions. Consequently, the Executive Committee has scheduled continuing education on cultural awareness issues as time has permitted.

Continuing education is important, but the focus of the Commission's work must always be on our primary focus - the hearings, trials, and decisions.

2. Management of the docket and meeting agenda

The Preamble to the Rules of Discipline calls for "the just, speedy, and economical determination of proceedings" (D-1.0101). If a case is ready to be heard by the GA PJC, it should be, and is, timely docketed. However, experience suggests that the number of cases to be heard at any given meeting should not exceed two or three. Although the caseload is somewhat lighter than it has been in previous years, the cases often have multiple complicated issues that require extensive research and writing. If a hearing cycle that included four cases with full records and hearings, deliberations and decisions that must be written and approved by the Commission before dismissal, it would be almost impossible to conclude in a meeting that lasts three full days and parts of two others. None of us does our best thinking at the end of a long day of intense deliberations.

Commissioners' preparation time is another factor in the management of the docket. Case records can range in length from 200 to almost 3,000 pages. Each Commissioner is expected to be thoroughly familiar with the record with the case committee being especially well prepared for its case. The demand on an individual commissioner's time before a meeting is clear. Although commissioners all find the work rewarding and inspiring, it is also exhausting.

Time management is the key to getting the work done yet the Commission also recognizes the necessity for continuing education. Continuing education time is sometimes cut short so that the quality of the deliberations and decisions do not suffer.

3. Use of the staff and technological resources

We continue to determine the best ways to effectively utilize the knowledge and experience of the Manager of Judicial Process. Additionally, we have availed ourselves of the expertise of other persons in the OGA, particularly in areas of continuing education and translation services. Having the assistance of other people is helpful to the Commission without compromising the independence and deliberative process of our work.

Although the Commission currently uses Microsoft OneDrive and Zoom conferencing technology, the GA PJC continues to be vigilant for technology products or innovations that smooth the path for the Commission's substantive work.

4. Other ways to "conciliate, mediate, and adjust differences without strife" (D-1.10103)

The Commission is aware of the limits of judicial process and encourages other avenues of dispute resolution and consensus building. The church should strive to resolve disputes in a manner that minimizes divisiveness and expense and promotes consensus, leaving this Commission to resolve disputes by judicial process as a last resort.

Several strengths characterize the work of the Commission.

1. Working together

Meetings are sometimes characterized by long hours dealing with difficult and potentially divisive issues. Commissioners develop relationships marked by mutual respect and genuine friendship. In moments of contention, these relationships serve to calm the seas and allow the Commission to get on with its assigned work. The Commission seeks always to be a community

guided by the Holy Spirit. Liturgical and fellowship occasions of officer installations and parting deepen our sense of mutual purpose.

The Commission could not meet its constitutional mandate without a spirit of collegiality and mutual respect among the commissioners. The Commission spends time at each meeting team building and sharing joys and concerns. We may strive mightily, but we fellowship as friends. Worship, prayer and fellowship are deeply rooted in our routines and work. While there may be disagreement on issues, there is firm solidarity in our mission: we are servants of the church who seek to build up Christ's kingdom.

2. Commitment to task

Commissioners rarely miss meetings. Commissioners come well prepared for the cases before them. Familiar with the record, they are ready for each hearing and/or trial and subsequent discussions; the debate is lively and spirited—and occasionally long-winded. Commissioners spend hours in session and in case committee meetings; this task is not for the faint-hearted. Often Commissioners use vacation and personal time sacrificially in order to serve the church in this way.

3. Case Committee Process

To facilitate its work, the Moderator appoints a case committee for each case to be heard before the Commission. The responsibilities of the case committee are detailed in the *Manual of Operations*. Effective work by the case committee is essential to the efficient functioning of the Commission and a vital part of its work in reaching a just decision. While a case committee does not prejudge cases prior to hearing, it can provide drafting, direction and guidance to the full Commission so that its work can be carried out in the time allotted for the Commission to meet. The Moderator meets with each case committee chair before the first formal session is convened to clarify issues prior to the hearing.

The Commission has found that the use of case committees facilitates its work. Individuals assigned to case committees take their responsibility to assist the other members of the Commission in understanding the issues in a case very seriously. Long hours of preliminary work and research can provide essential clarity and focus for the Commission.

4. Working with parties

The Commission shows respect for all parties. Inviting the parties to worship prior to hearings or trials, as well as extending the right hand of fellowship to all parties at the conclusion of each hearing or trial demonstrates the Commission's high regard for all who appear before them.

Additionally, the preparation for the meetings and the conduct during the hearings or trials displays the respect the Commissioners have for the parties. Parties have commented favorably on how familiar the Commissioners are with the record and the issues of their cases.

5. Openness to change

The Commission is open to changing its processes and ways of working. Policies on Asynchronous Meetings by Electronic Means adopted in February 2017 and Participating in Trials by Electronic Means revised in October 2016, are two examples of adaptation to the use of technology in our work. We strive to enhance our ways of working with the church as we move into the future together.

Summary and conclusion

The General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission deeply appreciates the opportunities afforded it to serve the church through the ecclesiastical judicial process. It is aware of the gravity of its responsibilities and the impact of its decisions on both the lives of individual participants and the life of the church as a whole. It seeks to be—and believes it has succeeded in being—faithful to the charges in both the church's *Constitution* and in its own Manual and policies. It remains attentive to the need for adaptation and change and is committed to making appropriate adjustments in process and technology that will enable it to serve these charges more effectively

Beyond the nuts and bolts of process improvements, the Commission is reminded with each meeting of the larger vision it serves. The Preamble to the Rules of Discipline, D-1.0102, reminds it that:

The power that Jesus Christ has vested in his Church, a power manifested in the exercise of church discipline, is one for building up the body of Christ, not for destroying it, for redeeming, not for punishing. It should be exercised as a dispensation of mercy and not of wrath so that the great ends of the Church may be achieved, that all children of God may be presented faultless in the day of Christ.

00 PLENARY

As a custodian of the church's judicial process, the GAPJC seeks always to build up and redeem, to point toward God's mercy. Through its decisions, the Commission seeks to uphold the church as "a community of hope" that "lives in the present on the strength of [God's] promised new creation" (F-1.0301).

With gratitude to God and appreciation of the support and good will of the PC(USA), the Commission submits this report.

APPENDIX

PERMANENT JUDICIAL COMMISSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Manual of Operations as amended February 23, 2018

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Section I - Statement of Authority and Purpose**1.01.00 – AUTHORITY AND RULES OF PROCEDURE**

1.01.10 The Rules of Discipline of the *Book of Order* describe the judicial processes of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), of which the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (GAPJC or Commission) is a part. The GAPJC has both original and appellate jurisdiction as prescribed in the Rules of Discipline. Primarily an appellate court, the Commission hears and decides both remedial and disciplinary cases; however, GAPJC may conduct trials in cases of original jurisdiction.

1.01.20 In accordance with G-3.0105 of the *Book of Order*, meetings of the GAPJC and its committees are conducted in accordance with the most recent version of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*, except in cases where the *Book of Order* provides otherwise.

1.01.30 The Clerk of the GAPJC shall have the responsibility of maintaining and distributing this *Manual of Operations*, and is authorized to make editorial corrections, including any necessary updates as the result of changes to the *Book of Order*, provided that all such changes are reported to the Executive Committee and to the full Commission at their next meetings.

1.02.00 – PURPOSE

1.02.10 The Preamble to the Rules of Discipline in the *Book of Order's* states the purpose of discipline in the Church of Jesus Christ:

Church discipline is the church's exercise of authority given by Christ, both in the direction of guidance, control, and nurture of its members and in the direction of constructive criticism of offenders. The church's disciplinary process exists not as a substitute for the secular judicial system, but to do what the secular judicial system cannot do. Thus, the purpose of discipline is to honor God by making clear the significance of membership in the body of Christ; to preserve the purity of the church by nourishing the individual within the life of the believing community; to achieve justice and compassion for all participants involved; to correct or restrain wrongdoing in order to bring members to repentance and restoration; to uphold the dignity of those who have been harmed by disciplinary offenses; to restore the unity of the church by removing the causes of discord and division; and to secure the just, speedy, and economical determination of proceedings (D-1.0101).

1.02.20 As a commission, the GAPJC undertakes the judicial function of the General Assembly and considers and concludes judicial matters before it (G-3.0109). Its commissioners are presbyters from each synod who are qualified to be commissioners to the General Assembly (D-5.0100).

1.02.30 Since the General Assembly is the highest council of the church, the decisions of the GAPJC are not subject to further review by appeal. Its decisions are Authoritative Interpretations of the *Book of Order*, and the "most recent interpretation of a provision of the *Book of Order* shall be binding" (G-3.0501c). The decisions of the GAPJC are reported to each General Assembly by the Stated Clerk as provided by D-7.0700.

Section II - Members and Officers**2.01.00 – MEMBERS**

2.01.10 Members of the GAPJC are elected by the General Assembly and serve in classes in accordance with D-5.0100 of the *Book of Order*. Any vacancies on the Commission are also filled in accordance with this provision.

2.02.00 – OFFICERS

2.02.10 The officers of the Commission are: Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Clerk, and Assistant Clerk. The Moderator shall ordinarily convene and preside at all meetings of the Commission. In the event of the Moderator's absence or inability to convene the Commission, it shall be convened by another officer, in the order stated above.

2.02.20 The Moderator shall fulfill all functions of the Moderator of the GAPJC as described in the *Book of Order*, and any specific functions described elsewhere in this *Manual of Operations*. The duties of the Moderator shall include:

a. Presiding, when present, at all meetings of the Commission and the Executive Committee, except when he or she finds it prudent to relinquish the chair or when disqualified by D-5.0205 of the *Book of Order*.

b. Responsibility for all aspects of the arrangements for meetings of the Commission, in consultation with the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly or the staff person designated by the Stated Clerk.

c. Appointment of Case Committees, Case Committee Moderators, and any other committees approved by the Commission or necessary for the Commission's work.

d. Together with the Clerk, editing and certifying each decision of the Commission.

e. Serving as a Corresponding Member to all meetings of the General Assembly during the term of service in accordance with the *Manual of the General Assembly*, and advising the General Assembly and its Nominating Committee and any other General Assembly entities on behalf of the Commission. The moderator may name a Commissioner to fulfill any of these responsibilities on her or his behalf.

2.02.30 Specific duties of the Vice-Moderator shall include:

a. Serving as Moderator-Pro-Tem of the Commission, presiding at any meeting of the Commission or the Executive Committee in the absence of the Moderator, or when the Moderator finds it prudent to relinquish the chair or is disqualified by D-5.0205.

b. Responsibility for all aspects of worship at meetings of the Commission in accordance with section 3.02.00 below.

2.02.40 The Clerk shall fulfill all functions of the Clerk of the GAPJC as described in the *Book of Order*, and any specific functions described elsewhere in this *Manual of Operations*. The duties of the Clerk (in consultation with and with the assistance of the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly or the staff person designated by the Stated Clerk) shall include:

a. Keeping administrative records of the Commission and the Executive Committee.

b. Serving as the Commission's parliamentarian.

c. Together with the Moderator, editing and certifying each decision of the Commission.

d. Filing a certified record of the proceedings and decisions of the Commission with the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly or the staff person designated by the Stated Clerk.

e. Circulating meeting evaluations to each commissioner for each meeting of the Commission, compiling the commissioners' responses, and transmitting a copy of the compiled responses to each commissioner.

f. Ensuring that a current a roster of members is maintained, including accurate current contact information.

g. Maintaining and publishing this *Manual of Operations*.

h. Notifying commissioners of all meetings.

i. Notifying parties to cases of the dates, times, and places of trials and hearings.

j. Distributing final copies of all decisions and orders to commissioners.

k. Ensuring prompt transmittal of certified copies of decisions to the parties in every case and the posting of decisions on the denomination's website.

2.02.50 Specific duties of the Assistant Clerk shall include:

a. Performing all duties of the Clerk in the absence or disqualification of the Clerk.

b. Assisting the Clerk as requested.

c. Meeting with parties prior to all trials or hearings – recording the names of all parties with their case position titles, presenting the record of those names to the Moderator and the Clerk, conducting the parties into the room, and introducing the parties to the Commission.

d. Serving as the Commission's timekeeper during all trials and hearings.

2.03.00 – ELECTIONS

2.03.10 In those years in which the General Assembly elects a new class of members to the Commission, the Moderator appoints a nominating committee of at least three commissioners prior to the Commission's first meeting of that year.

2.03.20 At the first meeting of the Commission after a nominating committee is appointed it shall nominate a slate of officers from among the continuing members of the Commission. There shall always be an opportunity for nominations from the floor. If there are no additional nominees, the election may be by acclamation. If there are additional nominees for any position, the entire election shall be by

secret ballot and the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly or the staff member designated by the Stated Clerk shall be responsible for the distribution and counting of ballots.

2.03.30 Should a vacancy occur in any office, the Moderator (or Vice-Moderator if the office vacant is the office of Moderator) shall immediately appoint a nominating committee to fill the vacancy, which shall follow the same procedure described in 2.03.20 above.

Section III - Meetings

3.01.00 – MEETINGS OF THE COMMISSION

3.01.10 Meetings of the Commission shall be at such times and places as the Commission shall determine (D-5.0203). Commissioners shall receive at least thirty days notice of any meeting.

3.01.20 A quorum of the Commission shall be a majority of the membership (D-5.0204).

3.01.30 Meetings of the Commission or any of its committees may occur by teleconference at the discretion of the convener of the meeting. Such teleconferences shall be arranged by the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly or the staff member designated by the Stated Clerk, and may employ additional technologies as appropriate and available.

3.01.40 Voting by e-mail is permitted, but shall not occur without provision for deliberation as provided in the 2004 Authoritative Interpretation of G-4.0301e (of the 2009–2011 *Book of Order*), which states in part that “voting by e-mail is permissible only if there has been provision for deliberation, and the governing documents of the governing body provide for vote by mail or e-mail.”

3.01.50 Dockets for meetings of the Commission shall be prepared by the Executive Committee in accordance with section IV below.

3.01.60 Absences are unexcused unless an excuse is presented to and accepted by the Executive Committee, which decision may be reviewed by the full Commission at its next meeting.

3.02.00 – WORSHIP AT MEETINGS

3.02.10 Corporate worship shall be a regular and integral part of all meetings of the Commission. At a minimum, this shall include opening and closing prayers for all business sessions, and daily services of morning and evening prayer.

3.02.20 On days on which hearings or trials are held, morning prayers shall be held in proximity to the room in which the proceedings will occur, and parties to cases shall be invited to participate.

3.02.30 When the Commission meets on the Lord’s Day, it will either recess to worship with a local congregation or, when its work load prohibits this practice, conduct its own Service for the Lord’s Day in accordance with W-3.3000.

3.03.00 – THE STATED CLERK AND STAFF SUPPORT

3.03.10 In accordance with the Standing Rules of the General Assembly, the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly may designate a member of the staff of the Office of the General Assembly to be the officer responsible for any action assigned to the Stated Clerk by the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly ordinarily assigns responsibilities related to the GAPJC to one or more staff members.

3.03.20 Staff services ordinarily available to the Commission in its work include the following:

- a. Preparing copies of materials as directed by the Executive Committee for orientation and training of new members of the Commission.
- b. Maintaining a current roster of members, including contact information, and distributing updated information to commissioners.
- c. Arranging for telephone conference calls for the Commission or its committees as requested.
- d. Ensuring the timely distribution of papers to the Commission and the Executive Committee.
- e. Identifying by personal inspection appropriate locations for meetings of the Commission.
- f. Notifying parties on behalf of the Clerk of the Commission of the dates, times, and places for any hearing or trial.
- g. Making physical arrangements for meetings of the Commission, such as: housing, meal service, meeting rooms, photocopying,

and travel.

- h. Photocopying working papers for the Commission during any trial, hearing, or deliberation.
- i. Contracting for the services of a court reporter or other means of accurate recording when required for a trial of original jurisdiction (D-7.0601a).
- j. During meetings of the Commission, producing copies of drafts, final decisions, and other official correspondence as requested by commissioners.
- k. Distributing final copies of the minutes and decisions of the Commission, and other official correspondence.
- l. Distributing and collecting expense vouchers from members of the Commission.

Section IV – Executive Committee

4.01.00 – MEETINGS

4.01.10 The Executive Committee is composed of the Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Clerk, and Assistant Clerk. It shall meet as necessary to accomplish its work upon the call of the Moderator.

4.01.20 In between meetings of the Commission, the Executive Committee shall ordinarily complete its work by e-mail, conference calls, and by employing other technologies, being careful to observe the limits of section 3.01.40 above.

4.01.30 A quorum of the Executive Committee is a majority of its members, except that when necessary the Moderator and Clerk of the Commission alone may fulfill those duties specifically assigned to them in the Rules of Discipline.

4.02.00 – RESPONSIBILITIES

4.02.10 The Executive Committee is responsible for decisions related to the location of Commission meetings and arrangements for the meetings, including the docket and hearing schedules.

4.02.20 The Executive Committee is responsible for ensuring that new members of the Commission are adequately prepared for their work. Generally, the Executive Committee will conduct formal orientation for new commissioners and is further responsible for planning ongoing education related to the Commission’s work as well as the technology it employs.

4.02.30 Although the Rules of Discipline assign responsibility for matters such as the examination of papers to determine preliminary questions to the Moderator and Clerk alone (*cf.* D-6.0305), the full Executive Committee generally participates in such determinations and issues preliminary orders related to matters pending before the Commission. In no way does this provision abrogate the rights and responsibilities of the Moderator and Clerk to fulfill their constitutional responsibilities alone, should they determine that it is prudent to do so.

4.02.40 The Executive Committee has additional responsibilities in relation to stays of enforcement (6.01.20), and procedures for handling cases (6.02.40-90b).

Section V – Case Committees

5.01.00 – PURPOSE AND AUTHORITY

5.01.10 Case committees exist to both lead and assist the Commission in its consideration of matters pending before it. While all commissioners are expected to prepare for every case, it is particularly incumbent upon the members of case committees to become acquainted with all aspects and details of their cases.

5.01.20 Case committees are appointed by the Moderator for each case once it has been accepted by the Commission.

5.01.30 Once appointed, case committees are authorized to meet via conference call as necessary to accomplish their work, to conduct pre-trial and pre-hearing conferences with parties, and to issue appropriate orders as the result of such conferences on behalf of the Commission under the signature of the case committee chair.

5.02.00 – STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

5.02.10 As soon as possible after the Moderator appoints a case committee, the case committee chair shall initiate a discussion with the committee (either by e-mail or conference call) regarding the materials in the case, and make appropriate assignments for specific aspects of the committee’s work.

5.02.20 Prior to hearings or trials, case committees assist the Commission by conducting research, writing memoranda as necessary and helpful, and making a presentation to the full Commission regarding the issues in a case, the arguments of the parties on those issues, and timelines or other such resources as the case may warrant.

5.02.30 Before any case is heard or tried by the Commission, the case committee shall have:

- a. Conducted any necessary conferences with the parties.
- b. Published for the Commission any memoranda as described above.
- c. Determined writing assignments for the history, arrival statement, and specifications of error sections of decisions on matters of appeal (but in no case making a recommendation on any determination prior to any scheduled hearing).

5.02.40 At hearings or trials, the case committee chair is the first commissioner to be recognized to ask questions of the parties. Other members of the case committee are then recognized, followed by the remaining commissioners. The case committee chair shall also ordinarily open the hearing with prayer.

5.02.50 During deliberations, case committees are responsible for developing drafts of decisions and orders for presentation to the Commission, and editing those drafts in light of the Commission's input and directions.

Section VI – Policies Related to the Work of the Commission

6.01.00 – REQUESTS FOR STAYS OF ENFORCEMENT

6.01.10 D-6.0103 denotes that “A stay of enforcement is a written instruction from the permanent judicial commission having jurisdiction that orders the suspension of a decision or an action until a complaint or appeal is finally determined.”

6.01.20 The procedure for the entering of a stay of enforcement is outlined in D-6.0103. The attention of Commissioners is called especially to D-6.0103(d)(2), which states, “If the request is made under D-6.0103(a)(3), by three members of the permanent judicial commission filing with the stated clerk of the council that has jurisdiction to hear the case a statement that in his or her judgment substantial harm will occur if the action or decision is not stayed and that in her or his judgment probable grounds exist for finding the decision or action erroneous. Each permanent judicial commission member must include a summary of the specific council action or decision being stayed.

6.02.00 – PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING CASES

6.02.10 In remedial cases of original jurisdiction, the GAPJC shall conduct the pre-trial proceedings as set forth in D-6.0000 of the Rules of Discipline, and shall conduct the trial as set forth in D-7.0000 of the Rules of Discipline. Any papers to be filed in such a case shall be filed with the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly. The parties shall also provide their contact information to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

6.02.20 When the GAPJC accepts a reference and conducts a trial of a disciplinary case, it shall conduct the pre-trial proceedings as set forth in D-10.0000 of the Rules of Discipline, and shall conduct the trial as set forth in D-11.0000 of the Rules of Discipline. Any papers to be filed in such a case shall be filed with the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly. The parties shall also provide their contact information to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

6.02.30 In cases of appellate jurisdiction, the proceedings shall be conducted in accordance with D-8.0000 of the Rules of Discipline and D-13.0000 for disciplinary cases. Any papers to be filed in such a case shall be filed with the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly. The parties shall also provide their contact information to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

6.02.40 Any of the aforementioned papers, when received, shall be immediately sent to the Executive Committee, which shall promptly make any appropriate preliminary determinations as required by D-6.0305, D-8.0301, and D-13.0301.

6.02.41 The GAPJC's preference is for all of the aforementioned papers to be filed electronically.

6.02.50 All preliminary determinations of the Executive Committee shall be immediately distributed to members of the Commission and to the parties, who may challenge them in accordance with the appropriate provisions of the Rules of Discipline.

6.02.60 The Executive Committee is authorized to schedule a hearing on preliminary questions should one be required as the result of a challenge by a party or a member of the Commission.

6.02.70 Upon being accepted by the Executive Committee or scheduled for a hearing on preliminary questions when the determination of the Executive Committee has been challenged, cases shall be assigned a unique reference number which shall remain as the reference number for that case until it has been finally adjudicated by the Commission. Every Decision and Order issued by the Commission in each case shall be assigned a number which consists of the number of the next General Assembly meeting following the filing of the Decision and Order, hyphenated with a numerical sequence number beginning with “01” for the Decisions and Orders for each General

Assembly.

6.02.80 The Moderator of the Commission may rule with respect to any administrative matter preliminary to the presentation of complaints or appeals scheduled to come before the Commission. The Moderator may also appoint a member or members of the Commission to conduct a pretrial conference in accordance with D-6.0310 when a case committee has not yet been appointed, or when the Moderator determines that it would be prudent for someone other than the case committee to do so.

6.02.90 Trials and Hearings:

a. The Moderator of the Commission or his or her designee shall preside at all trials or hearings except as provided elsewhere in this *Manual of Operations*.

b. The Executive Committee shall schedule the time for trial in consultation with the parties, allowing for a complete hearing of the issues.

c. The Commission may limit the time for presentation of argument by the parties or counsel in cases heard on appeal. The usual limit is thirty (30) minutes for Appellants, and 30 minutes for Appellees. Following presentations by the parties, commissioners shall have an opportunity to question the parties.

d. Following trials or hearings, the Commission shall deliberate privately to decide on the matters before it.

6.03.00 – DECISIONS AND ORDERS

6.03.10 All Decisions and Orders shall conform to the uniform writing practices currently in use by the Commission.

6.03.20 Following adjournment of its meetings, the Moderator and Clerk shall examine all Decisions and Orders issued by the Commission, and certify them on behalf of the Commission. A record shall be maintained of changes made, which shall be made available to the Commission at its next meeting.

6.03.30 The Commission shall report the decisions in all cases to the General Assembly through the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly. The decision of the Commission shall be the final judgment of the General Assembly from the time of the announcement of the decision to the parties either in person or by certified delivery (D-7.0402, D-8.0404, D-13.0404).

6.03.40 Case decisions are posted to the denominational website once it has been confirmed that they have been received by the parties, which should be within seven days after the conclusion of deliberations.

Section VII – Code of Ethics

7.01.00 – PREAMBLE

7.01.10 Members of the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission are charged to “recollect and regard their high character as judges of a governing body of the Church of Jesus Christ...” (D- 11.0402).

7.01.20 The following constitutes a “Code of Ethics” for the members of the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission and is intended to provide guidelines for their conduct:

7.02.00 – GENERAL EXPECTATIONS

7.02.10 In relationship with others, members of the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission shall strive to:

- a. Be honest and truthful.
- b. Regard all persons with equal respect and concern.
- c. Recognize the gifts of others.
- d. Work with others cooperatively and collegially.
- e. Be diligent and dependable.
- f. Speak the truth in love and bear witness without fear or favor.

- g. Maintain critical self-awareness.
- h. Conduct their lives with integrity so that they demonstrate consistently that they are disciples of Jesus Christ.

7.03.00 – PUBLIC COMMENT

7.03.10 For purposes of this section, “public” refers to any group or person not a member of this Commission, including members of the church and secular press, formal meetings of governing bodies or entities, educational or training events organized and conducted by entities of the church.

7.03.20 Commissioners should exercise discretion in making public comment on decisions.

7.03.30 Commissioners should exercise discretion in commenting on decisions in casual or private conversations.

7.03.40 The deliberations of the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission are confidential and are not to be divulged by any member of the Commission. Commissioners may not comment on a decision until it has been posted on the denomination’s website.

7.03.50 Once a decision has reached the parties and has been published by the Stated Clerk’s office, only the moderator or someone he/she designates shall speak for the Commission.

7.03.60 Commissioners will not misrepresent the position of the Commission even though personal opinions may conflict with the majority opinion of the Commission.

7.03.70 Commissioners may make public statements regarding the procedures of the Commission. While a proceeding is pending, Commissioners shall not make any public comment that might reasonably be expected to affect its outcome or impair its fairness.

7.04.00 – CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND THE APPEARANCE OF IMPROPRIETY

7.04.10 Commissioners may be appointed to serve on committees and task forces at various levels of the church. Each commissioner must evaluate the risks of conflict of interest with his/her service on the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission.

7.04.20 “No person shall serve on the Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly who is a member of any other entity elected by the General Assembly until that person shall have resigned such membership” (D-5.0105). In the spirit of this provision of the Rules of Discipline, commissioners should carefully weigh service on task forces or committees that might present the appearance of impropriety.

7.04.30 Impropriety is understood as conduct that would create in reasonable minds a perception of the commissioner’s inability to carry out judicial responsibilities with integrity and impartiality.

7.05.00 – MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY

7.05.10 Each commissioner is accountable to other commissioners and to the Church for maintaining the integrity and fairness of the judicial process. This requires mutual respect for each other and for those appearing before the Commission.

7.05.20 Commissioners are mutually accountable for their preparation for and participation in the meetings of the Commission and in carrying out responsibilities as outlined in this *Manual of Operations*.

7.06.00 – APPLICATION OF THE CODE OF ETHICS

7.06.10 All members of the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission shall comply with this Code.

7.06.20 Staff related to the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission shall be guided by this Code in their work with the Commission.

7.06.30 Any questions regarding the applicability of this code to specific situations shall be referred to the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission Executive Committee or the Moderator.

Section VIII – Review and Evaluation

8.01.00 – Review Processes

8.01.10 Section IV.D.2 of the General Assembly’s *Organization for Mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)* reads as follows:

00 PLENARY

The permanent, advocacy, and advisory committees and commissions of the General Assembly will be reviewed to evaluate their processes to fulfill the mandates given to them by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The General Assembly will review the work of the permanent, advocacy, and advisory committees and commissions based on a six-year schedule. A committee at the General Assembly will be assigned the review. The assembly committee will use the Standards for Review of General Assembly Permanent, Advocacy, and Advisory Committees and Commissions in the Guidelines and Policies of the General Assembly. The assembly committee will report to the General Assembly the results of the review and make recommendations based on its findings.

8.01.20 The GAPJC engages in the review of its work in two ways: commissioners participate in an evaluation process following each regular meeting of the Commission by the Commissioners; and the Commission engages in a self-study process in preparation for the General Assembly's review of its work once every six years as described above. The standards contained in sections 8.02.00 and 8.03.00, as well as any criteria established by the General Assembly, are the basis of the self study processes.

8.01.30 Each self-study process will be conducted by a four-person Self-Study Review Team composed of one person from each of the last four classes elected to the Commission. The review team will accomplish its work in accordance with this *Manual of Operations* and will render a report at the fall meeting of the commission in the year in which the review was conducted. The commission will act on the report, and thereafter, in applicable years, forward the report to the General Assembly in accordance with the *Organization for Mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*.

8.01.40 Meeting evaluations are conducted by the Executive Committee, and the Clerk is responsible for the tabulation and dissemination of responses to Commissioners.

8.02.00 – Constitutional Standards and Review Criteria

8.02.05 Compliance by the GAPJC with the following standards is required by the *Book of Order*, and review criteria are employed to provide an objective measure for determining compliance to constitutional standards as noted:

8.02.10 To open and close all meetings with prayer (*Book of Order*, G-3.0105);

Review Criteria:

- a. All meetings should be opened and closed with prayer.

8.02.15 To secure the just, speedy, and economical determination of proceedings (*Book of Order*, D- 1.0101);

Review Criteria:

- a. Time lapse between receipt of complaint or notice of appeal and final disposition of case should not exceed an average of 1 year.
- b. GAPJC meeting arrangements should be made by staff in a manner that reflects the needs of the commission to do its work, as well as reflecting the stewardship concerns of the church.

8.02.20 To accord procedural safeguards and due process (*Book of Order*, D-1.0101);

Review Criteria:

- a. Procedural safeguards and due process should be accorded to all parties.

8.02.25 To examine papers promptly upon receipt to determine preliminary questions (*Book of Order*, D- 6.0305, D-8.0301, D-13.0301);

Review Criteria:

- a. Time between receipt of initial case filings by OGA and forwarding the same to the Executive Committee of the GAPJC for their determination on preliminary questions should not exceed an average of 14 days.
- b. Time between receipt of initial case filings by the Executive Committee from OGA and their determination on preliminary questions should not exceed an average of 30 days.

8.02.30 To respond to stays of enforcement in a timely fashion (*Book of Order*, D-6.0103);

Review Criteria:

- a. Prompt determination of the preliminary matters as described in D-6.0103(b) following receipt by the Executive Committee of a request for a stay of enforcement from OGA.

00 PLENARY

b. Time between the Executive Committee's determination of the preliminary matters described above and the forwarding of the request for a stay of enforcement accompanied by a communication from the Executive Committee regarding this determination to the Commissioners shall not exceed 7 days in accordance with D- 6.0103(c).

8.02.35 To decide challenges to the findings of the moderator and clerk (*Book of Order*, D-6.0306, D- 8.0302); rulings of the moderator (*Book of Order*, D-7.0303a, D-11.0304); and the composition of the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (*Book of Order*, D-7.0303b, D-7.0401a and b, D-11.0402);

Review Criteria:

a. In each applicable case, parties should be given the opportunity to present evidence and arguments on any challenges made to findings of moderator and clerk on preliminary questions.

b. In each applicable case, parties should be given the opportunity to object to the composition of the commission.

c. In each applicable case, the GAPJC should address any challenges and/or objections raised by the parties.

8.02.40 To issue citations as deemed necessary (*Book of Order*, D-7.0202, D-11.0201);

Review Criteria:

a. In applicable cases, the moderator or clerk should consider and act upon requests for the issuance of citations.

8.02.45 To appoint counsel when necessary (*Book of Order*, D-11.0302);

Review Criteria:

a. In applicable cases, GAPJC should appoint counsel for an accused.

8.02.50 To conduct pretrial and pre-hearing conferences when necessary (*Book of Order*, D-6.0310, D- 10.0405, D-8.0307, D-13.0307);

Review Criteria:

a. Pretrial or pre-hearing committees should be appointed in appropriate cases.

b. Pretrial or pre-hearing conferences should be conducted in appropriate cases.

8.02.55 To conduct trials and hear appeals in remedial cases, and to hear appeals in disciplinary cases (*Book of Order*, D-4.0202, D-7.0101, D-7.0102, D-8.0403, D-11.0101, D-13.0403); [Note: The General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission would only hold a trial on a disciplinary case in the rare event of reference from a lower governing body, since a disciplinary case would ordinarily be tried by the presbytery or session of membership.]

Review Criteria:

a. Trials should be conducted formally with full decorum in a neutral place suitable for the occasion.

8.02.60 To read aloud D-1.0101 and D-1.0102 at the beginning of each trial (*Book of Order*, D-7.0401 and D-11.0402a);

Review Criteria:

a. Sections D-1.0101 and D-1.0102 should be read at the beginning of each trial.

8.02.65 To control the conduct of trials and hearings (*Book of Order*, D-7.0303, D-11-0304);

a. The GAPJC should exercise its authority and power to control conduct of trials and of all parties, witnesses, counsel and public, including removal of them, to the end that proper dignity and decorum are maintained.

b. Moderator should decide all questions as to procedure or the admissibility of evidence after parties have been given an opportunity to be heard.

c. In each case where applicable, all parties and commissioners should be given the opportunity to appeal from a decision of the moderator to the GAPJC.

d. The GAPJC should decide by majority vote all appeals from decisions of the moderator.

e. The absence of any member of GAPJC after trial has commenced should be recorded.

8.02.70 To decide cases after private deliberations (*Book of Order*, D-7.0402, D-8.0404, D-11.0403, D- 13.0404);

Review Criteria:

a. For each case in which a decision has been rendered, there should be private deliberations by the commission;

b. For an appeal, a separate vote should be taken on each specification of error, which may be combined or altered for clarity and efficiency;

c. For a trial, a separate vote should be taken on each irregularity, delinquency, or charge.

8.02.75 To write, amend, proofread, and finalize written decisions with the signatures of the moderator and clerk while in session, and immediately disseminate and timely file those decisions (*Book of Order*, D-7.0402, D-8.0404, D-11.0403, D-13.0404);

Review Criteria:

a. For each case in which a decision has been rendered, a written decision should have been prepared while the commission was in session;

b. A copy of the decision should have been delivered to the parties by personal service or certified mail; and

c. The decision should have been filed with the Stated Clerk within thirty days of the hearing.

8.02.80 To prepare and process records of proceedings following a trial before the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (*Book of Order*, D-7.0600, D-11.0600).

Review Criteria:

a. Following trials before the GAPJC, the full record of the proceedings should be prepared, processed, and transmitted to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly for permanent preservation.

8.03.00 – Non-Constitutional Standards and Review Criteria

8.03.05 In addition to the standards mandated by the *Constitution*, the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission has established the following other standards as guidance in conducting its work, and review criteria are employed to provide an objective measure for determining compliance to the standards as noted:

8.03.10 To participate in daily corporate worship for the duration of GAPJC meetings;

Review Criteria:

a. Commissioners should participate in daily corporate worship.

8.03.15 To maintain and follow this *Manual of Operations*, including its Code of Ethics;

Review Criteria:

a. This *Manual of Operations*, including its appendices, should be reviewed and, if necessary, updated following each meeting of the General Assembly.

8.03.20 To build community among members of the GAPJC;

Review Criteria:

a. Each meeting of the GAPJC will include time for sharing of personal joys and concerns, time for intercessory prayer for one another, and time for fellowship.

8.03.25 To orient newly elected commissioners;

Review Criteria:

a. The GAPJC Moderator should send welcoming letters to new commissioners at the conclusion of the electing General Assembly, which would include all scheduled GAPJC meetings.

b. At the first GAPJC meeting following election by the General Assembly, newly elected commissioners shall participate in an orientation in matters pertaining to the GAPJC, held prior to the convening of the full commission.

8.03.30 To communicate effectively with the greater church by various means including ensuring that decisions are disseminated in a timely manner

Review Criteria:

a. Case decisions should be disseminated to the parties within 7 days after adjournment of the meeting.

b. Case decisions should be forwarded to OGA within 7 days after adjournment of the meeting for immediate posting to the denominational website.

8.03.35 To implement an ongoing self-evaluation program;

Review Criteria:

a. The GAPJC should implement an ongoing self-evaluation program, which includes completion of evaluation forms by commissioners at the conclusion of each GAPJC meeting.

8.03.40 To engage in “continuing education” programs involving matters relevant to the work of the GAPJC;

Review Criteria:

a. Each GAPJC meeting should include an allocation of time for continuing education as feasible and needed.

8.03.45 To maximize attendance at GAPJC meetings;

Review Criteria:

a. All members should attend all GAPJC meetings unless excused.

b. All members should be present at the time when the meeting is initially convened.

c. All members should remain in attendance until the meeting is adjourned and no member should leave before a meeting is concluded.

d. The GAPJC meetings should be scheduled at least one year in advance in order to provide commissioners with adequate time to arrange their schedules.

e. The GAPJC meetings should be held at locations that minimize commissioner travel time on a rotating basis while weighing the attendance or convenience of the parties and the funds available for meetings.

f. Meeting arrangements should be made so as to facilitate the work of the commission, while accommodating the health, safety, and reasonable personal needs of commissioners.

8.03.50 To keep minutes of GAPJC meetings.

Review Criteria:

a. The clerk shall keep adequate minutes of GAPJC meetings.

Section IX – Amendment or Suspension of the Manual of Operations

9.01.00 – Amendments

9.01.10 The GAPJC is structured and conducts its business as provided in this *Manual of Operations*, which may be amended by a

two-thirds vote of the Commission at any regular or duly called meeting, or by a majority vote with prior notice to the full Commission of the proposed amendment(s).

9.01.20 The Appendices to this *Manual of Operations* are items of additional interest or usefulness to Commissioners in their work, and may be suspended, altered or amended at any time by a majority vote of either the full Commission or its Executive Committee.

9.02.00 – Suspension

9.02.10 Any portion of this *Manual of Operations* may be temporarily suspended by a vote of two-thirds of those present and voting at any stated or special meeting of the Commission.

Endnotes

1. This report covers an eight-year period, rather than the standard six years. The most recent self-study by the Commission was received by the General Assembly in 2012.
2. *General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission*, 2.03.10

Item 00-Info-02

General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission

1. *Roster of Former members (D-5.0206b)*

a. *Class of 2018*

Terry Epling, Synod of Mid-America; Helen Heffington, Synod of South Atlantic; Julia Henderson, Synod of Rocky Mountains; Robin Roberts, Synod of Living Waters.

b. *Class of 2016*

Barbara Bundick, Synod of Lincoln Trails; A Bates Butler III, Synod of the Sun; Jay Lewis, Synod of the Trinity; Jeana Lungwitz, Synod of the Sun; Patrick Notley, Synod of the Northwest.

c. *Class of 2014*

Bradley C. Copeland, Synod of Southern California and Hawaii; Meta Shoup Cramer, Synod of the Covenant; H. Clifford Looney, Synod of Alaska Northwest; Michael Lukens, Synod of Lakes and Prairies.

2. *Final Decisions of the Permanent Judicial Commission*

The Permanent Judicial Commission met in Louisville, Ky., on August 16–19, 2018; in Atlanta, Ga., on October 18–22, 2018; in Louisville, Ky., on April 25–28, 2019; in Louisville, Ky., on August 22–25, 2019; in Louisville, Ky., on October 10–14, 2019; and in Louisville, Ky., on April 23–26, 2020 (virtual).

a. *Remedial Appeal 224-01*

PERMANENT JUDICIAL COMMISSION
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

Julie Murphy)
 Appellant,)
 v.)
 The Session of Westminster Presbyterian Church,)
 Des Moines, Iowa,)
 Appellees.)

DECISION AND ORDER
Remedial Case 224.01

Arrival Statement

This is an appeal to the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (GAPJC or this Commission) from a November 7, 2017, Decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies (SPJC). In that Decision, the SPJC did not sustain the Appellant's specifications of error and affirmed a decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Presbytery of Des Moines (PPJC) that the Appellant's allegations of irregularities on the part of the Appellee were not sustained. Appellant appealed the Decision of the SPJC to the GAPJC.

Jurisdictional Statement

This Commission finds that it has jurisdiction, that Appellant has standing to file the Appeal, that the Appeal was properly and timely filed, and that the Appeal states one or more grounds for appeal under D-8.0105.²⁷

Appearances

Julie Murphy, Appellant, appeared on her own behalf. Beverly Evans, the representative of the Committee of Counsel, appeared on behalf of the Appellee, the Session of Westminster Presbyterian Church at Des Moines, Iowa.

History

This remedial case arises from Appellant's allegation of errors by the SPJC in its Decision to affirm a PPJC decision.

Appellant, Julie Murphy, is a long-time member of Westminster Presbyterian Church and was active in its music program. In October 2015, the congregation's Human Resources Committee (HRC) formed what it called a "fact-finding commission" (also referred to as "Music Commission") to look into reported conflict in the music program. In mid-October, Appellant and another congregant contacted the pastor, expressing concern about the director of music. The director of music sent a memo to the pastor stating that he had endured "passive-aggressive bullying" for years from Appellant and the other congregant. The "fact-finding commission" interviewed multiple Westminster members, including Appellant. On December 4, 2015, the "fact-finding commission" asked Appellant and the other congregant to voluntarily step away from the music program on a temporary basis. At the time of the request, both agreed to do so. The period of time was later clarified to be until July 2017.

Appellant complained about the HRC's action to the Session. The Session determined that the HRC's actions had been correct. The Session also formed what it called a "commission" on conflict resolution, which was later dissolved and reestablished as a task force. The Presbytery of Des Moines Congregation Reconciliation Task Force (PCRTF) subsequently worked with the congregation's task force, observed a combination of intersecting circumstances, and made recommendations with regard to both reconciling the conflict situation with the Appellant and with regard to what was described as "chronic anxiety in the congregational system."

Appellant and the other congregant initiated a remedial Complaint with the Presbytery of Des Moines, alleging irregularity on the part of the HRC, its chair, and the pastor, in that they acted without proper authority and without affording her due process. Appellant later amended her Complaint to include the Session. The Presbytery Permanent Judicial Commission (PPJC) advised the complainants that the only claim upon which relief could be granted was with regard to the Session. The PPJC decision of September 22, 2016, concluded there was no relief to be granted, issued a Decision to dismiss the case, and instructed the PCRTF to monitor compliance and progress with recommendations in its report.

On October 3, 2016, Appellant asked the PPJC to reconsider its Decision. Appellant then appealed the PPJC Decision to the Synod of Lakes and Prairies Permanent Judicial Commission (SPJC) on October 17, 2016. The PPJC returned to the matter and held a remedial trial on June 24, 2017. The PPJC found that no formal process was initiated nor was there any disciplinary action taken by Appellee. The Complaint was not sustained.

Appellant then appealed the second PPJC Decision to the SPJC with four (4) specifications of error. The SPJC Decision of November 7, 2017, did not sustain any of the specifications of error.

The GAPJC received a Notice of Appeal of the Decision of the SPJC on November 27, 2017, and issued a Preliminary Order for hearing, on January 5, 2018. On February 16, 2018, Appellant amended the appeal to supplement the record. Appellee concurred with the request on February 25, 2018. The GAPJC entered an Order on March 1, 2018, regarding supplementing the record. On August 17, 2018, the GAPJC heard oral argument.

²⁷ *Book of Order* citations in this Decision are from the 2015–2017 edition, which was in effect during the time of the actions and PPJC decisions herein.

00 PLENARY
Specifications of Error

Specification of Error No. 1: Error in constitutional interpretation, the SPJC erred in upholding the finding of the PPJC that no formal process was initiated nor was there any disciplinary action taken by the Session.

This specification of error is not sustained.

The record and the hearing before the GAPJC confirm that no formal process was undertaken, and the Session did not take disciplinary action against Appellant. While the Appellant describes the action as “disciplinary-like,” nothing done by the Session or its entities met the definition of disciplinary actions in the *Book of Order*.

Specification of Error No. 2: Injustice in the decision, the SPJC erred by holding there was no injustice in the Decision. A preponderance of evidence at trial clearly showed that a Decision was made and actions taken by the Human Resources Committee, where no such authority existed and where due process was not afforded to church members as required by the Book of Order.

This specification of error is not sustained.

The record and the hearing before the GAPJC confirm that the request made to Appellant and another congregant to step away from the music program was not a disciplinary action. Rather, it was a request to which they voluntarily agreed. Neither the HRC nor its “Music Commission” had been constituted by the Session as an administrative commission under the terms of G-3.0109b. The HRC’s request cannot be considered the action of either an administrative commission or the Session. Therefore, the provisions of fair notice and opportunity to be heard are not relevant (G-3.0109b).

Specifications of Error Nos. 3 and 4: Injustice in the process and manifestation of prejudice in the conduct of the case.

These specifications of error are sustained (see Decision below).

Decision

The SPJC decision is modified to reverse its findings with regard to specifications of error number 2, “Injustice in the process,” and number 4, “Manifestation of prejudice in the conduct of the case.” There was injustice in the remedial case process at the PPJC level. Such injustice at the PPJC level was prejudicial in favor of Appellee.

Appellant may have concluded the request to step away was an act of Session based on the fact that the request was voiced by the HRC chair, as chair of the “Music Commission.” In fact, this action was not an action of Session, but confusion on this point lies at the heart of this case. The Session bears some responsibility for this confusion in permitting the HRC to form a so-named “Music Commission” to inquire into difficulties in the program. Section G-3.0201 gives the Session “responsibility for governing the congregation and guiding its witness to the sovereign activity of God in the world, so that the congregation is and becomes a community of faith, hope, love, and witness.” While not outside the scope of its authority, that authority might have been exercised more effectively in supervising its committee.

Fewer than 24 hours prior to the start of the PPJC trial on June 24, 2017, Appellant (Complainant at the PPJC trial) received a copy of a document dated October 22, 2015. When disclosing its exhibits before trial, Appellee (Respondent at PPJC trial) noted this as a confidential document without disclosing the subject matter. Appellant had requested that any documents with undisclosed content not be allowed at trial as they would be prejudicial in favor of Appellee. The PPJC allowed this document to be introduced at trial the next day. The admissibility of evidence arising in the course of a trial shall be decided by the moderator, after the parties have had an opportunity to be heard (D-7.0303a). The GAPJC interprets “opportunity to be heard” to include sufficient time to prepare a response or rebuttal to the evidence submitted. Appellant clearly did not have sufficient information about the formerly confidential document in adequate time to prepare a response or rebuttal to that evidence.

The original Complaint to the PPJC included four (4) identifiable irregularities. The PPJC Decision of June 24, 2017, appears to consolidate the first two of the alleged irregularities (injustice in the process and prejudice), which are addressed in the Decision. However, the remaining two alleged irregularities (reconciliation and remediation) are not addressed in the Decision. Item D-7.0402a requires a vote on each irregularity in the Complaint. The record does not indicate that the PPJC voted on those remaining irregularities, which was a failure to provide justice in this aspect of the decision-making process. The SPJC failed to address these errors.

The SPJC’s failure to provide any rationale for its November 7, 2017, Decision constituted an injustice to Appellant. The GAPJC reminds the parties, and in a broader sense all permanent judicial commissions within the church, of its concerns on

this matter, first raised in (*Buescher, et al., v. Presbytery of Olympia* 2008, 218-09) and reiterated in (*Presbytery of Greater Atlanta v. Ransom* 2009, 219-02):

[W]hile the Constitution does not require that a permanent judicial Commission provide a rationale for every irregularity or delinquency assigned in the complaint when rendering a decision (D-7.0402), this Commission recommends that permanent judicial commissions provide enough explanation for the church to understand the reasons for decisions and be guided accordingly.

In spite of these errors, there is no ready relief available to the GAPJC to grant. July 2017 has passed, and thus withdrawal of the request to step aside is moot. Requiring a public apology is beyond the authority of a permanent judicial commission. The GAPJC encourages all parties to continue the work of reconciliation.

The GAPJC notes that G-3.0301c lists among the responsibilities and powers of the Presbytery, “promoting the peace and harmony of congregations and inquiring into the sources of congregational discord.” The GAPJC observes that this matter might have been more successfully and satisfactorily addressed through the process of administrative review (G-3.0108) available in partnership between the Session and the Presbytery.

Order

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the Decision of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies Permanent Judicial Commission is hereby modified.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies report this Decision to the Synod of Lakes and Prairies at the first meeting after receipt, that the Synod of Lakes and Prairies enter the full Decision upon its minutes and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Des Moines report this Decision to the Presbytery of Des Moines at the first meeting after receipt, that the Presbytery of Des Moines enter the full Decision upon its minutes and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Clerk of Session of Westminster Presbyterian Church of Des Moines report this Decision to the Session at the first meeting after receipt, that the Session enter the full Decision upon its minutes and an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

Absences and Non-Appearances

The full Commission participated in the hearing and deliberations.

Certificate

We certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the Decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in Remedial Case 223-04, *Julie Murphy, Appellant v. The Session of Westminster Presbyterian Church at Des Moines, Iowa, Appellees*, made and announced at Louisville, Ky., this 19th day of August, 2018.

Dated this 19th day of August, 2018.

Ruth Goldthwaite, Moderator
Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly

Deborah Little Cohn, Clerk
Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly

I certify that I did transmit a certified copy of the foregoing to the following persons by Federal Express Next Day Air, directing Flor Vélez-Díaz to deposit it in the mail at Louisville, Ky., this 20th day of August, 2018.

Julie Murphy, Appellant
Beverly Evans, Committee of Counsel for Appellee
Clerk of Session, Westminster Presbyterian Church, Des Moines, Iowa
Stated Clerk, Presbytery of Des Moines
Stated Clerk, Synod of Lakes and Prairies
General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission

I further certify that I did transmit a certified copy of the foregoing to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) by delivering it in person to Flor Vélez-Díaz, on August 19, 2018.

Deborah Little Cohn, Clerk
Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly

I certify that I received a certified copy of the foregoing, that it is a full and correct copy of the Decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), sitting during an interval between meetings of the General Assembly, in Louisville, Ky., on August 19, 2018, in Remedial Case 2017-02, *Julie Murphy, Appellant, v. The Session of Westminster Presbyterian Church at Des Moines, Iowa, Appellees*, and that it is the final judgment of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in the case.

Dated at Louisville, Ky., on August 19, 2018.

Flor Vélez-Díaz
Manager of Judicial Process and Social Witness

b. Original Jurisdiction Remedial Complaint 224-02

PERMANENT JUDICIAL COMMISSION
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

Atlantic Korean American Presbytery,)	
Complainant,	)	DECISION ON CHALLENGE TO PRELIMI-
and	)	NARY ORDER FOR DISMISSAL
Nam H. Cho and Kim Robinson,	)	Remedial Case 224-02
Complainant,)	
)	
v.)	
)	
Synod of the Mid-Atlantic,)	
Respondent.)	

Arrival Statement

This is a remedial case of original jurisdiction before the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (GAPJC or this Commission) as a result of a remedial Complaint filed by Atlantic Korean American Presbytery (Presbytery or AKAP) against the Respondent Synod of the Mid-Atlantic (Synod). Complainants the Reverend Nam H. Cho and Ruling Elder Kim Robinson (Cho and Robinson) also filed a remedial Complaint against the Respondent Synod. The Cho and Robinson case was consolidated with the Presbytery case because the irregularity cited in the Cho and Robinson case was the same irregularity cited as one of the issues in the Presbytery Complaint. The trial was held at the Fall 2018 meeting of the GAPJC held in Atlanta, Ga., October 18–22, 2018.

Jurisdictional Statement

In its Preliminary Order dated June 12, 2018, the Executive Committee of the GAPJC found this Commission has jurisdiction, Complainants have standing to file the Complaints, the Complaints were timely filed, and the Complainants state a claim upon which relief can be granted.

Appearances

Complainant AKAP was represented by the Reverend Byeong Ho Choi and the Reverend Chi Hyeon Yun as Committee of Counsel. Complainant Rev. Cho was present and represented himself with assistance from the AKAP Committee of Counsel. Complainant Ruling Elder Kim Robinson was not present but was represented by Rev. Cho and the AKAP Committee of Counsel. The Respondent Synod was represented by the Reverend Archibald Wallace III, Ruling Elder Susanne

Taylor, and the Reverend Wilbur Douglass as Committee of Counsel. The Reverend Jihyun Oh and the Reverend Jae Kim acted as interpreters.

History

This case arose from actions taken at the 241st Stated Meeting of the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic held at Ginter Park Presbyterian Church in Richmond, Va., on March 12–13, 2018 (the Meeting). Present as commissioners for AKAP were Rev. Cho and Elder Robinson. Also present at the Meeting was the Executive Presbyter/Stated Clerk for AKAP, the Reverend David Kang. Elder Robinson was present for both days of the Meeting; Rev. Cho attended only the second day.

The Synod had received numerous reports over several years of difficulties in the Presbytery. The executives of the Synod and the Presbytery reported difficulties in communication. Additionally, there were reports of conflict at meetings of the Presbytery.

The Synod stated clerk's report on March 12 noted that concerns continued to be expressed about the life, health, and vitality of the ministry of the Presbytery. It indicated that there had been consultations with Korean staff members from the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA), Office of the General Assembly (OGA), and other individuals proficient in Korean culture. It also indicated that there were a number of cases pending before the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic Permanent Judicial Commission (SPJC) involving AKAP.

On the evening of March 12, 2018, Rev. Kang was informed by the Synod Executive Committee of its pending recommendation related to the Presbytery. Rev. Kang testified that he had no prior knowledge of the recommendation. On the next day, the second day of the Meeting, the Executive Committee presented a report, including a recommendation "to appoint an Administrative Commission to deal with the life, health and vitality of the Atlantic Korean American Presbytery."

Several commissioners, including Rev. Cho, addressed the motion. Some suggested looking for other avenues to address concerns in AKAP. At the conclusion of the discussion, the Synod approved the following: "That the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic appoint an Administrative Commission of no more than seven persons to address concerns in AKAP according to the *Book of Order* G-3.0109b, and that the Synod Moderator and Stated Clerk be given the authority to appoint an AC with at least one half of the commission representing Koreans."

On March 21, Synod Executive/Stated Clerk the Reverend Warren Lesane, Jr., sent a letter officially informing AKAP of the Synod action establishing an Administrative Commission (AC) "as provided in G-3.0109b(5) of the Presbyterian *Book of Order*." The letter went on to say, "The Administrative Commission shall consist of not fewer than seven (7) persons and its membership shall be appointed by the Synod Moderator and Synod Stated Clerk. At least one-half of the commission shall be Koreans. The Administrative Commission may be given additional authority as the Synod deems necessary in order to effectively engage its work." Finally, Rev. Lesane asked that the letter be read in its entirety at the AKAP meeting to be held in April.

A Request for Stay of Enforcement was received for both of these cases by the Commission on April 15, 2018, but failed to receive the necessary signatures pursuant to G-6.0103d. Respondent filed a motion to dismiss on June 7, 2018, which was withdrawn at the start of the trial on October 19, 2018. A pre-trial conference was held pursuant to D-6.0310 on October 10, 2018, at which the parties stipulated to facts, exhibits, and witnesses in preparation for the trial and the issues in dispute. Trial was held October 19–20, 2018.

Alleged Irregularities

By agreement of the parties and pursuant to a pre-trial order dated October 12, 2018, the trial focused on the following three disputed issues, phrased here as three alleged irregularities:

Irregularity No. 1: The appointment of an Administrative Commission was an irregularity under G-3.0109b. (This issue was understood to include the Complainants' allegation that false information was presented to the Synod.)

This irregularity is not sustained in part and sustained in part.

The original complaint of the Presbytery concerning the appointment of an AC is not sustained. However, the language of the Synod action establishing the AC was insufficient, and therefore was irregular (see Decision below).

Irregularity No. 2: The Synod treated the Presbytery improperly under F-1.0403.

This irregularity is not sustained (see Decision below).

Irregularity No. 3: The Complainants have not been afforded “fundamental fairness” or “due process” in the appointment of an Administrative Commission.

This irregularity is not sustained (see Decision below).

Decision

Over the course of two days, this Commission considered the documentary evidence presented to it, evaluated the testimony of the witnesses, and carefully deliberated and voted on each alleged irregularity and disputed issue. This Commission is grieved by the long history of conflict and communication difficulties between the Synod and Presbytery, and between the councils’ leaders. A lack of clarity and understanding about certain processes and procedures, exacerbated by differences in language and culture, further complicates conflicted relationships, such as these.

Irregularity No. 1: The appointment of an Administrative Commission was an irregularity under G-3.0109b. (This issue was understood to include the Complainants’ allegation that false information was presented to the Synod.)

Councils have wide latitude in the appointment of administrative commissions. Except for a few specifically prohibited powers, many of their official functions may be delegated to duly appointed administrative commissions. The authority to delegate oversight of lower councils, and to inquire into councils “reported to be affected with disorder” (G-3.0109b(5)), is explicit.

In the present case, the Synod’s decision to appoint an administrative commission to inquire into reported difficulties in one of its constituent presbyteries did not violate any provisions of the *Book of Order*. No provision quantifies how severe the disorder must be to justify such an appointment. The facts in this case present sufficient justification, based on a history of reported conflict in the Presbytery, for Synod reasonably to act.

However, G-3.0109 also states, “The designating council shall state specifically the scope of the commission’s power and any restrictions on those powers.” On March 13, 2018, the Synod approved a motion to appoint an administrative commission, “That the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic appoint an Administrative Commission of no more than seven persons to address concerns in AKAP according to the *Book of Order* G-3.0109b, and that the Synod Moderator and Stated Clerk be given the authority to appoint an AC with at least one half of the commission representing Koreans.” This motion fails to specify the powers and limitations given to the AC by the omission of any language to define the scope of the AC’s authority to “address concerns” or any language defining the restrictions of the AC’s authority. Such a generic charge is insufficient. The conflicting testimony at trial from the Respondent’s own witnesses about the intended scope of the action demonstrates the potential for confusion. So, too, does the conflict in language between the approved motion and its description in the Synod stated clerk’s March 21 letter to the Presbytery. Because of this insufficiency, the Synod must delegate specific powers prior to the AC taking any actions on behalf of the Synod (see *Hoy, et al., v. Presbytery of Tropical Florida* 1991, 203-01; *Sundquist v. Heartland Presbytery* 2008, 219-03; *Lee, et al., v. Presbytery of Midwest Hanmi* 2008, 219-05).

Unless or until additional powers are delegated, the AC would only have authority to make recommendations to the Synod, not to take any actions. Any final actions (e.g., any assumption of original jurisdiction), would require providing the Presbytery and its representatives the opportunity to be heard on the matter before a final decision is made. And such actions, whether taken by the Synod or delegated to an AC, would be subject to administrative or judicial review. Any power not specifically delegated remains with the Synod (*Sundquist v. Heartland Presbytery*, 2008).

Complainants have also alleged that Synod’s decision to appoint an AC was based, in part, on false information orally presented by the Synod executive/stated clerk at the Synod assembly. This remedial case did not provide an appropriate framework to investigate or adjudicate all of the Complainant’s allegations, and this Commission did not find sufficient evidence to prove or disprove those claims.

Irregularity No. 2: The Synod treated the Presbytery improperly under F-1.0403.

F-1.0403 establishes important principles that lie at the heart of what it means to be the Church. The Constitution establishes an expectation of intentionality in representation in every council of the Church.

The existence of non-geographic presbyteries within synods, and of presbyteries where the language and culture are not shared by the majority in the synod, places a special responsibility on the synod to ensure representation, fairness, and

equal access in decision-making. No council should take lightly its responsibility to ensure diverse voices are given opportunity to speak and be heard in the councils of the church.

In this case, this Commission finds the Synod has met its responsibility. Being heard is not the same as being agreed with. While members of the Presbytery were displeased by the Synod's action to appoint an AC, there is no evidence that they were excluded from the decision-making process. Indeed, the Presbytery's two commissioners and executive presbyter/stated clerk (as a corresponding member) were present during the Meeting on the motion in question and had opportunity to speak. At least one of them did so.

The Presbytery has raised broader questions of racial representation on Synod entities. It is not within this Commission's purview to conduct an administrative review of the Synod's efforts, or lack thereof, to ensure diversity and representation on its committees and boards. But no evidence has been presented that Asian persons (or those of Korean descent, specifically) are being deliberately underrepresented. Synod standing rules intentionally place representatives of all presbyteries, including AKAP, on Synod entities. An Asian-American woman (from another presbytery) served as Synod moderator in 2015.

Irregularity No. 3: The Complainants have not been afforded "fundamental fairness" or "due process" in the appointment of an Administrative Commission.

Complainants have also raised concerns about whether "fundamental fairness" was shown to the Presbytery. This Commission held in *Sundquist, et al., v. Heartland Presbytery* 2008, 219-03, that an administrative commission may be appointed without hearing or advance notice.

In fact, the Presbytery did have some advance notice of an action being considered to form an AC. The minutes of the September 2017 Synod meeting anticipate the formation of a commission to conduct special administrative review of the conflict issues in the Presbytery. On March 12, 2018, the Presbytery's executive presbyter/stated clerk was advised of the Synod Executive Committee's recommendation to form an AC. At the Synod Meeting, AKAP commissioners had opportunity to speak on the motion, as did the executive presbyter/stated clerk (as a corresponding member). Additionally, attention was given in the action creating the AC to ensure that Korean voices would make up at least half of the AC.

Throughout its consideration of this case, this Commission has heard an earnest desire from the Presbytery's representatives to be heard and fully included in the life and mission of the Synod. Through its witnesses and counsel, the Presbytery has expressed a sense of injustice, of a history of unfair treatment, and of not being heard. This Commission has also heard testimony that Presbytery leadership has not submitted minutes or other documents for regular review and has been unresponsive to some outreach efforts from the Synod. In seeking reconciliation, judicial process is often a poor substitute for deeper investment in relationships and shared mission. The Synod and its staff are encouraged—perhaps even through the work of the AC at issue in this case—to consider how best to achieve a different tone and spirit in the ongoing relationship between the councils and their leadership.

Order

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the Synod action of March 13, 2018, establishing an Administrative Commission is hereby suspended, pending modification of the action to delineate the powers of that Administrative Commission consistent with this decision and in compliance with G-3.0109, "The designating council shall state specifically the scope of the commission's powers and any restrictions on those powers."

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic report this Decision and Order to the Synod at its first stated meeting following the date of this Order, that the Synod enter the full Decision and Order upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from the Synod's minutes showing entry of the Decision and Order be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic deliver a copy of this Decision and Order to its Administrative Commission addressing concerns in the Atlantic Korean American Presbytery.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Atlantic Korean American Presbytery report this Decision and Order to the Atlantic Korean American Presbytery at the first stated meeting after receipt, that the Atlantic Korean American Presbytery enter the full Decision and Order upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision and Order be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

Opinion Concurring in Part and Dissenting in Part

We concur with the decision of the Commission on Irregularities Nos. 2 and 3, but we respectfully dissent from the decision to sustain in part Irregularity No. 1. We would not sustain any irregularity.

We join the Commission in the finding that the formation of an AC was justified. While we agree that the language of the Synod's motion was insufficient, we believe the Synod could delegate powers at a later time, correcting the insufficiency before the AC took actions that would have been constitutionally irregular.

Brian Ellison
Linda Windy Johnston
Diana Moore

Dated at Atlanta, Ga., the 22nd day of October, 2018.

Dissenting Opinion

As to Irregularity No. 1, I dissent.

The Synod motion fails to state specifically the scope of the AC's powers and any restrictions on those powers (G-3.0109) by the omission of any language to define the scope of the AC's authority to "address concerns" and the omission of any language defining the restrictions of the AC's authority. The motion as approved lacked specificity defining the delegation of authority from Synod to the AC and is, therefore, irregular. Because the motion was irregular and thus did not create a valid AC, the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic should be required to begin anew its consideration of possible recommendations related to the Atlantic Korean American Presbytery.

Ruth Goldthwaite

Dated at Atlanta, Ga., this 22nd day of October, 2018.

Opinion Concurring in Part and Dissenting in Part

We concur with the decision of the Commission on Irregularities Nos. 1 and 3, but we respectfully dissent from the decision to not sustain Irregularity No. 2. We would sustain in part, and not sustain in part, Irregularity No. 2.

The Commission recognizes this case was—in part—about a lack of clarity and understanding about certain processes and procedures, exacerbated by differences in language and culture, which further complicates conflicted relationships, such as these. In this case, while we agree that the Synod provided opportunities to AKAP representatives and participated in many processes, the existence of non-geographic presbyteries within synods requires additional efforts to ensure representation, fairness, and equal access in decision-making. The Executive Committee could have made, and should make, additional efforts, like consulting an AKAP representative (according to the Synod Standing Rules), and providing adequate interpretation and translation services to ensure diverse voices are given opportunities to speak and be heard in the diverse committees and councils of the Synod.

Mari Glory Gonzalez Guerra
David Goss
William Myers

Dated at Atlanta, Ga., this 22nd day of October, 2018.

Absences and Non-Appearances

Commissioners Paul Hooker and James Pak were recused and did not participate in the trial and deliberations. Commissioners Craig Lindsey, June Lorenzo, and Susan McGhee were absent and did not participate in the trial and deliberations.

Certificate

We certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the Decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in Remedial Case 224-02, *Atlantic Korean American Presbytery, Complainant v. Synod of the Mid-Atlantic, Respondent*, and in Remedial Case 224-02, *Nam Cho and Kim Robinson, Complainants v. Synod of the Mid-Atlantic, Respondent*, made and announced at Atlanta, GA, this 22nd day of October, 2018.

Dated this 22nd day of October, 2018.

c. Remedial Appeal 224-03

PERMANENT JUDICIAL COMMISSION
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

Louis F. and Margo R. Gaines, Appellants.)	
	)	DECISION AND ORDER
	)	Remedial Appeal 224-03
v.)	
)	
First Meridian Heights Presbyterian Church, Ap- pellee.)	
)	
)	

Arrival Statement

This is an appeal to the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (GAPJC or this Commission) from a December 11, 2017, decision of the Synod of Lincoln Trails Permanent Judicial Commission (SPJC).

Jurisdictional Statement

This Commission has jurisdiction, Appellants have standing to file the Appeal, the Appeal was properly and timely filed, and the Appeal states one or more of the grounds for appeal under D-8.0105.²⁸

Appearances

The Parties agreed to the Appeal being considered by this Commission without appearing for the hearing.

History

This matter arose as an appeal of Louis F. and Margo R. Gaines (Appellants) of a decision by the SPJC to sustain the decision of the Whitewater Valley Presbytery Permanent Judicial Commission (PPJC), which dismissed the Complaint for failing to satisfy one of the preliminary questions, namely that the Complaint did not state a claim upon which relief can be granted.

Appellants are members of First Meridian Heights Presbyterian Church, Indianapolis, Indiana, (FMHPC), a congregation of the Whitewater Valley Presbytery (Presbytery). They brought the underlying complaint to raise concerns regarding the termination of the pastoral relationship between the Reverend Won Ho Kim and FMHPC in December 2016. It is undisputed that: (1) on November 21, 2016, the Session of FMHPC called a congregational meeting for December 18, 2016, to act on its recommendation to dissolve the pastoral relationship with Rev. Kim; (2) by letter dated December 5, 2016, Rev. Kim indicated his intent to leave FMHPC, effective December 11, 2016; (3) the congregation voted on December 18, 2016, to request that the Presbytery dissolve the pastoral relationship with Rev. Kim; and (4) Rev. Kim, a representative of the Session, and a representative of the Presbytery Committee on Ministry subsequently executed a Dissolution Agreement and Release. Appellants allege that Rev. Kim’s actions in sending the letter and signing that agreement were not voluntary and that the actions of the Session and congregation were irregular. Neither the Presbytery nor Rev. Kim are parties to this action.

Appellants’ Appeal of the December 11, 2017, decision of the SPJC was forwarded to the officers of the GAPJC and reviewed under the provisions of D-8.0301. After review, on February 1, 2018, the Moderator and Clerk of the GAPJC issued a Preliminary Order that the GAPJC has jurisdiction to hear this Appeal, Appellants have standing to file this Appeal, the Appeal papers were timely filed, and the Appeal states one or more of the grounds for appeal set forth in D-8.0105.

²⁸ *Book of Order* citations in this Decision are from the 2015–2017 edition, which was in effect during the time of the actions and the PPJC and SPJC decisions herein.

Appellee challenged the Preliminary Order, pursuant to D-8.0302, on the grounds that Appellants' Notice of Appeal did not state valid grounds for appeal under D-8.0105. This Commission found on August 19, 2018, that the Notice of Appeal did state grounds for appeal under D-8.0105. Therefore, Appellee's Challenge under D-8.0302 was denied.

A hearing was set before this Commission for April 26, 2019. Appellants requested, and Appellee agreed, that this Commission determine the matter on appeal solely by the review of written briefs and the record.

Specifications of Error

Appellants state eleven specifications of error. Permanent judicial commissions have long-standing and broad authority to restate, group, consolidate, and summarize, but not omit, specifications of error presented in an appeal, for purposes of clarity. This Commission has reorganized Appellants' specifications of error as follows:

Specification of Error No. 1: The SPJC erred in finding that the complaint did not sufficiently state a claim upon which relief can be granted (Appellants' Specification of Error No. 1).

This specification of error is not sustained (see Decision below).

Specification of Error No. 2: The SPJC erred in minimizing its authority to grant "fair relief" to Reverend Won Ho Kim, a victim of an "F-1.0403 Violation" (Appellants' Specification of Error No. 7).

This specification of error is not sustained (see Decision below).

Specification of Error No. 3: The SPJC erred in affirming the decision of the PPJC, "contrary to the standards of: (1) Thomas E. Morgan, Complainant v. Session, First Presbyterian Church, Asheboro, Respondent, 4-29-2016; (2) Lewellen, Appellant v. Presbytery of Los Ranchos, Appellee, 2017, 223-03; and, (3) Rev. Patrick Laney, Appellant v. Presbytery of North Alabama, Appellee, 2017, 223-02" (Appellants' Specification of Error No. 2).

This specification of error is not sustained (see Decision below).

Specification of Error No. 4: The SPJC erred procedurally in the following ways:

a. *Before and during the hearing on December 11, 2017, the SPJC improperly received and heard evidence from the Appellee that was not part of the record on appeal and was not new evidence, contrary to D-8.0105c and D-8.0105f (Appellants' Specification of Error No. 3).*

This specification of error is not sustained.

The record indicates that the "evidence" received was actually a Corrected Brief requested by Appellee by motion on November 2, 2017. On December 11, 2017, the SPJC, pursuant to D-7.0303a, granted Appellee's motion to submit the Corrected Brief which would: (1) delete or strike allegations not part of the Record on Appeal; (2) delete or strike false statements presented as being true; and (3) correct page numbering as necessary.

b. *The SPJC allowed the Stated Clerk to use a filing procedure that wrongfully granted an additional eight days for Appellee to file Appellee's Brief, contrary to D-8.0105f (Appellants' Specification of Error No. 4).*

This specification of error is not sustained.

In accordance with D-8.0305b, "For good cause shown, the stated clerk of the higher council may extend the time limits in D-8.0303 for a reasonable period."

c. *The SPJC wrongfully excluded the Presbytery as a party to the case of Louis F. and Margo R. Gaines, Appellants v. First Meridian Heights Presbyterian Church, Appellee, et al., contrary to D-8.0105f (Appellants' Specification of Error No. 6).*

This specification of error is not sustained.

d. *The SPJC erred in failing to deny "Error Number Twelve" in the appeal to the SPJC (which alleged that the PPJC used a method of review that made its recusal procedure "inconsistent and unreliable"), contrary to D-8.0105a (Appellants' Specification of Error No. 11).*

This specification of error is not sustained.

Specification of Error No. 5: The SPJC erred in constitutional interpretation in the following ways:

a. *The SPJC erred in finding that Appellee’s Dissolution Agreement and Release was made void, because it was executed or signed under conditions that violated D-1.0101 and/or F-1.0403 (Appellants’ Specification of Error No. 9).*

This specification of error is not sustained (see Decision below).

b. *The SPJC erred in failing to sustain Specifications of Error One through Eleven in the appeal before it: “D-1.0101 and F-1.0403 do not prevent an employee or person from resigning a ‘Hostile Working Environment,’ where various forms of discriminations: age, race, and sex for example; will not be tolerated” (Appellants’ Specification of Error No. 10).*

This specification of error is not sustained (see Decision below).

Specification of Error No. 6: The SPJC manifested prejudice in the conduct of the case in the following ways:

a. *The SPJC focused on the “resignation of the employment of Reverend Won Ho Kim; and, wrongly excluded the core issue: the Appellees subjected Reverend Won Ho Kim to a ‘Racially Hostile Working Environment,’ and for the period between September 11, 2016 to December 12, 2016” (Appellants’ Specification of Error No. 5).*

This specification of error is not sustained (see Decision below).

b. *Even though Appellants restricted “Racial Motivations” to Appellee (FMHPC); and, only in the context of an “F-1.0403 Violation” against Rev. Kim, the SPJC erred by making the following comment in its Decision: “Appellants make serious allegations concerning alleged racial motivations by the Appellees and/or the Presbytery PJC” (Appellants’ Specification of Error No. 8).*

This specification of error is not sustained (see Decision below).

Decision

The paramount question is whether this Complaint states a claim upon which relief can be granted. Appellants request that this Commission reverse the decision of the SPJC, order the Presbytery to state at a congregational meeting that Rev. Kim’s resignation was imposed in violation of the *Book of Order*, that he be reinstated and awarded back pay, and that he be granted any other “fair relief.” This Commission affirms the ruling of the SPJC that the judicial process cannot turn back time, recreate a pastoral relationship, or compel a congregational meeting to be called. In this context, all of the requested remedies are beyond the authority of this Commission.

In lieu of the particular relief requested above, Appellants ask the Commission to order whatever possible relief may be available and cite earlier decisions of this Commission in which declaratory relief was granted. A claim requesting declaratory relief seeks the kind of relief that a permanent judicial commission has authority to grant in a remedial case under D-7.0402b, which states in part that a commission “shall either order such action as is appropriate or direct the lower governing body to conduct further proceedings in the matter” (*McKittrick v. Session of West End Presbyterian Church*, 2003, 2015-5). This body has directed that, where a lower governing body’s actions cannot be undone, a permanent judicial commission may exercise its declaratory authority to provide future guidance (*Patrick Laney v. Presbytery of North Alabama*; 2017, 223-02, *Wilber Tom, David Hawbecker, and Thomas Conrad v. Presbytery of San Francisco*, 2012, 221-03). In each of those cases, however, the Complaint stated a claim upon which relief could be granted. In this case, no such claim exists.

That this Commission cannot grant any of the requested relief neither denies nor minimizes the seriousness of the allegations made in the Complaint. Further, this Commission takes seriously the foundations of our polity expressed in F-1.0403, and this church continues to address issues of racism through its confessions and supplemental resources.²⁹ But in this case, without a Complaint stating a claim upon which relief can be granted, this matter does not lend itself to judicial review.

The Rules of Discipline provide a process to address concerns and correct errors, but it is not the only process in our polity—and often not the most efficient or effective process—designed to do so. G-3.0108b provides for special administrative review and G-3.0109b(5) for the use of an administrative commission as means by which a presbytery may inquire into and

²⁹ The last three confessions adopted by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) make significant reference to issues of racism: The Confession of 1967, A Brief Statement of Faith—Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and the Confession of Belhar. Additionally, General Assemblies have approved numerous additional statements and resources, including: *Facing Racism: A Vision of the Beloved Community*, 211th General Assembly (1999) as revised and updated in Item 11-22, 222nd General Assembly (2016); “Declare an Imperative for the Reformation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in being a Transformative Church in This Intercultural Era,” Item 11-11, 223rd General Assembly (2018); *Hearing and Singing New Songs to God: Shunning Old Discords and Sharing New Harmonies. Report of the Women of Color Consultation Task Force To the 218th General Assembly (2008)*; “The Doctrine of Discovery: A Review of Its Origins and Implications for Congregations in the PC(USA) and Support for Native American Sovereignty,” 223rd General Assembly (2018); and many others.

00 PLENARY

settle irregularities, delinquencies, and disorder in its member congregations. These provisions do not preclude the use of judicial process, but offer alternatives that may be more accessible, timely, and productive.

Order

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the decision of the SPJC is hereby affirmed.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of Lincoln Trails report this Decision to the Synod of Lincoln Trails at the first meeting after receipt, that the Synod of Lincoln Trails enter the full Decision upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of Whitewater Valley Presbytery report this Decision to the Whitewater Valley Presbytery at the first meeting after receipt, that the Whitewater Valley Presbytery enter the full Decision upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Clerk of Session report this Decision to the Session of First Meridian Heights Presbyterian Church, Indianapolis, Indiana, at the first meeting after receipt, that the Session enter the full decision upon its minutes, and an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

Absences and Non-Appearances

Commissioners Jean Kennedy and William Myers were absent and did not participate in the deliberations.

Certificate

We certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the Decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in Remedial Case 224-03, *Louis F. and Margo R. Gaines, Appellants v. First Meridian Heights Presbyterian Church, et al., Appellee*, made and announced at Louisville, Ky., this 28th day of April, 2019.

Dated this 28th day of April, 2019.

Ruth Goldthwaite, Moderator
Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly

Deborah Little Cohn, Clerk
Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly

I certify that I did transmit a certified copy of the foregoing to the following persons by Federal Express Next Day Air, directing Flor Vélez-Díaz to deposit it in the mail at Louisville, Ky., this 28th day of April, 2019.

General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission
Stated Clerk, Synod of Lincoln Trails
Stated Clerk, Whitewater Valley Presbytery
Clerk of Session, First Meridian Heights Presbyterian Church
Greg Foulke, Counsel for the Appellee
Louis F. Gaines and Margo R. Gaines, Appellants

I further certify that I did transmit a certified copy of the foregoing to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) by delivering it in person to Flor Vélez-Díaz, on April 28, 2019.

Deborah Little Cohn, Clerk
Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly

I certify that I received a certified copy of the foregoing, that it is a full and correct copy of the decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), sitting during an interval between meetings of the General Assembly, in Louisville, Ky., on April 28, 2019, in Remedial Appeal 224-03, *Louis F. and Margo R. Gaines, Appellants v. First Meridian Heights Presbyterian Church, et al., Appellee*, and that it is the final judgment of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in the case.

Dated at Louisville, Ky., on April 28, 2019.

Flor Vélez-Díaz

Assistant Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and Manager of Judicial Process and Social Witness

d. *Disciplinary Appeal 224-04*

PERMANENT JUDICIAL COMMISSION
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), filed by the Prosecuting
Committee of Newark Presbytery,
Appellee.

DECISION AND ORDER
Disciplinary Appeal 224-04

v.

Ruler Elders Ana Aquino, Catherine Campbell-Wright,
Emile Duho, Stephen Fingal, Sr., Samuel Jan,
Michael Lunga, and Paul Taylor, of First Pres-
byterian Church, Newark, New Jersey,
Appellants.

Arrival Statement

This is an Appeal to the Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly (GAPJC or this Commission) from an April 11, 2018, decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of the Northeast (SPJC) censuring the seven Appellants pursuant to D-12.0104. In that decision, the SPJC found Appellants guilty on three of four disciplinary charges. The Appeal was received by the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly on June 4, 2018.

Jurisdictional Statement

This Commission finds that it has jurisdiction, that Appellants have standing to file the Appeal, that the Appeal was properly and timely filed, and that the Appeal states one or more grounds for appeal under D-13.0106.³⁰

Appearances

For Appellants, William B. Savo and Appellant Michael Lunga appeared by telephone conference call, such that all could hear and be heard by everyone present. For Appellee, Jeremy Campbell and Gregory Horn appeared.

History

This case arises as an appeal from a disciplinary case before the SPJC, heard on April 9–11, 2018. Appellants were all trustees of First Presbyterian Church in Newark, New Jersey (FPCN). Newark Presbytery (Presbytery) placed an Administrative Commission (AC) over the affairs of the Session of FPCN in July 2015, and the Synod of the Northeast (Synod) placed an Administrative Commission over the affairs of Presbytery in October 2015. The SPJC heard the disciplinary case as the court of original jurisdiction.

The SPJC tried Appellants on four charges, identified in the underlined text below:

1. Service beyond maximum term limits. Appellants have exceeded six consecutive years of service as trustees as prohibited by G-2.0404 and G-4.0101.
2. Causing a corporation to be formed without the knowledge, consent, and vote of the congregation in a properly called congregational meeting. On May 13, 2015, Appellants filed a “certificate of incorporation” in Superior Court

³⁰ *Book of Order* citations in this Decision are from the 2015-2017 edition, which was in effect during the time of the actions and the SPJC decisions herein.

of New Jersey, Essex County, Chancery Division (Docket No. ESX-C-147-18), to cause formation of a non-profit religious corporation, “The Trustees of First Presbyterian Church in Newark.” This was done without the approval of Session or congregation in violation of G-4.0101.

3. Failure to submit to the authority of the Session, in violation of G-4.0101. Appellants disregarded the authority of Session (e.g., by refusing to disburse funds as directed by the AC that was acting as the Session per decision of Presbytery). Additionally, in oral testimony, Appellants maintained that “they did not have to answer to the Session.”
4. Violation of ordination vows.

On April 11, 2017, FPCN Treasurer Anthony Wisseh and the Presbytery AC for FPCN filed a civil suit in Superior Court of New Jersey, Essex County, Chancery Division, seeking a declaratory judgment concerning the relationship between the Charter of the First Presbyterian Church in Newark (Charter), granted by King George II of England in 1753, and the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). As of the date of the hearing on this appeal, the civil case had not been decided.

The SPJC pretrial hearing scheduled for January 4, 2018, was postponed until January 10. The trial was scheduled for February 12–14, in Albany, New York, but upon request of Appellants was postponed to April 9–11, 2018, and relocated to Orangeburg, New York.

On March 16, 2018, Appellant Ana Aquino informed the SPJC Executive Committee (EC) that she could not attend the trial because she did not have sufficient leave from her employment. On March 23, Appellant Catherine Campbell-Wright informed the EC that she did not believe her health permitted her to attend the trial. The EC agreed to excuse both, if both agreed to be represented by counsel. On April 2, Appellant Emile Duho informed the EC that he would not be able to attend the trial because he would be attending the funeral of a relative in Africa. The EC offered Duho the same arrangement offered to Aquino and Campbell-Wright. On April 3, the EC was informed that William Savo, counsel for Appellants, was not able to attend due to a serious medical condition. The EC invited one of the Appellants (Lunga), a practicing attorney, to serve as counsel. He declined, but the record shows that he spoke on behalf of Appellants throughout the course of the trial.

On April 9–11, 2018, SPJC tried the case. It found Appellants guilty by unanimous decisions on charges 1 through 3 and not guilty by unanimous decision on charge 4. It imposed immediate temporary exclusion from membership in the PC(USA), to be lifted three months after all records and control of all financial accounts of FPCN are turned over to the duly elected treasurer of FPCN.

As part of their defense, Appellants relied on the fact that FPCN was granted a Charter, arguing that the provisions of the Charter supersede the authority of the *Book of Order* in matters on which the Charter speaks.

Appellants maintain that, pursuant to their fiduciary and contractual obligations under the Charter, the Board of Trustees has always independently controlled the disposition of the property of FPCN, and that the congregation is bound by contractual obligations through its Charter superior to any which bind it to any ecclesiastical judicatories.

In its decision, the SPJC held:

...the fact that FPCN’s legal existence commenced with the Royal Charter does not mean that its trustees are not subject to the Constitution of the PC(USA). The corporate status of every incorporated congregation in the denomination arises out of a civil source, as the *Book of Order* recognizes (G-4.0101). This does not mean that the board of trustees of a church is a separate and distinct entity apart from the church itself.... The trustees of the corporation of the church are subject to both the requirements of the source of origin AND the provisions of the Constitution, including the *Book of Order*, and as such, those rules are read together, giving full effect to both, to the extent possible. The history and tradition of an individual congregation of the PC(USA) cannot supplant the Constitution applicable to all congregations in the denomination, particularly on topics specifically addressed in the Constitution (*PC(USA) by Presbytery of Newark v. Aquino, et al.*, SNE 2017-06, p. 5).

Appellants filed their Appeal with the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly on May 22, 2018.

Specifications of Error

There are five specifications of error raised by the appeal, most with sub-parts. Appellants’ specifications of error pursuant to D-13.0106 are listed below in substantially the same language used by Appellants.

Specification of Error No. 1: Irregularities in the proceedings (D-13.0106a) on the part of the SPJC, by:

- a. *Failing to give three of the Appellants the opportunity to be present by denying their request for a continuance;*
- b. *Failing to give the Appellants adequate time to obtain counsel;*
- c. *Failing to appoint counsel for the Appellants.*

This specification is not sustained (see Decision below).

Specification of Error No. 2: The SPJC erred by refusing the Appellants reasonable opportunity to be heard and present evidence at a time when they could attend (D-13.0106b).

This specification is not sustained (see Decision below).

Specification of Error No. 3: The SPJC erred by hastening to a decision (D-13.0106d) by:

- a. *Failing to allow a continuance for Appellants to obtain counsel;*
- b. *Failing to allow a continuance for Appellants the opportunity to be present;*
- c. *Failing to allow a continuance until after the civil case was heard.*

This specification is not sustained (see Decision below).

Specification of Error No. 4: The SPJC manifested prejudice in the conduct of the case (D-13.0106e) by denying Appellants an opportunity to be heard, to present evidence, and to be present, and by hastening to a decision.

This specification is not sustained (see Decision below).

Specification of Error No. 5: The SPJC erred through injustice in the decision (D-13.0106f) by:

- a. *The Prosecuting Committee (PC) failed to establish beyond a reasonable doubt that they were guilty of service beyond six consecutive years;*
- b. *The PC failed to establish beyond a reasonable doubt that they were guilty of causing a corporation to be formed;*
- c. *The PC failed to establish beyond a reasonable doubt that they were guilty of any actions related to the session of the FPCN.*

This specification is not sustained (see Decision below).

Decision

Two issues are central to this case.

1. *Specifications 1 through 4*

The first issue is whether the action of the SPJC to hold the disciplinary trial on April 9–11, 2018, was in error. The SPJC had been notified of the absences of three of the Appellants and of Appellants' counsel. The procedural irregularities alleged in Specifications 1 through 4 consist of a denial of the right to be heard and to present evidence, hastening to a decision, and a manifestation of prejudice on the part of the SPJC. This Commission holds that the SPJC decision to proceed to trial on April 9 does not constitute error.

The record is silent concerning any alternate date proposed by Appellants Aquino and Campbell-Wright on which they expected to be able to appear. It does note that both agreed to be represented by counsel and to have their absences excused. Additionally, although Savo, original counsel for Appellants, was unable to appear, there was among Appellants an attorney (Lunga) who was eligible to serve. The SPJC appointed Lunga as counsel; he declined the appointment. Nonetheless, the record shows that he spoke on behalf of Appellants throughout the trial, serving as *de facto* counsel. (It should be noted that there is no requirement in the *Book of Order* that counsel be an attorney.) Appellants had already been granted one postponement from an original trial date of February 12–14, 2018, and a relocation of the trial from Albany, N.Y., to Orangeburg, N.Y.

In response to the argument that the SPJC's refusal to delay the trial until after a decision in the civil suit constitutes hastening to a decision, this Commission finds that the SPJC assessed the costs of postponement and determined that proceeding with the April 9 trial date was the most faithful stewardship of resources. In its decision, the SPJC notes:

The history statement demonstrates the great practical difficulty involved in exercising church discipline in councils of the church that are far removed from the council having direct responsibility for members of the church. It becomes necessary to ask the Accused, the Prosecuting Committee, their counsel, and members of the Commission to travel considerable distances and forego work and family commitments in order to be present, and it becomes difficult to exercise flexibility with regard to hearing and trial dates, since arrangements involving significant material and human resources must be made (*PC(USA) by Presbytery of Newark v. Aquino*, et al., SNE 2017-06, p. 8).

This Commission declines to substitute its judgment for that of the SPJC in this matter.

Specifications 1 through 4 are therefore not sustained.

2. *Specification 5*

The second issue is whether the PC established beyond a reasonable doubt that Appellants were: a) guilty of service beyond maximum permitted length of term; b) guilty of causing a corporation to be formed without approval of the congregation; and c) guilty of actions related to the Session of FPCN.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its antecedent churches have long insisted that adherence to the church's Constitution is not optional but mandatory for congregations and their members, councils, and those in the church's ordered ministries (F-3.0209, G-1.0103, W-4.0404e). For those who are part of the church's life and ministry, there are no exceptions to the requirement to act in accordance with the Constitution.

This is an appeal of a disciplinary case in which Appellants were found guilty of actions that violate the Constitution. It is not a remedial matter concerning the disposition of church property. It is undisputed by either party that Appellants have violated provisions of the Constitution represented in charges 1 through 3 brought against them in the SPJC trial.

Appellants' Specification No. 5 rests on the claim that the Charter supersedes the authority of the Constitution. This Commission does not find this argument persuasive.

The question of the relationship between civil authority and ecclesiastical constitutions goes back to the earliest days of Presbyterianism in the United States. In 1789, the first General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America adopted as its first historic principle of church order "the commitment of the Westminster Confession (1646) that God alone is Lord of the conscience." It drew from this core commitment the following corollary:

Therefore we consider the rights of private judgment, in all matters that respect religion, as universal and unalienable: We do not even wish to see any religious constitution aided by the civil power, further than may be necessary for protection and security, and at the same time, be equal and common to all others (F-3.0101b).

Bearing in mind Revolutionary era concerns to avoid state-sponsored or "established" churches, Presbyterians in the new United States of America asserted their commitment to the right of each individual church or society of churches to declare "the whole system of its internal government," acknowledging as they did so that "in the exercising of this right they may, notwithstanding, err; yet even in this case they do not infringe upon the rights and liberties of others, but only make an improper use of their own" (F-3.0102). Throughout the centuries since, Presbyterians have insisted that, in matters of internal ecclesial governance, the church's polity is subordinate only to Scripture and the Confessions as a guide for our ecclesiastical decisions, and that all congregational articles of incorporation must be consistent with provisions of the Constitution.

This case tests these commitments. Appellants argue that the Charter supersedes in authority any provisions of the *Book of Order* with which the Charter may be in conflict. Appellants' argument is based on the fact that the Charter was granted in 1753, some thirty-six years before the adoption of the historic principles adopted in 1789 by the first General Assembly. Appellants rely on civil authority to secure their position, something PC(USA) polity does not do.

The *Book of Order* G-4.0101 mandates:

Where permitted by civil law, each congregation shall cause a corporation to be formed and maintained. ... The corporation so formed, or the individual trustees, shall have the following powers: to receive, hold, encumber, manage, and transfer property, real or personal, for the congregation, provided that in buying, selling, and mortgaging real property, *the trustees shall act only after the approval of the congregation, granted in a duly constituted meeting*; to accept and execute deeds of title to such property; to hold and defend title to such property; to manage any permanent special funds for the furtherance of the purposes of the congregation, *all subject to the authority of the session and under the provisions of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The powers and duties of the trustees shall not infringe upon the powers and duties of the session or the board of deacons.* (emphasis added)

As the SPJC notes in its decision:

The corporate status of every incorporated congregation in the denomination arises out of a civil source, as the *Book of Order* recognizes (G-4.0101). This does not mean that the board of trustees of a church is a separate and distinct entity apart from the church itself. The fact that a church has a legal existence pursuant to a source outside of the PC(USA) does not mean that each and every matter involving the corporation and its trustees is determined outside the *Book of Order*. By virtue of being a congregation of the PC(USA), the congregation is governed by the Constitution of the PC(USA) and the members of the congregation subject themselves to the leadership of the session and higher councils (G-1.0203). The trustees of the corporation of the church are subject both to the requirements of the source of origin AND the provisions of the Constitution, including the *Book of Order*, and as such, those rules are read together, giving full effect to both, to the extent possible. The history and tradition of an individual congregation cannot supplant the Constitution applicable to all congregations in the denomination, particularly on topics specifically addressed in the Constitution (*PC(USA) by Presbytery of Newark v. Aquino, et al.*, SNE 2017-06, p. 5).

This Commission concurs in this reasoning of the SPJC.

Appellants assert that a decision in the pending civil suit will be the final determinant regarding the authority of the Charter. This Commission finds that the outcome of this ecclesiastical proceeding is not dependent on the decision of a civil court. Regardless of civil court rulings, a congregation of the PC(USA) is bound by the Constitution of the PC(USA). Provisions of

the Constitution governing the relationship of trustees to congregation and session, and the length of term of those serving as trustees, apply fully and without exception to PC(USA) congregations.

Appellants also claim injustice in the SPJC finding of guilt with respect to causing a corporation to be formed without approval by the congregation. They argue that their action of May 15, 2018, to “reaffirm” the corporation did not constitute the formation of a corporation. This Commission finds this argument unpersuasive.

In recent years, congregations in many states have sought to amend corporate documents or revise them in various ways, many of which are inconsistent with provisions of the church’s Constitution. In 2010, the 219th General Assembly addressed this matter in an authoritative interpretation of G-4.0101 (then G-7.0401; *Minutes*, 2010, p. 330, Item 05-12). The interpretation stated that a congregation “lacks the power to adopt changes to its articles of incorporation, regulations, bylaws, or standing rules that are contrary to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)” This Commission regards the adoption of corporate documents without congregational approval as no less a violation of the church’s polity than adoption of such documents containing provisions contrary to the Constitution. Either constitutes grounds for presbytery to act to correct the irregularities inherent in the creation of such documents.

Appellants’ claim of injustice in the finding of guilt for service beyond the maximum term limit fails on the grounds that each currently serving trustee has served longer than six consecutive years (G-2.0404). On the basis of oral testimony and record, it is clear that Appellants have not stood for election as trustees since 2014 and have served for periods considerably longer than six years, and that this is both current and historic practice.

This Commission notes that the SPJC-imposed censure temporarily excluded Appellants from membership in the congregation. An effect of this action is that Appellants are also no longer trustees of FPCN, since G-4.0101 requires that trustees be members of the congregation.

Appellants’ claim of injustice in the finding of guilt for actions related to the Session of FPCN is also unpersuasive. In both the record and oral argument, Appellants admit their failure to turn over control of financial assets of the congregation, and to pay a former pastor as instructed by the AC serving as the Session of FPCN. G-3.0201c mandates that the session has responsibility for “directing the ministry of deacons, trustees, and all organizations of the congregation.” The fact that the Session of FPCN was dissolved and an administrative commission was in place to manage the congregation’s affairs does not obviate this charge. Therefore, the AC’s instructions, for the period of time it serves in place of the Session, are the instructions of the Session.

Specification 5 is therefore not sustained.

Order

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the decision of the Synod of the Northeast Permanent Judicial Commission is hereby affirmed.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Appellants be notified of this Decision and Order.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of the Northeast report this Decision to the Synod of the Northeast at the first meeting after receipt, that the Synod of the Northeast enter the full Decision upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of Newark Presbytery report this Decision to Newark Presbytery at the first meeting after receipt, that Newark Presbytery enter the full Decision upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Clerk of Session of the First Presbyterian Church in Newark, New Jersey, report this Decision to the Session at the first meeting after receipt, that the Session enter the full Decision upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

Absences and Non-Appearances

Commissioners Jean Kennedy and William Myers were absent and did not participate in the hearing or its deliberations.

Certificate

We certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in Disciplinary Appeal 224-04, *Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), filed by the Prosecuting Committee of Newark Presbytery, Appellee, v. Ruling Elders Ana Aquino, Catherine Campbell-Wright, Emile Duho, Stephen Fingal, Sr., Samuel Jan, Michael Lunga, and Paul Taylor, of First Presbyterian Church, Newark, New Jersey, Appellants*, made and announced at Louisville, Ky., this 28th day of April, 2019.

Dated this 28th day of April, 2019.

Ruth Goldthwaite, Moderator
Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly

Deborah Little Cohn, Clerk
Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly

I certify that I did transmit a certified copy of the foregoing to the following persons by Federal Express Next Day Air, directing Flor Vélez-Díaz to deposit it in the mail at Louisville, Ky., this 28th day of April, 2019.

General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission
Stated Clerk, Synod of the Northeast
Stated Clerk, Newark Presbytery
Clerk of Session, First Presbyterian Church in Newark, New Jersey
William Savo, Counsel for the Appellants
Jeremy Campbell and Gregory Horn, Counsel for Appellee

I further certify that I did transmit a certified copy of the foregoing to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) by delivering it in person to Flor Vélez-Díaz, on April 28, 2019.

Deborah Little Cohn, Clerk
Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly

I certify that I received a certified copy of the foregoing, that it is a full and correct copy of the decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), sitting during an interval between meetings of the General Assembly, in Louisville, Ky., on April 28, 2019, in Disciplinary Appeal 224-04, *Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) filed by the Prosecuting Committee of Newark Presbytery, Appellee, v. Ruling Elders Ana Aquino, Catherine Campbell-Wright, Emile Duho, Stephen Fingal, Sr., Samuel Jan, Michael Lunga, and Paul Taylor, of First Presbyterian Church, Newark, New Jersey, Appellants*, and that it is the final judgment of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in the case.

Dated at Louisville, Kentucky, on April 28, 2019.

Flor Vélez-Díaz, Assistant Stated Clerk, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and Manager of Judicial Process and Social Witness

e. Remedial Appeal 224-05

PERMANENT JUDICIAL COMMISSION
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

Rev. David Lee Jones, Th.D.,)	
Appellant.)	
	)	DECISION AND ORDER
v.	)	Remedial Appeal 224-05
)	
Mission Presbytery,)	
Appellee.)	
)	

Arrival Statement

This is an appeal to the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (GAPJC or this Commission) from a Decision dated March 13, 2019, of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of the Sun (SPJC). In that Decision, the SPJC sustained its Moderator and Clerk's determination of preliminary questions dismissing the Complaint of the Reverend David Lee Jones, Th.D., (Appellant) against Mission Presbytery (Appellee) for failure to state a claim upon which relief can be granted. Appellant appealed the SPJC's Decision to the GAPJC.

Jurisdictional Statement

This Commission has jurisdiction, Appellant has standing to file this appeal, the appeal was properly and timely filed, and the appeal states one or more of the grounds for appeal under *Book of Order*, D-8.0105.³¹

Appearances

The Reverend David Lee Jones, Appellant, appeared on his own behalf. The Reverend Thomas Currie, Committee of Counsel, appeared on behalf of Appellee.

History

Appellant, a minister member of Mission Presbytery (Presbytery), filed a complaint against the Presbytery based on actions taken by its Commission on Ministry (COM).

In early 2018, the Reverend Michael Roberts announced his retirement following a ministry of 30 years as pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Georgetown, Tex (FPC, Georgetown), effective at the end of September 2018. On June 4, 2018, the Austin region of the COM recommended to the COM that FPC, Georgetown, be allowed to contract with the Reverend William Poe to serve as the transitional minister upon Roberts's retirement. (The COM meets as a body, breaks into smaller regional groups, then reconvenes as the full commission.) Poe was the Chair of the COM and worshiped regularly at FPC, Georgetown, but was not at the June 4 meeting. The COM also voted to set aside its "Ending Ministry Well" policy to allow Poe and his family to continue to worship at FPC, Georgetown, after completion of his contract.

On August 6, 2018, the full membership of the COM gave final approval to the contract between FPC, Georgetown, and Poe as the transitional minister. Poe did not recuse himself from the discussion nor from the unanimous decision, nor did any COM member request that he do so.

On November 1, 2018, Appellant filed a remedial complaint against the Presbytery with the Synod of the Sun (Synod) challenging the August 6 actions of the COM. The Presbytery filed an answer on December 10. Also, on December 10, the Presbytery Stated Clerk sent the list of papers and other materials pertaining to the case (D-6.0307a) to the Synod Stated Clerk, but not to the parties. On December 14, the Moderator and the Clerk of the SPJC determined that Appellant failed to state a claim upon which relief can be granted, dismissing the case in accordance with D-6.0305d. The determination was delivered by email and did not offer rationale.

Appellant filed a Challenge to the determination of the Moderator and Clerk on January 11, 2019. On February 6, Appellant requested a more detailed explanation for the dismissal. On February 11, the Synod Stated Clerk conveyed by email the determination of the Moderator and Clerk that their initial response had been sufficient.

On February 22, Appellant requested information from the Presbytery Stated Clerk regarding actions taken by the Presbytery; the Stated Clerk did not reply to this request until the Appellant followed up on April 18. The Stated Clerk informed Appellant on April 23 that he could set up an appointment to come to the Presbytery office and look through the minutes himself.

On Friday, March 1, five days before the scheduled hearing, the SPJC Clerk sent an email to both parties notifying them about procedures for the hearing. Among those procedures were a limit of five minutes for each party to present its argument and a deadline of noon, Monday, March 4, for raising any questions about hearing procedures. On Sunday, March 3, Appellant

³¹ *Book of Order* citations in this Decision are from the 2017–2019 edition, which was in effect during the time of the actions and SPJC decisions herein.

requested 20 minutes for his presentation. On the afternoon of Tuesday, March 5, the SPJC Clerk informed the parties that, “in the spirit of fairness,” both parties would be granted 10 minutes.

On Wednesday, March 6, a hearing on the Challenge was held using Zoom conferencing technology. Although all parties could hear one another, generally only the person speaking was visible to others on the conference. Following the hearing, the SPJC deliberated. In a Decision dated March 13, 2019, the SPJC upheld the findings of its Moderator and Clerk and dismissed the Complaint.

On April 29, 2019, Appellant filed a notice of appeal with the GAPJC, which heard oral argument on August 23, 2019.

Specifications of Error

Specification of Error No. 1: The SPJC erred in constitutional interpretation (D-8.0105g) and/or reached an unjust decision (D-8.0105f) when it dismissed the complaint for failure to state a claim upon which relief can be granted in accordance with D-6.0306c (Appellant’s Specifications of Error 1a, 1g, 5b, 6a, 6b).

This specification of error is not sustained.

This Commission has significant concerns about the actions of the Presbytery COM in its handling of the transitional minister selection for FPC, Georgetown. In a number of ways, the Presbytery did not model best practices for transparency and leadership. Councils should strive to avoid even the appearance of impropriety, with leaders making every effort to avoid conflicts of interest, real or perceived. Discernment and hiring practices should be undertaken with the utmost attention to ethical concerns, and existing policies and guidelines should not be set aside lightly. In all these respects, the COM could and should have provided better leadership.

Notwithstanding these concerns, GAPJC precedent guides when it is appropriate to dismiss a case for “failure to state a claim upon which relief can be granted” (see *Daniel McKittrick v. Session of West End Presbyterian Church of Albany*, 2003, 215-5; *Hope, et al. v. Presbytery of San Francisco*, 2003, 216-6; *Dixie Lewellen v. Presbytery of Los Ranchos*, 2017, 223-03). Even assuming all the facts alleged in the Complaint to be true, dismissal under D-6.0305d occurs if a permanent judicial commission (PJC) determines that no constitutional irregularity or delinquency occurred for which it could grant relief.

In this case, Appellant’s Complaint does not state a constitutional claim. Assuming the truth of all the alleged facts is not the same as accepting the accuracy of a complainant’s constitutional interpretation.

Appellant argues that the COM’s actions approving a particular temporary pastoral relationship: were “irresponsible” (G-3.0301a); represented a failure to be a “pastor and counselor” to the ministers of the presbytery (G-3.0307); did not keep before it the six Great Ends of the Church (G-3.0301); and other failures to abide by general descriptions of a presbytery’s responsibilities. The Form of Government, in contrast with editions prior to 2011, intentionally avoids regulatory language where possible, creating flexibility for councils. Councils have responsibility for developing particular processes not specified in the Constitution (G-3.0106). If PJs were to accept cases solely on the basis of such general constitutional complaints as those presented in this case, they would run the risk of becoming boards of general review over lower councils’ discretionary decisions.

As even Appellee has acknowledged in this case, certain actions of the Presbytery should have been more thoughtfully or carefully implemented. However, the Constitution gives wide latitude to presbyteries in their oversight and approval of temporary pastoral relationships under G-2.0504. Even a case brought against a presbytery that has failed to follow its own policy must state a claim of constitutional error (see *Hope, et al. v. Presbytery of San Francisco*, 217-1).

Assuming the events occurred as Appellant has described (that is, resolving any facts in dispute in his favor), the Presbytery would still have been fulfilling—within its discretion and without constitutional error—its responsibilities to “develop and maintain mechanisms and processes” to serve and care for its members (G-3.0307), “to facilitate the relations between the presbytery and its congregations” (G-3.0307), and to “oversee congregations without pastors” (G-3.0301a).

As a member of the Presbytery, Appellant had every right to seek changes to the Presbytery’s policies regarding transitional ministers, or to question and seek reversal of the actions of the COM at a stated meeting of the Presbytery. But, inasmuch as the facts alleged do not add up to a violation of the Constitution, the SPJC did not err in dismissing the case for failure to state a claim upon which relief can be granted.

Specification of Error No. 2: The SPJC committed various procedural errors in its process.

Specification of Error No. 2a: The SPJC committed numerous irregularities (D-8.0105a) and/or manifested prejudice (D-8.0105e) in the proceedings, including:

1. *Not meeting in person (Appellant's Specification of Error 1d);*
2. *Not completing its full decision in regular session (Appellant's Notice of Appeal "Other errors and irregularities" 1c);*
3. *Conducting a video conference in which members of the SPJC could not be seen throughout the hearing (Appellant's Specification 1e);*

These specifications of error are not sustained.

In support of this specification of error, Appellant has cited this Commission's decision in *Hope et al. v. Presbytery of San Francisco*, 2004, 217-1. That case interpreted the requirement in D-7.0402 that a PJC complete its decision "while in session" to mean PJs must meet "in person" for their deliberations.

In the years since the use of video conferencing technology became more widely available, this Commission has never ruled on its use in judicial hearings, trials, and deliberations. The *Hope* case involved a situation where a synod PJC had adjourned at the conclusion of a trial, its members going their separate ways before a decision was written. The GAPJC, in that 2004 case, was not ruling on whether "in person" could be understood to include conversations where faces, voices, and documents could be shared even as participants were geographically separate—technology that was not then in widespread use. Rather, the GAPJC was ruling on the necessity of speaking and listening to one another to reach a decision, not the medium through which the communication takes place. In the instant case, therefore, the SPJC was not necessarily committing constitutional error by using video conferencing technology, and neither party raised an objection before or during the hearing.

This Commission nevertheless holds that, until the Rules of Discipline are amended by the appropriate authority to address the use of video conferencing, the use of video conferencing is discouraged. A PJC must in every case ensure all participants are present, visible, and audible. All requirements of the Rules of Discipline regarding procedures and participation in trials, hearings, and deliberations—including the necessity to agree upon a full written decision while still in session—remain fully in effect. Judicial process, which frequently involves sensitive matters in the lives of people and communities, requires the highest level of attention to how God's people discern and decide complicated matters together. Being in the same physical room provides a higher level of engagement and allows for greater assurance that important procedural requirements are being observed.

4. *Not giving a full explanation for its Decision (either the Moderator and Clerk in their determination of preliminary questions, or the full SPJC in its Decision) (Appellant's Specifications 1b & 1c);*
5. *Failing to deliver a hard copy of the Decision, which was undated and sent first by email, via personal service or certified delivery (Appellant's Notice of Appeal "Other errors and irregularities" 1b & 1d);*

These specifications of error are sustained.

This Commission frequently has expressed concern about decisions rendered by synod PJs without rationale. Most recently, in *Julie Murphy v. The Session of Westminster Presbyterian Church, Des Moines, Iowa*, 2018, 224-01, this Commission held that a decision rendered without rationale constituted an injustice to the appellant in that case. (See also *Buescher, et al., v. Presbytery of Olympia*, 2008, 218-09 and *Presbytery of Greater Atlanta v. Ransom*, 2009, 219-02.)

Appellee has argued that the SPJC's handling of its final decision is not governed by D-7.0402 because that paragraph refers to a decision rendered after a trial, and the instant case involves a decision rendered following a hearing on preliminary questions. But this Commission finds that any decision by a PJC that is final and renders a case ripe for appeal—including a decision to dismiss a case on preliminary questions—should include rationale for the decision. Inasmuch as this Commission has found that dismissal of a case under D-6.0306 "terminates further proceedings" and is therefore "final in nature and renders the case 'ripe for appeal'" (*Jeffrey K. Raines v. Session of Miami Shores Presbyterian Church*, 2005, 217-06), this Commission holds that any constitutional requirements pertaining to a final decision under D-7.0402c, d, and e shall fully apply to decisions to dismiss a case under D-6.0306.

6. *Inconsistency in votes reported in the Decision (Appellant's Specification 1f);*

7. *Failing to conduct votes on each irregularity or delinquency alleged in a complaint in accordance with D-7.0402 (Appellant's Specification 5a); and*
8. *Failing to respond to Appellant's motion by personal service or certified delivery (Appellant's Notice of Appeal "Other errors and irregularities" 1a).*

These specifications of error are not sustained.

There is no evidence that the SPJC vote count was inaccurately reported. Dismissal of a Complaint prior to trial under D-6.0305 obviates the need for voting on each irregularity or delinquency in a Complaint. The Rules of Discipline neither require nor prohibit the delivery of PJC responses to motions by personal service or certified delivery.

Specification of Error No. 2b: The SPJC refused Appellant reasonable opportunity to be heard (D-8.0105b), including:

1. *Limiting Appellant's time for argument to 10 minutes and restricting the scope of his presentation (Appellant's Specifications 1h, 2a, 2c) and*
2. *Providing insufficient time for questions of clarification about procedure and evidence (Appellant's Specification 2b).*

These specifications of error are sustained.

The Rules of Discipline do not specifically define the minimum amounts of time that should be provided to parties, either before the hearing for raising procedural questions, or within the hearing for making an argument. PJCs are to develop procedures suited to situations in order to guarantee fairness to all parties.

Considering each of these specifications of error individually, no single concern of Appellant would necessarily amount to "refusing [him] reasonable opportunity to be heard" (D-8.0105b). But cumulatively, the limitations set forth by the SPJC imposed an unnecessary burden on Appellant. PJCs should err on the side of permitting, not limiting, argument.

Specification of Error No. 2c: The SPJC hastened to a decision (D-8.0105d) by dismissing the complaint rather than conducting a trial (Appellant's Specification 3a).

This specification of error is not sustained.

Because the SPJC found that Appellant did not provide a claim on which relief could be granted, dismissal prior to a trial was in order. Dismissal of a case under D-6.0306 does not constitute hastening to a decision.

Specification of Error No. 3: Proceedings in the case prior to the hearing before the SPJC contained "injustice in the process" (D-8.0105f), specifically in the work of the Presbytery Stated Clerk:

Specification of Error No. 3a: Presbytery Stated Clerk's failure to provide information on presbytery policies (Appellant's Specification 2d);

This specification of error is not sustained.

The Presbytery Stated Clerk's inability or unwillingness to answer a question from Appellant about previously adopted Presbytery policies is not a constitutional error. Still, this Commission reminds all stated clerks of their role as facilitators of fair process and encourages them to provide records upon reasonable request.

Specification of Error No. 3b: Presbytery Stated Clerk's sending a list of documents pertaining to the case to the Synod Stated Clerk only, and not to the parties (including Appellant) (Appellant's Appeal Brief, Specification 2a).

This specification of error is sustained.

The remedial process seeks to set forth basic requirements of fairness, ensuring that all parties are working with the same information. To that end, D-6.0307a reads:

Within forty-five days after the receipt of a complaint, the clerk of session or stated clerk of the respondent council or the respondent entity or council shall list in writing to the parties all the papers and other materials pertaining to the case.

Appellant indicates in his appeal brief that he was not aware of the list the Presbytery Stated Clerk sent to the Synod Stated Clerk on December 10, 2018, even though that list should also have been sent to him (and to the Presbytery Committee of Counsel). He then would have had the opportunity to request additional minutes or papers to be included. Appellee's brief

confirms this “unfortunate oversight.” This represented a fundamental breach of fairness in the SPJC process, which should have been caught by both the Presbytery Stated Clerk and the Synod Stated Clerk.

Decision

This Commission has sustained various procedural errors in Specifications of Error No. 2 and No. 3. While serious, these errors alone do not provide sufficient grounds for reversing or setting aside the SPJC Decision. Rather, this Commission must rule for itself on the question that was before the SPJC, namely whether the case was rightly dismissed for failure to state a claim upon which relief can be granted.

As discussed under Specification of Error No. 1 above, this Commission finds that, though the execution of the judicial process in this case was seriously flawed, the SPJC nonetheless correctly dismissed the Complaint for failure to state a claim upon which relief can be granted.

This Commission strongly urges the SPJC, the Presbytery COM, and the Stated Clerks of both councils to review and improve their procedures and practices in light of this Commission’s Decision.

Order

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the Decision of the SPJC is affirmed and the Complaint is dismissed.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of the Sun report this Decision to the Synod of the Sun at the first meeting after receipt, that the Synod of the Sun enter the full Decision upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of Mission Presbytery report this Decision to Mission Presbytery at the first meeting after receipt, that the Stated Clerk of Mission Presbytery convey this Decision to the Presbytery Commission on Ministry, that Mission Presbytery enter the full Decision upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

Opinion Concurring in Part and Dissenting in Part

I concur with the Decision of the Commission in all parts but for the decision related to Specification of Error No. 2a. I believe the SPJC erred by failing to meet in person for its hearing.

This Commission should have held the use of video conferencing technology is unacceptable as a medium for meeting the judicial requirements for hearings, trials, and deliberations. Judicial process, which frequently involves sensitive matters in the lives of people and communities, requires the highest level of attention to discern and decide complicated matters together. Requiring the PJC to be in the same physical space provides a higher level of engagement and allows for greater assurance that important procedural requirements are being observed.

Given continuing advances in technology, the question of whether to allow the use of video conferencing in lieu of in-person participation should be addressed by an appropriate authority apart from the GAPJC.

Ruth Goldthwaite

Concurring Opinion

We concur with the Decision of the Commission in all parts of the decision with the addition of comments related to Specification of Error No. 2a.

This Commission stopped short of prohibiting the use of video conferencing technology for meeting the judicial requirements for PJC formal actions. We agree that the GAPJC is not the appropriate authority to issue a rule on whether it should be allowed. If the Rules of Discipline are amended to allow (or prohibit) the use of video conferencing for hearings and deliberations in a case, it should be done with more voices than the 16 in the GAPJC. We think that this issue can have major due process implications, and thus a rule amendment should include input from a broader representation of the PC(USA).

As noted in the dissent above, process involves sensitive matters, requiring the highest level of attention to discern and decide complicated matters together. This body has noted before that a “fundamental reason for this requirement rests upon the Reformed understanding of the activity of the Holy Spirit in the midst of the covenant community which is the Body of Christ (I Cor. 12:12-13; Book of Confessions, 5.124-141)” (*Hope, et al. v. San Francisco Presbytery* 217-1). Thus, the issue of whether

the use of video conferencing respects these concerns, in a denomination that professes to value its diversity, deserves greater consideration.

There is therefore no place in the Church for discrimination against any person. The [PC(USA)] shall guarantee full participation and representation in its worship, governance and emerging life to all persons or groups within its membership (F-1.0403).

June L. Lorenzo
Maurice R. Caskey

Absences and Non-Appearances

Commissioners Jean Kennedy and Craig Lindsey were absent and did not participate in the hearing and deliberations.

Certificate

We certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the Decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in Remedial Case 224-05, *Rev. David Lee Jones, Th.D., Appellant, v. Mission Presbytery, Appellee*, made and announced at Louisville, Ky., this 25th day of August, 2019.

Dated this 25th day of August, 2019.

Ruth Goldthwaite, Moderator
Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly

Deborah Little Cohn, Clerk
Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly

I certify that I did transmit a certified copy of the foregoing to the following persons by Federal Express Next Day Air, directing Flor Vélez-Díaz to deposit it in the mail at Louisville, Ky., this 25th day of August, 2019.

David Lee Jones, Appellant
Thomas Currie, Counsel for Appellee
Stated Clerk, Mission Presbytery
Stated Clerk, Synod of the Sun
General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission

I further certify that I did transmit a certified copy of the foregoing to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) by delivering it in person to Flor Vélez-Díaz, on August 28, 2019.

Deborah Little Cohn, Clerk
Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly

I certify that I received a certified copy of the foregoing, that it is a full and correct copy of the decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), sitting during an interval between meetings of the General Assembly, at Louisville, Ky., on August 25, 2019, in Remedial Appeal 224-05, *Rev. David Lee Jones, Appellant, v. Mission Presbytery, Appellee*, and that it is the final judgment of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in the case.

Dated at Louisville, Ky., on August 25, 2019.

Flor Vélez-Díaz
Assistant Stated Clerk of the General Assembly
Manager of Judicial Process and Social Witness

f. Remedial Appeal 224-06

PERMANENT JUDICIAL COMMISSION
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

Rev. John H. An,)	
Appellant.)	
	)	DECISION AND ORDER
	)	Remedial Appeal 224-06
v.)	
)	
Atlantic Korean American Presbytery,)	
Appellee.)	
)	

Arrival Statement

This is an appeal to the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (GAPJC or this Commission) from an October 17, 2018, decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic (SPJC). In that decision, the SPJC upheld Atlantic Korean American Presbytery’s (Presbytery or Appellee) dissolution of the pastoral relationship between the Reverend John H. An (Rev. An or Appellant) and the Maryland Presbyterian Church (MPC), determining that the Presbytery met the requirements of G-2.0901. Appellant appealed the SPJC’s decision to this Commission.

Jurisdictional Statement

This Commission finds that it has jurisdiction, Appellant has standing to file this appeal, the appeal was properly and timely filed, and the appeal states one or more of the grounds for appeal under D-8.0105.³²

Appearances

The Reverend John An, Appellant, appeared with Ruling Elder Dong Yul Chough, counsel. The Reverend Nam Cho and the Reverend Chi Hyeon Yun, Committee of Counsel, appeared on behalf of Appellee.

History

This remedial case arises as an appeal from the SPJC decision of October 17, 2018, which affirmed the action of the Presbytery to dissolve the pastoral relationship between Rev. An and MPC on December 4, 2017.

On March 13, 2017, ten members of MPC sent a petition to the Presbytery listing nine reasons for the dissolution of the pastoral relationship between Appellant and MPC. The Presbytery requested a consultation in June 2017 with Appellant and the session to discuss the petition. Neither Appellant nor the clerk or any session member attended the meeting. Additional events documented in the record indicate continuing difficulties within the congregation.

The Presbytery Committee on Ministry (COM) reported the difficulties between Appellant and the congregation to the Presbytery General Council on November 16, 2017. The General Council ordered COM to hold a consultation with the pastor, the session, and the congregation pursuant to G-2.0904. Notice was sent by email on November 18, 2017, setting the consultation for November 26, 2017. The email indicated that COM would also send the information about the consultation to the members of the congregation in case the notice was not posted. The result of the consultation was to be reported by COM to the Presbytery at its stated meeting on December 4, 2017.

The MPC Session and Rev. An responded by email stating that they would not attend the consultation for three reasons: that MPC Session did not report any difficulties between Rev. An and the congregation; that the General Council did not go through due process; and that the motion by COM was invalid because of lack of due process. There was also a request to

³² *Book of Order* citations in this Decision are from the 2017–2019 edition, which was in effect during the time of the actions and the SPJC decision herein.

reschedule the consultation. Nonetheless, a number of MPC members attended the November 26, 2017, consultation with COM.

On December 4, 2017, the Presbytery dissolved the pastoral relationship between Rev. An and MPC. Rev. An attended the meeting, and after the vote he announced that he could not accept the result, and that the MPC Session would file a remedial action.

Subsequently, the MPC Session discussed a petition, dated December 11, 2017, protesting the dissolution of the pastoral relationship. During oral argument before this Commission, Appellant acknowledged that he moderated the meeting. The petition was attached to Appellant's notice of appeal to the GAPJC, but nothing in the record reflects what happened to the petition.

Appellant filed a remedial complaint against the Presbytery that was received by the SPJC on February 26, 2018. He did not request a stay of enforcement of the Presbytery's action to dissolve the pastoral relationship.

On October 17, 2018, the SPJC declined to sustain Appellant's Complaint, upholding the dissolution of the pastoral relationship. The SPJC found that the requirement of a congregational meeting in G-2.0901 was fulfilled, in that Appellant by his own actions was resistant to any meetings and further refused and failed to post a notice of a congregational meeting as ordered by the Presbytery. The SPJC further suggested that the Presbytery hold a congregational meeting, with notice to be posted on the bulletin board and in the bulletin on two consecutive Sundays. The congregational meeting was held on December 2, 2018, and the congregation on December 12, 2018, the GAPJC received Appellant's notice of appeal. This Commission heard oral argument on October 11, 2019.

Specification of Errors

Specification of Error No. 1: The SPJC erred in its procedure and constitutional interpretation by upholding the Presbytery's motion to dissolve the pastoral relationship, because a congregational meeting was not held as required in G-2.0904.

This specification of error is sustained in part and not sustained in part (see Decision below).

Specification of Error No. 2: The SPJC erred in its procedure and constitutional interpretation by upholding the Presbytery's decision to dissolve the pastoral relationship. The Presbytery hastened to a decision in that notice for a congregational meeting pursuant to G-2.0904 was given on November 18, 2017, for a meeting to be held on November 26, 2017.

This specification of error is sustained in part and not sustained in part (see Decision below).

Specification of Error No. 3: The SPJC erred in procedure in upholding the Presbytery's decision to dissolve the pastoral relationship. The SPJC ignored a request from the MPC Session and congregation to keep the pastoral relationship.

This specification of error is not sustained.

At oral argument, Appellant referenced the December 11, 2017, "Petition." Appellant further stated during oral argument that the petition was drafted and "approved" by the MPC Session at a meeting at which he served as moderator. That session meeting occurred after the action of the Presbytery dissolving the pastoral relationship, thereby removing Rev. An as moderator. An action by a session, meeting in the absence of a duly appointed moderator, cannot be regarded as a legitimate action. Additionally, a "petition" has no standing in judicial process under the terms of the church's Constitution. In any case, there is nothing in the record that indicates that the SPJC received this petition.

Decision

Both parties in this case failed to function according to the mandates of the Constitution. The lack of reliable facts and the lack of clarity in the record have made it virtually impossible for this Commission to identify who bears responsibility for particular failures in the process. For this reason, this Commission sustains in part and does not sustain in part Specifications of Error Nos. 1 and 2.

Prior to its action to dissolve the pastoral relationship on December 4, 2017, the Presbytery failed to call a congregational meeting as required by G-2.0901 and as authorized by G-1.0502. The consultation held on November 26, 2017, does not satisfy this requirement. The SPJC erred in constitutional interpretation of both G-2.0901 and G-2.0904 by confusing the requirements for congregational meetings (G-2.0901) and consultations with pastor, session, and congregation (G-2.0904).

It further erred in ruling, “The requirement for holding a congregational meeting was met by issuing a call for such a meeting.”

Similarly, the refusal of Rev. An and the MPC Session to notify the congregation of, or to attend, the November 26, 2017, consultation mandated by the COM action of November 18, 2017, constitutes a refusal to comply with binding actions of a presbytery per G-3.0202c. Refusal to comply with lawfully enacted decisions of higher councils constitutes obstruction of the constitutional governance of the church and is intolerable in Presbyterian polity (G-2.0105).

The matter of adequate notice for congregational meetings and consultations is less clear than the specifications of error in this appeal would suggest. G-2.0904 does not specify a minimum amount of notice for a consultation; the question of adequate notice may best be determined by whether the majority of those invited to the consultation were in attendance. The record in this case indicates that a substantial portion of the MPC congregation was in attendance on November 26, 2017. Appellant and the MPC Session received multiple days’ notice by both email and telephone call and were not otherwise prevented from attendance. Instead, they elected not to attend.

Notice for congregational meetings, on the other hand, is referenced in G-1.0502, but no particular minimum notice is prescribed. Congregations are to provide by their own rule for minimum notice of congregational meetings. It is unclear from the record whether MPC has adopted such minimum notice provisions. It is clear, however, that on December 2, 2018, the congregational meeting suggested by the SPJC was attended by a majority of the congregation and resulted in a unanimous vote to dissolve the pastoral relationship. No complaints about notice for that meeting were received.

This Commission regards the circumstances of this case as a lamentable failure of both parties to follow the procedures of Presbyterian polity in the crucially important matter of the dissolution of pastoral relationships.

Having said this, the actions of the SPJC and the pursuant congregational meeting on December 2, 2018, have accomplished the steps required by the *Book of Order* to dissolve a pastoral relationship. Therefore, the relief requested—the reinstatement of Rev. An to his pastoral relationship at MPC—is no longer possible. An interim pastor is now in place, a pastor nominating committee has been formed, and a new session has been elected. These facts render this case moot. No additional action by this Commission is warranted.

Order

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the decision of the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic Permanent Judicial Commission is set aside for the reasons detailed in this Decision. Because the congregational meeting required by G-2.0901 to concur in the dissolution of the pastoral relationship has already occurred, this case is moot, and no additional action is warranted.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic report this Decision to the Synod of Mid-Atlantic at the first meeting after receipt, that the Synod of Mid-Atlantic enter the full Decision upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Atlantic Korean American Presbytery report this Decision to the Atlantic Korean American Presbytery at the first meeting after receipt, that the Atlantic Korean American Presbytery enter the full Decision upon its minutes and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

Absences and Non-Appearances

Commissioner James C. Pak was recused and did not participate in the hearing or deliberations. Commissioners Jean Kennedy and June L. Lorenzo were absent and did not participate in the hearing or deliberations. The commissioner position from the Synod of the Northeast was vacant.

Certificate

We certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the Decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in Remedial Appeal 224-06, *Rev. John H. An, Appellant, v. Atlantic Korean American Presbytery, Appellee*, made and announced at Louisville, Ky., this 14th day of October, 2019.

Dated this 14th day of October, 2019.

Ruth Goldthwaite, Moderator
Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly

Deborah Little Cohn, Clerk
Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly

I certify that I did transmit a certified copy of the foregoing to the following persons by Federal Express Next Day Air, directing Flor Vélez-Díaz to deposit it in the mail at Louisville, Ky., this 14th day of October, 2019.

Rev. John H. An, Appellant
Elder Dong Yul Chough, Counsel for the Appellant
Rev. Nam Cho and Rev. Chi Hyeon Yun, Counsel for the Appellee
Stated Clerk, Atlantic Korean American Presbytery
Stated Clerk, Synod of the Mid-Atlantic

I further certify that I did transmit a certified copy of the foregoing to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) by delivering it in person to Flor Vélez-Díaz, on October 14, 2019.

Deborah Little Cohn, Clerk
Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly

I certify that I received a certified copy of the foregoing, that it is a full and correct copy of the decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), sitting during an interval between meetings of the General Assembly, in Louisville, Ky., on October 14, 2019, in Remedial Appeal 224-06, *Rev. John H. An, Appellant, v. Atlantic Korean American Presbytery, Appellee*, and that it is the final judgment of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in the case.

Dated at Louisville, Ky., on October 14, 2019.

Flor Vélez-Díaz
Assistant Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and
Manager of Judicial Process and Social Witness

g. Remedial Appeal 224-07

PERMANENT JUDICIAL COMMISSION
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

Patrick Handlson,
Appellant.

v.

Presbytery of Middle Tennessee,
Appellee.

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DECISION AND ORDER
Remedial Appeal 224-07

Arrival Statement

This is an appeal to the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (GAPJC or this Commission) from a decision in a remedial case tried by the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of Living Waters (SPJC) on January 10, 2019. In that decision, the SPJC reversed in part and affirmed in part actions of the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee (Appellee or Presbytery) in response to a complaint of Patrick Handlson (Appellant). Appellant appealed the SPJC’s decision to the GAPJC.

Jurisdictional Statement

This Commission has jurisdiction, Appellant has standing to file this appeal, the appeal was properly and timely filed, and the appeal states one or more of the grounds for appeal under D-8.0105.³³

³³ *Book of Order* citations in this Decision are from the 2017–2019 edition, which was in effect during the time of the actions and SPJC decision herein.

00 PLENARY

Appearances

Neal Lloyd and Jamie Bibee Lloyd appeared as counsel on behalf of Appellant. Hunter Brush and Terry Epling, Committee of Counsel, appeared on behalf of Appellee.

History

This case arises as an appeal from a decision of the SPJC by Appellant, a minister member of the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee under censure of temporary exclusion from the exercise of ordered ministry. In May 2016, the Presbytery received statements alleging Appellant engaged in sexual misconduct and communications of a sexual nature. An investigating committee was appointed, and the committee and Appellant negotiated an alternative form of resolution prior to a trial by the Presbytery Permanent Judicial Commission (PPJC). The PPJC accepted Appellant's guilty plea at trial on September 29, 2016, and ordered the agreed-upon censure. The PPJC censure reads:

The [Presbytery] ... does now declare you temporarily excluded from the office of teaching elder for a period of six months beginning October 1, 2016, and the completion of the following actions:

1. Your pastoral relationship with First Presbyterian Church, Cookeville [FPCC], will be dissolved pursuant to D-12.0104f and G-2.0904, Presbytery (acting through its Permanent Judicial Commission) having determined that the church's mission under the Word imperatively demands it. The exact timing and manner of implementing this decision left to the Committee on Ministry [COM], in consultation with the session of First Presbyterian Church, Cookeville.
2. You must cooperate with the Committee on Ministry in informing the congregation of First Presbyterian Church, Cookeville, that you are in full agreement with the decision to dissolve the pastoral relationship, and that this decision is in the best interest of all concerned, especially the congregation. You must inform them of your guilty plea and your desire to allow them to make a fresh start and begin the healing process without the divisions and distractions caused by the disciplinary proceeding.
3. You must receive counseling for a period of not less than one year. Presbytery will determine the adequacy of your treatment program and will have the discretion to arrange alternative counseling or psychological/psychiatric treatment to ensure that your counselor or therapist is fully qualified by training and experience to provide the needed counseling and therapy.
4. You will be temporarily excluded from the exercise of ordered ministry for a period of six months beginning on October 1, 2016.
5. As an act of grace, Presbytery will arrange for the payment of the costs of your health insurance to the Board of Pensions during the period of your temporary exclusion from ordered ministry if those costs are not covered by a severance package from First Presbyterian Church, Cookeville.
6. Upon the expiration of your period of temporary exclusion you will retire from active ministry as a Teaching Elder. You would not be allowed to perform any of the functions of ordered ministry following your retirement unless Presbytery approves your restoration pursuant to D-12.0104h.
7. Your retirement status will be determined by the Presbytery, based upon the recommendation of its Committee on Ministry. Your plea to the above charges will not preclude you from being classified as honorably retired if you demonstrate appropriate repentance and rehabilitation. You will be allowed to address Presbytery concerning your repentance and rehabilitation before it makes that decision.

A COM care team, which was established to deal with matters related to the PPJC decision, met with Appellant on a periodic basis. Appellant also was receiving counseling from a qualified counselor and therapist.

Appellant requested restoration to ordered ministry on March 29, 2017, six months after the decision; the COM denied that request and appointed a new care team. The COM also advised Appellant to apply to the Board of Pensions for retired status on June 1, 2017.

The COM considered Appellant's second request for restoration on September 12, 2017, following favorable reports from the counselor and the care team. The COM required counseling through the end of the calendar year and agreed to recommend Presbytery approval of Appellant's request for restoration and honorable retirement at its February 2018 meeting.

The COM reported to the Presbytery on February 3, 2018, recommending that Appellant be restored to the active roll of ministers of the Word and Sacrament and that he be granted status of honorably retired. Appellant addressed the Presbytery, answered questions from the floor, and was excused from the room during the subsequent debate and voting. The Presbytery defeated the COM's recommendation in a single vote that combined the actions on restoration and retirement status ("the first matter"). The Presbytery then considered a "second matter" and adopted the following motion without Appellant present in the room:

00 PLENARY

In order to establish a process for the Presbytery and Mr. Handlson to move forward, if he so desires, Mr. Handlson can renew his request for reinstatement every 24 months provided the following:

1. that he can show continued work toward healing and health through things like counseling, getting a support group, participating in a church;
2. that he continue to abide by the restrictions placed upon him through his guilty plea and abide by the presbytery's Former Pastor Policy;
3. that he submit written reports of his work toward healing and health every six months to the presbytery's Committee on Ministry; and
4. that there be no more incidents of misconduct on his part.

And that if Mr. Handlson desires for this body to reconsider the decision that has been made today, his request will come through the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery; and all of the documents provided at this meeting, including the victim's impact statement, as well as any other documents that the Committee on Ministry believes is important for this council to consider, will be included in the packet from the presbytery prior to the meeting.

Appellant filed a remedial Complaint alleging three irregularities by the Presbytery in taking its February 3, 2018, actions. The SPJC preliminary order accepted two irregularities for trial. The SPJC trial was conducted on January 10, 2019, resulting in a decision that upheld the Presbytery's actions in all respects except for its requirement that Appellant wait twenty-four months between requests for restoration. The SPJC observed, "[W]hile the wording of the original censure is inartful in its implementation of both a definite time period *and* a supervised rehabilitation process (when the Rules of Discipline call for one or the other), the exclusion was clearly intended to be temporary, not permanent, and the Presbytery's leadership is urged to help the Presbytery move forward in a manner that gives effect to the censure's intent."

On February 18, 2019, Appellant filed a notice of appeal with the GAPJC, which heard oral arguments on October 11, 2019.

Specifications of Error

Specification of Error No. 1: The SPJC erred in constitutional interpretation (D-8.0105g) by failing to find in the first matter that the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee erred:

1. *when it failed to follow the recommendation of its Committee on Ministry to restore Appellant to the active roll of ministers and grant him honorably retired status, thus not following the terms of the PPJC censure;*
2. *when it combined granting of honorably retired status with restoring to the exercise of ordered ministry; and*
3. *when it applied flawed process and criteria in assessing Appellant's repentance and rehabilitation.*

This specification of error is sustained.

Following a finding of guilt in a disciplinary case against a minister of the Word and Sacrament, it is the responsibility of a presbytery PJC to impose a censure. This censure is not subject to change or further interpretation by the presbytery as a whole. (See *Presbytery of Muskingum Valley v. Hauser*, 222-06, 2015.)

The responsibility of a presbytery is to enforce the censure as issued by the PJC, seeking to give it full effect while not perpetuating constitutional errors, particularly when there is confusion or ambiguity within the censure. According to D-12.0104a, a censure of temporary exclusion from the exercise of ordered ministry may be "for a definite period of time, **or** for a period defined by completion of supervised rehabilitation" (emphasis added). However, the censure in this case contained **both** a length of time (six months) and required actions (seven listed items) as requirements to be fulfilled. In addition, the various elements of the censure seem contradictory with one another and/or within themselves. Because the censure was not appealed, it became the final determination of the Presbytery in the matter.

A plain reading of the censure indicates that Appellant's temporary exclusion was intended to last for six months, as was reiterated in No. 4 of the required actions. As Appellee acknowledged in oral argument, Appellant also fulfilled the censure's required elements Nos. 1, 2, 3, and 6. No. 5 of the censure was a requirement for the Presbytery, not the Appellant.

The final element, No. 7 in the censure's list, provides a procedure for the Presbytery to determine Appellant's "retirement status." The Presbytery erred in conflating Appellant's restoration to the exercise of ordered ministry with considering his retirement status. Nothing about the language of the censure suggests the Presbytery is to exercise its own judgment about Appellant's readiness for restoration to ordered ministry on the basis of his repentance. The Presbytery's effort to do so constituted an error and an injustice to the Appellant.

A presbytery is ill-suited to make a determination, through a floor debate, of a particular person's repentance. Sessions and PJs are advised to impose censures with specific and measurable provisions, rather than requiring the council to conduct subjective evaluations in plenary session.

However, the censure in the instant case required the Presbytery to make such a determination in order to act on Appellant's retirement status. The censure assigned the COM the responsibility for making a recommendation. The record reflects that the COM considered assessments by its own care teams as well as a qualified counselor assigned by the Presbytery and recommended restoration and honorable retirement. The Presbytery declined to approve that recommendation. In most cases, a presbytery would be well served by showing deference to those with the greatest expertise and/or closest proximity to the situation.

D-12.0104h says, "The council that imposed the censure shall approve the restoration when the time of exclusion has expired or when the council is fully satisfied that the supervised rehabilitation pronounced has been completed." In this case, the Presbytery was unable to articulate any way in which the prescribed censure has not been completely fulfilled. While a presbytery may determine whether a temporarily excluded individual is to be granted "honorably retired" status, this Commission reminds the Presbytery of the ruling in *Veldhuizen & Yoshioka v. Presbytery of San Francisco* (209-2, 3; 1997): "We also hold that it is inappropriate for a presbytery to withhold the status of Honorably Retired from ministers or to place them on the inactive roll as a means of discipline."

Specification of Error No. 2: The SPJC erred in constitutional interpretation (D-8.0105g) by failing to find in the second matter that the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee failed to show fundamental fairness and protect Appellant's due process rights by conducting a debate and vote on an issue concerning Appellant without informing him or inviting him to be present for the debate or to speak on his own behalf.

This specification of error is sustained.

Authoritative interpretations (AIs) of the Form of Government have long recognized that ministers of the Word and Sacrament under temporary exclusion from the exercise of ordered ministry are still members of presbytery. An AI in 1994 classified them as "inactive members." Although that category no longer exists in the Form of Government, the privileges and limitations afforded to temporarily excluded ministers of the Word and Sacrament remain the same; namely, they are not "entitled to take part in the meetings of the presbytery or to speak, vote, hold office, or serve on committees, except that the inactive member may speak when the matter under consideration concerns that minister" (*Minutes*, 1994, Part I, p. 203). That AI goes on to reiterate, "a minister temporarily excluded from exercise of ordained office may speak at presbytery meetings on matters relating to himself or herself." We hold that this authoritative interpretation remains in effect as an interpretation of D-12.0104d and D-12.0104e.

In the instant case, Appellant was permitted to speak on the first matter relating to his application for restoration. He was excused before the full discussion and vote in keeping with the custom of the Presbytery, although this Commission finds that there is no constitutional or parliamentary requirement for a presbyter to leave in such a situation. But having left the room for the first vote, Appellant should have been immediately informed of the initial vote and invited back in the room as soon as the second matter was introduced. Consideration of this second matter, the evidence shows, clearly contained proposals and discussion related to Appellant. This Commission maintains that he had a right to be present and to speak on matters pertaining to him.

Fundamental fairness requires allowing the voices of those potentially affected by a decision to be heard. It is a protection the church grants throughout its polity, and explicitly so for those facing decisions regarding their temporary exclusion from the exercise of ordered ministry. The action of the Presbytery, in this case, blatantly violated that principle.

Specification of Error No. 3: The SPJC erred in constitutional interpretation (D-8.0105g) by failing to find that the entirety of the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee's action on the second matter at its February 3, 2019, meeting amounted to an unconstitutional amendment of the PPJC censure.

This specification of error is sustained.

In a disciplinary case involving a minister of the Word and Sacrament, it is the exclusive responsibility of a PJC to impose a censure, as noted under Specification of Error No. 1. This censure is not subject to amendment by the council as a whole (*The Presbytery of Muskingum Valley v. Robert A. Hauser*, 222-06, 2015). Rather, the council is responsible for "ongoing enforcement" of the censure as issued by the PJC.

This Commission finds that the language of the Presbytery's action in the second matter is an amendment to the original censure. The approved motion goes beyond requiring the twenty-four-month waiting period between requests for restoration

that was struck down by the SPJC. It also requires “continued work toward healing and health through things like counseling, getting a support group, participating in the church”; additional written reports to the Committee on Ministry; and new expectations regarding the avoidance of additional misconduct. These constitute additional requirements beyond those found in the original PPJC censure and not merely “ongoing enforcement” of that censure. Such a practice undermines the fairness of the church’s disciplinary process by diminishing the exclusive authority of a PJC to impose a censure. This action, in its entirety, was a violation of the Constitution.

Of particular concern was this element of the Presbytery’s action: “If Mr. Handlson desires for this body to reconsider the decision that has been made today ... all of the documents provided at this meeting, including the victim’s impact statement ... will be included in the packet from the presbytery prior to the meeting.” This Commission holds that this action is an inappropriate use of the victim impact statement contemplated in D-11.0403e, which is intended for use only in the formulation of a censure following a finding of guilt. Its continued use may revictimize those harmed by an offense and impair the council’s future ability to assess an individual’s repentance.

Decision

Concluding a temporary exclusion from the exercise of ordered ministry is an important, though difficult, responsibility of councils. As in all matters of church discipline, the purpose is to manifest our shared responsibility “for building up the body of Christ, not for destroying it, for redeeming, not for punishing” (D-1.0102). In this case, the Presbytery’s actions fell short of this ideal.

Councils are encouraged to be extremely attentive to the details of their responsibilities under D-12.0104h. When crafting censures in disciplinary cases or when approving settlement agreements, sessions and PJs are to abide by the Rules of Discipline, imposing temporary exclusion “for a definite period of time, **or** for a period defined by completion of supervised rehabilitation...” (D-12.0104h, emphasis added). Requirements for supervised rehabilitation should be clear and easily understood, without contradictions within the censure, allowing councils to objectively determine if the terms of a censure have been fulfilled. A council has the responsibility to effect restoration when the requirements of supervised rehabilitation have been completed (or earlier in accordance with D-12.0104i).

This case involves an egregious example of sexual misconduct. The Rules of Discipline establish a process for disciplinary cases to address such misconduct. While some might question the adequacy of the PPJC decision, the Constitution clearly assigns to the permanent judicial commission the responsibility for determination of a censure. For a presbytery to impose its will by amending the censure is outside the bounds of the Rules of Discipline.

All are encouraged to undertake every aspect of their discernment in disciplinary situations with attention to the principles stated in D-1.0101:

The purpose of discipline is to honor God by making clear the significance of membership in the body of Christ; to preserve the purity of the church by nourishing the individual within the life of the believing community; to achieve justice and compassion for all participants involved; to correct or restrain wrongdoing in order to bring members to repentance and restoration; to uphold the dignity of those who have been harmed by disciplinary offenses; to restore the unity of the church by removing the causes of discord and division; and to secure the just, speedy, and economical determination of proceedings. In all respects, all participants are to be accorded procedural safeguards and due process, and it is the intention of these rules so to provide.

Order

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the decision of the Synod of Living Waters Permanent Judicial Commission is hereby reversed.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that all actions regarding Patrick Handlson by the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee at its meeting on February 3, 2018, are set aside and are to be considered null and void.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee consider again the Committee on Ministry recommendation (on restoring Mr. Handlson to active ministry and on granting him honorably retired status) at its next meeting, but no sooner than thirty days from this Decision, voting separately on restoration and on his retirement status, and taking actions consistent with this Decision and Order.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of Living Waters report this Decision to the Synod of Living Waters at the first meeting after receipt, that the Synod of Living Waters enter the full Decision upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

00 PLENARY

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee report this Decision to the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee at the first meeting after receipt, that the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee enter the full Decision upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

Absences and Non-Appearances

Commissioners Jean Kennedy and June L. Lorenzo were absent and did not participate in the hearing or deliberations. The commissioner position from the Synod of the Northeast was vacant.

Concurring Opinion

While I concur with the decision, I have reservations with the portion of the analysis under Specification of Error No. 3 dealing with the use of the victim impact statement. Although the language used by the majority assumes that a victim impact statement is written, I am concerned that the language could be read to preclude any reference whatsoever by the victim concerning the harm caused by a minister who has engaged in sexual misconduct. While the disciplinary rules seek “to bring members to repentance and restoration,” they also seek “to achieve justice and compassion for all participants involved” (D-1.0101). In bringing a member to repentance and restoration, we can never forget the victims.

Diana Moore
October 14, 2019

Concurring Opinion

We concur with the Decision of this Commission. We further concur with the concurring opinion by Commissioner Moore. However, we have additional comments regarding the last two sentences of the analysis under Specification of Error No. 3 dealing with the use of victim impact statements.

This Decision holds that victim impact statement “is intended for use only in the formulation of a censure following a finding of guilt.” This would prohibit the statement presented to a PJC from being utilized to assess an individual’s degree of repentance.

The sharing of a victim impact statement is not prohibited in D-11.0403e and should be the individual right of the victim to allow or disallow the use of the statement. With the victim’s agreement, the statement should be made available to the therapist of the offending individual in cases where rehabilitation or counseling is part of the censure. This information is very valuable to counselors and therapists when determining whether a particular individual has been successfully rehabilitated and/or is repentant.

Maurice R. Caskey
Mari Glory González-Guerra
Linda Windy Johnston
James C. Pak
October 14, 2019

Certificate

We certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the Decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in Remedial Case 224-07, *Patrick Handlson, Appellant, v. Presbytery of Middle Tennessee, Appellee*, made and announced at Louisville, Ky., this 14th day of October, 2019.

Dated this 14th day of October, 2019.

Ruth Goldthwaite, Moderator
Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly

Deborah Little Cohn, Clerk
Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly

I certify that I did transmit a certified copy of the foregoing to the following persons by Federal Express Next Day Air, directing Flor Vélez-Díaz to deposit it in the mail at Louisville, Ky., this 14th day of October, 2019.

Patrick Handlson, Appellant
Neal Lloyd and Jamie Bibee Lloyd, Counsel for Appellant
Hunter Brush and Terry Epling, Counsel for Appellee
Stated Clerk, Presbytery of Middle Tennessee
Stated Clerk, Synod of Living Waters

I further certify that I did transmit a certified copy of the foregoing to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) by delivering it in person to Flor Vélez-Díaz, on October 14, 2019.

Deborah Little Cohn, Clerk
Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly

I certify that I received a certified copy of the foregoing, that it is a full and correct copy of the decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), sitting during an interval between meetings of the General Assembly, in Louisville, Kentucky, on October 14, 2019, in Remedial Case 224-07, Patrick Handlson, Appellant, v. Presbytery of Middle Tennessee, Appellee, and that it is the final judgment of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in the case.

Dated at Louisville, Kentucky, on October 14, 2019.

Flor Vélez-Díaz
Assistant Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and
Manager of Judicial Process and Social Witness

h. Remedial Appeal 224-08

Harry Hoyt, Appellant,	(
	(
	(	Decision and Order
	(
v.	(	Remedial Appeal 224-08
	(
The Presbytery of East Iowa, Appellee.	(
	(
	(

Arrival Statement

This is an appeal to the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (GAPJC or this Commission) from a decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies (SPJC). Pursuant to D-6.0305, the Moderator and Clerk of the SPJC determined that Harry Hoyt (Appellant) did not have standing to file a complaint and that the complaint failed to state a claim upon which relief could be granted. Appellant filed a challenge with the SPJC to the dismissal of his complaint. In a decision issued May 4, 2019, the SPJC denied the challenge. Appellant appealed the SPJC’s decision to the GAPJC.

Jurisdictional Statement

This Commission has jurisdiction, Appellant has standing to file the appeal, the appeal was properly and timely filed, and the appeal states one or more of the grounds for appeal set forth in D-8.0105.³⁴

Appearances

The parties agreed to the appeal being considered by this Commission without appearing in person for a hearing. (See further detail in the final paragraphs of “History” below.)

³⁴ *Book of Order* citations in this Decision are from the 2017-2019 edition, which was in effect during the time of the actions and SPJC decision herein.

On December 18, 2018, Appellant Harry Hoyt filed a Complaint against the Presbytery of East Iowa (Presbytery), its Stated Clerk, its Ministers and Congregations Commission (MCC), and the Rev. Dr. Richard Miller (the original Respondents), with the SPJC. The complaint alleged the “Presbytery of East Iowa as represented by the Stated Clerk and MCC made public accusations that were defamatory and untrue that the former members of the Church Government and Personnel Committee of First Presbyterian Church in Davenport operated outside the polity of the denomination as defined by the *Book of Order*, and violated Iowa law.”

Appellant’s initial complaint was based on events that occurred on October 1, 2018, when the MCC called a special meeting of the session of First Presbyterian Church in Davenport (FPCD) and delivered a letter, which “made a number of demands of the Session” and accusations that the Church Government and Personnel Committee (Committee) had “acted in violation of polity and broken Iowa Law.” As a ruling elder of FPCD, Hoyt served on the Committee. Additionally, Hoyt had served as moderator of the Presbytery from February 12, 2008, to February 24, 2009; Presbytery bylaws accorded him continuation of his membership after he served as moderator. The Presbytery suspended its bylaws in January 2018.

Respondents filed their Answer to the Complaint on February 19, 2019, responding to the allegations. On the same day, Respondents also filed a Motion to Dismiss for Lack of Standing, Motion to Dismiss for Lack of Jurisdiction, and Motion to Dismiss for Failure to State a Claim Upon Which Relief Can Be Granted. The Respondents recommended administrative review in their Answer and Alternate Prayer for Relief. On February 25, 2019, the Moderator and Clerk of the SPJC issued a Preliminary Order for dismissal, finding, *inter alia*, that the SPJC had authority over the Presbytery but not over the individuals cited in the complaint, the complainants did not have standing to file the case, and the complaint did not state a claim upon which relief could be granted. The SPJC dismissed the complaint, but also noted its agreement with the Presbytery that an administrative review by the Synod of Lakes and Prairies (Synod) would “prove beneficial to both the Complainants and the would “prove beneficial to both the Complainants and the Respondents, [sic] and recommend[ed] that the Synod institute such a review.”

On March 11, 2019, Complainants submitted a Challenge to the dismissal. They requested that the individuals not be named as parties and argued that Hoyt did have standing. Additionally, Hoyt withdrew requests for a rebuke and monetary damages, and argued that the complaint did state a claim upon which relief could be granted. On the same day, Respondents filed their Brief in Answer to Challenge. On March 19, 2019, Hoyt filed a Brief in Support of Challenge to SPJC Findings and Dismissal. The SPJC scheduled a hearing to hear the challenge. On May 4, 2019, Hoyt filed amendments to his complaint, to correspond to the changes he made in his Challenge to the dismissal. After the hearing, on May 4, 2019, the SPJC issued a Decision and Order. It found that Hoyt did not have standing either by virtue of being a former moderator or as a former employee of the Presbytery. The SPJC also found that it could not grant the relief requested by Hoyt on two grounds: (1) The SPJC “has no authority to compel the Synod of Lakes and Prairies to take action” because a commission cannot order its council to do anything; and (2) a trial before the SPJC “would not achieve reconciliation of the parties involved and so would not grant the relief sought by the appellant.” The appeal was denied.

Notably, the SPJC included in its Decision and Order a section on “Possible Alternatives to Judicial Process,” suggesting three possible paths to resolution: (1) A non-judicial process such as mediation; (2) a request for vindication, as set forth in D-9.0000; and (3) an administrative review by the Synod.

On June 5, 2019, Appellant filed an Appeal from the SPJC decision. The Appeal was transmitted to the officers of the GAPJC who reviewed it under provisions of D-8.0301. The GAPJC officers determined that the GAPJC has jurisdiction, Appellant has standing to file this Appeal, the Appeal papers were properly and timely filed, and the Appeal states one or more of the grounds for appeal set forth in D-8.0105. Appellant filed a brief in support of his appeal on November 4, 2019, and Appellee filed a brief responding to the appeal on February 7, 2020.

On March 23, 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the GAPJC informed the parties by letter that the April 24, 2020, face-to-face hearing had been cancelled due to the decision by the Office of the General Assembly to cancel all face-to-face meetings until further notice. The GAPJC gave the parties the option of having the case decided on the briefs and record alone. The Commission invited the parties to file an additional two-page brief. Both parties agreed to this arrangement. On April 14, 2020, the GAPJC voted to amend its Manual of Operations to allow deliberations to take place electronically. On April 15, 2020, Appellant filed a Second Brief; Appellee did not file an additional brief.

Per its amended Manual of Operations, the GAPJC conducted deliberations by video conference during its stated meeting between April 23 and 26, 2020.

Appellant did not delineate “Specifications of Error” in the appeal; therefore, this Commission has formulated the following Specifications of Error, drawn from Appellant’s arguments in the case.

Specification of Error No. 1: The SPJC erred in constitutional interpretation (D-8.0105g) by dismissing the complaint for lack of standing on the grounds that Appellant, a ruling elder and former moderator of the Presbytery, could not be granted enrollment after the end of his term of elected service.

This specification of error is neither sustained nor not sustained.

Appellant, having served as the moderator of the Presbytery in 2008-09, clearly had been granted the privilege of continuing membership, although the Presbytery alleges that membership ended when the Presbytery took action to suspend its bylaws in January 2018. Whether this provision of the Presbytery’s manual conformed to G-3.0301, and whether its suspension changed Appellant’s membership status or affected his standing to file a complaint, is a conclusion this Commission chooses not to reach.

It is clear that Appellant’s presbytery membership status, and the status of all former moderators in the Presbytery of East Iowa who are ruling elders, was in question, given the Presbytery’s purported action to suspend its bylaws without providing a procedural alternative. This decision by the Presbytery left a void in its governance, creating the potential for confusion regarding its own membership. This is one of the factors justifying special administrative review by the Synod.

Specification of Error No. 2: The SPJC committed an injustice in its decision (D-8.0105f) and erred in constitutional interpretation (D-8.0105g) in dismissing the complaint for lack of standing on the grounds that Appellant was no longer employed by the Presbytery at the time of the alleged irregularity.

This specification of error is not sustained.

To the extent that Appellant stated a particular irregularity in his complaint, it was the transmission of a letter from the MCC to the Session dated October 1, 2018. Appellant’s last day of employment by the Presbytery was September 30, 2018. Inasmuch as he was not an employee of the Presbytery on the date of the alleged irregularity, he does not have standing to file a complaint under G-6.0202a(6).

Specification of Error No. 3: The SPJC committed an injustice in its decision (D-8.0105f) to dismiss the complaint for failure to state a claim upon which relief can be granted.

This specification of error is not sustained.

G-3.0303d explicitly authorizes a presbytery to “counsel with a session concerning reported difficulties within a congregation.” The MCC’s presenting the October 1, 2018, letter to the Session was not unconstitutional, and disagreement with such an action does not make it so. If there were concerns about the content of the letter, those concerns should have been brought to the attention of the Presbytery, giving the Presbytery an opportunity to affirm, amend, or rescind the MCC’s actions.

The complaint does not allege “an irregularity or a delinquency of a lower council”; D-2.0202a defines an irregularity in a remedial case as an “erroneous decision or action” of that council. The letter of the MCC on October 1, 2018, was a fulfillment of the MCC’s responsibilities in working with congregations. In any case, its actions were subject to review by the Presbytery as a whole, but the record in this case does not indicate that the Presbytery was ever asked to affirm, amend or rescind the MCC’s actions.

Appellant sought relief that the SPJC was not in a position to grant. Appellant requested first that the SPJC direct the Synod to “conduct a thorough investigation,” but a council’s PJC may not direct that council to take an action; thus, the SPJC could not direct the Synod to conduct an administrative review. (However, this Commission *does* have authority to direct the Synod to do so.) Second, Appellant requested that the SPJC direct the MCC and Presbytery Stated Clerk to issue a public statement to the congregation of FPCD, but PJCs cannot compel apologies or public statements from individuals or entities. Third, Appellant sought relief in the form of a trial before the SPJC, but that request is contrary to the purpose of judicial process under D-2.0100a; a trial would serve the purpose of determining whether relief should be granted, not serve as relief itself.

For all these reasons, the SPJC was correct to dismiss the case for failure to state a claim upon which relief can be granted.

Specification of Error No. 4: The SPJC declined to receive proper evidence (D-8.0105c) when it did not accept materials from the Appellant into the record for consideration in its hearing on preliminary questions.

This specification of error is not sustained.

In a hearing to rule on preliminary questions, a PJC has wide discretion to decide what documents will be relevant for its consideration. Such documents are not “evidence” in the sense of what may be offered in a trial in accordance with D-14.0101. Therefore, the SPJC was free to consider whatever was necessary for ruling on the narrow questions before it, and to disregard the rest.

Decision

Because the complaint failed to state a claim upon which relief can be granted, the SPJC correctly dismissed the case. However, this Commission holds that further action is warranted. While judicial process was not the proper avenue for Appellant to address his concerns, Appellant may have valid concerns.

This case reveals considerable conflict, distrust, and confusion in the proceedings and relationships among the Presbytery; its Ministers and Congregations Commission; the First Presbyterian Church of Davenport; its Session; its Government and Personnel Committee; and Mr. Hoyt as a former presbytery moderator, former presbytery employee, and active member of his congregation. In the course of these proceedings, this Commission has identified a number of issues indicating that special administrative review, guided by G-3.0108, is in order. This would offer the parties the opportunity to seek resolution and reconciliation.

Order

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the decision of the Synod PJC is affirmed and the case is dismissed.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Synod of Lakes and Prairies shall at its next stated meeting initiate special administrative review in accordance with G-3.0108b of the actions of the Presbytery of East Iowa (including its suspension of its manual of operations without providing a procedural alternative) and its Ministers and Congregations Commission in this case. The Synod shall consider whether the designation of an administrative commission with such powers and responsibilities as may be required under G-3.0109b(5) is warranted in this matter.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies report this Decision to the Synod of Lakes and Prairies at the first meeting after receipt, that the Synod of Lakes and Prairies enter the full Decision upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of East Iowa report this Decision to the Presbytery of East Iowa at the first meeting after receipt, that the Presbytery of East Iowa enter the full Decision upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

Absences and Non-Appearances

All current commissioners participated in the hearing and deliberations. The commissioner position from the Synod of the Northeast was vacant.

Certificates

We certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the Decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in Remedial Appeal 224-08, Harry Hoyt, Appellant, v. Presbytery of East Iowa, Appellee, deliberating by videoconference under the provisions of 6.02.90e of its Manual of Operations, made and announced in Louisville, KY, this 26th day of April, 2020.

Dated this 26th day of April, 2020.

Ruth Goldthwaite, Moderator
General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission

Deborah Little Cohn, Clerk
General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission

I certify that I did transmit a certified copy of the foregoing to the following persons by Federal Express Next Day Air, directing Flor Vélez-Díaz to deposit it in the mail in Louisville, KY.

Harry Hoyt, Appellant
Jim Claypool, Committee of Counsel for the Appellee
Stated Clerk, Presbytery of East Iowa
Stated Clerk, Synod of Lakes and Prairies
General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission

I further certify that I did transmit a certified copy of the foregoing to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) by delivering it in person to Flor Vélez-Díaz, on April 26, 2020.

Deborah Little Cohn, Clerk
General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission

I certify that I received a certified copy of the foregoing, that it is a full and correct copy of the decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), sitting during an interval between meetings of the General Assembly on April 26, 2020, in Remedial Appeal 224-08, Harry Hoyt, Appellant, v. Presbytery of East Iowa, Appellee, and that it is the final judgment of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in the case.

Dated in Louisville, KY, on April 26, 2020.

i. Remedial Appeal 224-09

Kum Ham, <i>et al.</i> , Appellants,	(	Decision and Order
v.	(	Remedial Appeal 224-09
The Session of Korean Community Presbyterian Church of Atlanta, Appellee .	(
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Arrival Statement

This is an Appeal to the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (GAPJC or this Commission) from a decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of the South Atlantic (SPJC). In that decision, the SPJC affirmed the dismissal of the complaint by the SPJC’s Moderator and Clerk based upon lack of standing.

Jurisdictional Statement

This Commission has jurisdiction, Samuel S. Chung has standing to file the appeal, the appeal was properly and timely filed, and the appeal states one or more of the grounds for appeal set forth in D-8.0105.³⁵

Appearances

The parties agreed to the appeal being considered by this Commission without appearing in person for a hearing. (See further detail in final paragraphs of “History” below.)

History

The history of this case begins with the untimely death of the Rev. In Soo Jung, pastor of Korean Community Presbyterian Church of Atlanta (KCPC). The Rev. Woojin Shim, an associate pastor of the church, assumed the role of acting head of staff. Controversy ensued around the process and appropriate roles for the Session, pastor nominating committee, congregation, and

³⁵ *Book of Order* citations in this decision are from 2017–2019 edition, which was in effect during the time of the actions and PJC decisions herein.

the Presbytery in the selection of the next pastor of the congregation. This process was complicated by the consideration of the associate pastor for the pastor position.

On September 4, 2018, a joint meeting of representatives of the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta (PGA), Korean Community Presbyterian Church of Atlanta Session (KCPC Session), and representatives from a group calling itself the “Save Our Church Committee” (SOCC) was held at the offices of the PGA. Kum Ham was the identified moderator of SOCC at this meeting and served as translator and interpreter for some of the members of the group. Samuel S. Chung (who later identified himself as counsel for SOCC), along with others, outlined the concerns of the SOCC in a PowerPoint presentation.

From the beginning there was confusion about the nature of the September 4, 2018, SOCC presentation. The PGA representatives and KCPC Session considered it an airing of grievances while the counsel for SOCC later asserted it was a filing of a formal remedial complaint. The PGA Stated Clerk sought to clarify the matter and encourage SOCC counsel to file a complaint in written form other than a PowerPoint presentation. Ultimately counsel for SOCC prevailed in insisting that the presentation met the minimum standard for a remedial complaint and that it had been served in person. On September 12, 2018, an amendment to the complaint was filed identifying Kum Ham, *et al.*, as complainant and as member of SOCC.

The Presbytery Permanent Judicial Commission (PPJC) Executive Committee reviewed the complaint and made its preliminary ruling on the preliminary questions on January 14, 2019. The ruling was appealed, and a PPJC hearing was scheduled for February 23, 2019. In the meantime, the parties engaged in settlement discussions. On February 11, 2019, Chung, counsel for SOCC, submitted his resignation from the SOCC. In order to accommodate work toward a settlement, the identified Complainant, Ham, requested on February 19, 2019, an extension for the date of the hearing, which was granted. On February 20, 2019, the SOCC and Ham removed Chung as counsel. On February 24, 2019, Ham, SOCC, and the KCPC Session filed a settlement agreement with the Stated Clerk resolving all the issues in the complaint between Ham (inclusive of SOCC), and KCPC Session. In a hearing on March 9, 2019, the PPJC received the joint request of Ham, SOCC, and the KCPC Session to accept the settlement agreement and dismiss the complaint. The PPJC accepted the settlement and dismissed the complaint.

During the negotiation of the settlement, on February 20 and February 22, 2019, Chung sought to amend the original complaint by adding names to the complaint and seeking to reinstate himself first as counsel and then as a complainant while a settlement was being negotiated. On March 9, 2019, the PPJC, ruling on the preliminary questions, determined that Chung did not have standing to continue the case because he was not identified as one of the original complainants.

On March 25, 2019, Chung appealed the ruling of the PPJC to the SPJC. On April 19, 2019, the Executive Committee of the SPJC ruled on the preliminary questions that Chung did not have standing to make the appeal on the grounds that he was not one of the original complainants.

On July 1, 2019, Chung amended his appeal and appealed the ruling of the Executive Committee to the full SPJC. On August 27, 2019, the SPJC held a hearing and ruled that Chung did not have standing to make the appeal on the grounds that he was not one of the original complainants.

On October 7, 2019, Chung appealed the ruling of the SPJC to the GAPJC. On November 12, 2019, the Executive Committee of the GAPJC accepted the case.

On March 23, 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the GAPJC informed the parties by letter that the April 24, 2020, face-to-face hearing had been cancelled due to the decision by the Office of the General Assembly to cancel all face-to-face meetings until further notice. The GAPJC gave the parties the option of having the case decided on the briefs and record alone. The Commission invited the parties to file an additional two-page brief. Both parties agreed to this arrangement. Both parties filed second briefs. On April 14, 2020, the GAPJC voted to amend its Manual of Operations to allow deliberations to take place electronically.

Per its amended Manual of Operations, the GAPJC conducted deliberations by videoconference during its stated meeting between April 23 and 26, 2020.

Specification of Error

Chung did not delineate “Specifications of Error” in the appeal; therefore, this Commission has formulated the following Specification of Error, drawn from Chung’s arguments in the case.

That the SPJC erred in its determination on the challenge to the preliminary question(s) pursuant to D-8.0302 that Chung does not have standing to file an appeal and therefore erroneously dismissed the case.

The specification of error is not sustained.

Chung claims continuous membership in the KCPC since 2008, and that he was one of the original complainants in the case when it was before the PPJC. However, from the beginning of this case, and certainly when Chung filed an amended complaint on September 12, 2018, he did not identify himself as one of the original complainants, but only as “counsel.”

It is noteworthy that the case has been styled³⁶ “Kum Ham, *et al.* v. the Session of Korean Community Presbyterian Church” since its origination before the PPJC. At no time has a full list been provided of complainants otherwise obscured by the “*et al.*” Elsewhere in the record, only one additional person is identified as one of the original complainants, Kun Kil An, who signed the settlement agreement. In his brief, Chung lists himself and others as complainants in the original case, but this list does not appear in any other document in the record. Tellingly, Chung filed a motion with PPJC to change the name of the complainant in Remedial Case 18-01 to “Jane Chung”; even then no list of original complainants appears, and thus no record of Samuel Chung as being among them exists. Appellee’s brief includes language that it claims was in the Synod’s Determination of Preliminary Questions Pursuant to D-8.0302 that states, in pertinent part, that Samuel Chung was not party to the “above and foregoing matter.”

Decision

Book of Order D-8.0102 states, “An appeal may be initiated only by one or more of the original parties in the case and is accompanied by the filing of written notice of appeal.” In 2002, this Commission, in *Presbytery of San Joaquin v. Permanent Judicial Commission, Synod of the Pacific, and Synod of the Pacific* (Remedial Case 215-3), held that “Our Rules of Discipline do not permit a person to seek remedial relief, as San Joaquin is attempting here, against a judicial commission based upon that commission’s rulings in another case in which that person was not a party.” It further noted that San Joaquin could 1) have joined the original case as a complainant, or 2) have filed its own original case against the Synod. This Commission dismissed the appeal for lack of standing.

The same principle is applicable here. Chung, who throughout referred to himself as “counsel” for the complainants, did not seek to join the complaint until shortly before the matter was dismissed by the PPJC. He sought to change the names of the complainants when a settlement appeared imminent. The PPJC noted that Chung could have filed his own case. Chung elected not to do so.

In addition, this Commission notes its concern over the styling of this case from its inception at the PPJC level. A complete list of the names of individuals that comprise the parties in the case is an essential element of a complaint, so that all parties and councils are clearly identified. Collective terms such as “*et al.*” in case styling may be convenient after the parties have been identified, but their use in the initial case styling often creates confusion by obscuring the full list of participants. In the instant case, the problem is complicated by the fact that the original complaint was in the form of a PowerPoint presentation that did not identify any complainants by name. Courts of original jurisdiction throughout the church are advised to clearly identify all parties in a complaint.

Order

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the decision of the SPJC is affirmed and the complaint is dismissed.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of the South Atlantic report this Decision to the Synod of the South Atlantic at the first meeting after receipt, that the

Synod of the South Atlantic enter the full Decision upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from

those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta report this Decision to the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta at the first meeting after receipt, that the

Presbytery of Greater Atlanta enter the full Decision upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from

those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

³⁶ The “styling” of a case is the material at the top of the case records that identify the various individuals and/or councils that are parties to the case, the body hearing the case or appeal, the reference number, and whether the case is remedial or disciplinary.

00 PLENARY

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Clerk of Session report this Decision to the Session of the Korean Community Presbyterian Church of Atlanta, at the first meeting after receipt, that the Session enter the full Decision upon its minutes, and an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

Absences and Non-Appearances

All current commissioners were present and participated in the deliberations. The commissioner position from the Synod of the Northeast was vacant.

Certificates

We certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the Decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in Remedial Appeal 224-09, Kum Ham, *et al.*, Appellants v. The Session of Korean Community Presbyterian Church of Atlanta, Appellee, deliberating by videoconference under the provisions of 6.02.90e of its Manual of Operations, made and announced in Louisville, KY, this 26th day of April, 2020

Dated this 26th day of April, 2020.

Ruth Goldthwaite, Moderator
General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission

Deborah Little Cohn, Clerk
General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission

I certify that I did transmit a certified copy of the foregoing to the following persons by Federal Express Next Day Air, directing Flor Vélez-Díaz to deposit it in the mail in Louisville, KY

Samuel Chung, Counsel for the Appellant
Philla Kim, Counsel for the Appellee
Stated Clerk, Synod of South Atlantic
Stated Clerk, Presbytery of Greater Atlanta

General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission

I further certify that I did transmit a certified copy of the foregoing to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) by delivering via electronic transmission to Flor Vélez-Díaz, on April 26, 2020.

Deborah Little Cohn, Clerk
General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission

I certify that I received a certified copy of the foregoing, that it is a full and correct copy of the decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), sitting during an interval between meetings of the General Assembly, on April 26, 2020, in Remedial Appeal 224-09, Kum Ham, *et al.*, Appellant v. The Session of Korean Community Presbyterian Church of Atlanta, Appellee, and that it is the final judgment of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in the case.

Dated in Louisville, KY on April 26, 2020.

Flor Vélez-Díaz
Assistant Stated Clerk of the General Assembly
Manager of Judicial Process and Social Witness
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Item 00-Info-03

Report of Changes to the Appendices of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Manual of Operations

The *Presbyterian Mission Agency Manual of Operations* states that, “The Presbyterian Mission Agency may change those appendices to the *Manual of Operations* that are within its purview.”

In accordance with the above, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board reports the following changes to the Appendices of the *Manual of Operations*, as approved between the 223rd General Assembly (2018) and the 224th General Assembly (2020): [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

1. Page 14, Section II. E.—Election Procedures

Committee Chairs ~~and Vice Chairs~~

a Committee Chairs ~~and Vice Chairs~~ shall be elected for two-year terms, ~~and they are not eligible to serve consecutive terms.~~ The Chairs ~~and Vice Chairs~~ shall begin their service at the end of the General Assembly.

b Board voting members completing at least eighteen consecutive months on a committee are eligible for election as committee Chair. ~~This is not a requirement for Vice Chair.~~

c The Personnel and Nominating Committee shall nominate committee Chairs ~~and Vice Chairs~~, with a view toward diversity on the PMAB Coordinating Committee. These nominees shall be presented in committees at the first Presbyterian Mission Agency Board meeting in the calendar year. Nominees may also come from the floor.

d Ordinarily, committee Chairs shall make appointments and assignments of committee members to subcommittees or committee task forces, as necessary, giving consideration to experience, interest, and representation.

e Committees ~~Cehairs~~ are responsible for ensuring that the plenary session has a closed session to discuss any matters discussed in closed sessions of the committee.

2. Page 16, Section II. G. Board Committees, Task Forces and Teams

b. Task Forces - *Temporary*

If need is determined for, task force that will involve Presbyterian Mission Agency Board membership and/or non-Presbyterian Mission Agency Board membership, a proposal shall be submitted to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, through the Coordinating Committee, for approval. All proposals for, task forces shall include the following information:

- (1) Task force name.
- (2) Statement of purpose and tasks to be accomplished.
- (3) Explanation as to why these tasks cannot be accomplished by the current Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Committees.
- (4) Expertise, skills and experience needed by the members.
- (5) Duration of the task force shall not exceed two years.
- (6) Size of the task force (Ordinarily not to exceed seven members).
- (7) Annual budget with the source of funding.
- (8) Proposed names of the task force members with sensitivity to diversity.

c. *Task Forces - Permanent*

(1) *Power and Privilege Task Force will observe board meetings with particular attention to the dynamics of power and privilege and to use the tools developed by the General Assembly Committee on Representation to watch how diversity plays out in the collective and in business before the Board. The Task Force will be nominated from the board at large by the Personnel and Nominating Committee and shall serve for two years. The two-year term will begin and end with each General Assembly. The task force will recommend to the Coordinating Committee at least one month before each such meeting how, by whom, and the time necessary to conduct cultural humility training at the board meetings so that the Coordinating Committee may docket the appropriate time necessary to conduct such training.*

3. Page 20, Section II.G. Board Committees, Task Forces and Teams

Personnel and Nominating Committee

(1) It is responsible for the Board's oversight in these areas including:

- (a) Presbyterian Mission Agency personnel policies and procedures
- (b) Compensation guidelines within which salaries are administered.
- (c) Equal employment and affirmative action guidelines.
- (d) Working with the General Assembly Nominating Committee to recruit new Board members.
- (e) Securing nominations to those committees and Agencies that require Presbyterian Mission Agency participation and/or approval. In securing these nominations, the Personnel and Nominating Committee shall give priority in the selection process to current Board members.
- (f) Send "Guidelines for Liaisons to Other Entities" to all individuals nominated to serve on other entities.
- (g) Receiving summary reports from liaisons regarding their service on other boards/committees and reporting a synopsis to the full Board.
- (h) Recommend the assignment of new members to Program and Administrative Committees for Board approval, ensuring diverse representation on each committee.
- (i) Nominating Chairs for the Program and Administrative Committees for election by the committees, ensuring that the nominations as a whole reflect a diverse slate, since these individuals will comprise the Coordinating Committee.
- (j) *Nominating Vice-Chairs for the Program and Administrative Committees for election by the Committees.*
- (~~h~~)(k) Nominating Chair-elect of the Board.
- (~~k~~)(l) Any other responsibilities assigned under the Employee Handbook, and any other employment-related assignment from the Coordinating Committee or the Board.

4. Page 21, Section II.G.6.b.:

Property/Legal Committee

The Property/Legal Committee focuses on the proper management of the legal and property matters of the agency and ensures appropriate consideration on matters of risk by the agency and its employees, including:

- Assertion of attorney-client privilege, work-product privilege, self-critical analysis privilege, ecclesiastical privileges, and any other applicable privileges;
- Management, control, and decision-making with respect to pending or threatened litigation or other legal claims or proceedings;
- Management, control, and direction of former, current, or future outside counsel;
- *Ethical considerations*

5. Page 21, Section II.G.6.b.(1)

Property/Legal Committee

Oversight

It is responsible for the Board's oversight in these areas including:

- (a) Review with legal staff and the President/Executive Director all legal and property matters to ensure their proper management, and work to educate the Board on these matters.
- (b) Review with staff the appropriate enterprise risk management policies and concerns necessary for ensuring that the ministry and the mission of the agency are performed without undue hindrance or delay.
- (c) Hiring outside legal counsel, when required by the board
- (d) *Decisions related to appropriate ethical questions and waivers.*

6. *Page 7, Section II.C.2.*

Special/Called Meetings

A Special Meeting of the Board can be called by the Chair, Coordinating Committee, or by a written request to the Chair from at least three voting members of the Board.

Written notice of the meeting shall be provided, specifying the subject matter to be considered, to all members of the Board at least forty-eight hours in advance of the meeting date.

All members of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board shall be notified of the resulting decisions as soon as possible after the meeting.

The Board and its Committees may take any permissible action by electronic vote if the vote is unanimous, everyone entitled to vote responds, and no discussion is desired by a member of the group. Such action by the full Board shall be filed with the minutes of the proceedings of the Board. Such action by Committees shall report such votes at the next meeting of the Board.

7. *Page 73, Section IV.A.4.b*

Committee on Theological Education

~~The Committee on Theological Education (COTE) has direct access to the General Assembly and their work is coordinated through the Theology, Formation and Evangelism Ministry.~~

~~As constituted by the 198th General Assembly (1986) and reaffirmed by the 205th General Assembly (1993) the Committee on Theological Education has the following purposes: to further the cause of theological education in the church; to provide a vehicle through which the individual theological seminaries can coordinate their activities and report to the church; to provide for official communication from the church to the seminaries; to preserve the freedom of the seminaries for the benefit of the church; and to assure visible representation of theological education at the national level of the church's organization.~~

The Presbyterian Church has been deeply committed to theological education since its early days. This commitment has been consistent across changing ways of structuring the relationship between the denomination and the theological institutions rooted in it. The Committee on Theological Education (COTE) was established by the 198th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (1986). Establishment of COTE was called for as part of the reunion that brought together the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (UPCUSA) and the Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUS). The Purpose, Functions, Membership, and organizational relationships of COTE were initially set forth by action of the 198th and 205th (1993) General Assemblies.

~~(1) Committee Membership~~

~~This committee of the General Assembly will consist of:~~

- ~~• One representative appointed by each of the ten PC(USA) seminaries;~~
- ~~• Thirteen at-large members for special expertise and geographical diversity, who are elected through the General Assembly Nominating Committee process to serve four year terms, with eligibility for one additional term;~~
- ~~• Corresponding members representing seminaries that have renewable covenant relationships with the PC(USA);~~

~~• A corresponding member representing the Omaha Presbyterian Seminary Foundation; and up to three corresponding members representing non-Presbyterian seminaries as determined by annual vote of the Committee on Theological Education.~~

(1) Mandate, Purpose, and Functions

The mandate, purpose, and functions of COTE are established in the Organization for Mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.):

“The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB) ensures the continuation of the Committee on Theological Education (COTE) as a committee that includes representatives of each theological institution identified as in institutional or covenant relationships with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) as set forth below. COTE has direct access to the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. Its work is coordinated through the Theology, Formation, and Evangelism ministry area, with staff accountability to the Director of the Theology, Formation, and Evangelism ministry area. Access shall be in the form of resolutions, a biennial narrative report, comments on issues before the Assembly, and other appropriate correspondence. The biennial narrative report shall be forwarded to the PMAB for possible comment.

The purpose of the Committee on Theological Education is to attend to the relationship between the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (PC(USA)) and those theological institutions that are formally related to the PC(USA) either by historic relationship and governance commitments (“Institutional” relationships), or by covenant commitments and shared concern for the training of ministry leaders and members of this denomination (“Covenant” relationships).”

(Criteria for Institutional and Covenant membership in COTE are set forth in the Organization for Mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).)

“The standing rules of the General Assembly provide for the presidents/executive officers (or their designee) of the theological institutions in institutional or covenant relationship with the PC(USA) to be corresponding members of the General Assembly.”

~~(2) Staff Accountability and Lodgment~~

~~Staff responsible for planning and coordinating work of the committee shall be appointed by the Director of the Theology, Formation and Evangelism Ministry in consultation with the Committee on Theological Education. The staff shall be lodged within the Theology, Formation and Evangelism Ministry and be directly accountable to the Director of the Theology, Formation and Evangelism Ministry.~~

(2) Voting Membership

(a) Seven General Assembly Representatives are nominated and elected through the General Assembly Nominating Committee process to four-year terms. These terms may be renewed once, with no representative serving more than eight years continuously. Terms shall be staggered. No General Assembly Representative may be a current member of a faculty, staff, or board of trustees of one of the theological institutions with representation on COTE.

(b) The presidents/executive officers of the theological institutions in “Institutional” relationship with the PC(USA) shall speak in COTE for the institutions. Should a theological institution’s president/executive officer be unable to attend a meeting, they may appoint another representative from their theological institution to attend that meeting in their place.

(c) The presidents/executive officers of the theological institutions in “Covenant” relationship with the PC(USA) shall represent the institutions in COTE.

(3) Staff Accountability and Lodgment

(a) PMA Staff Liaison: The PMA Staff Liaison of COTE shall be assigned and provided for by the Theology, Formation, and Evangelism ministry area (TFE) of the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA). The Staff Liaison shall have voice but no vote in meetings of COTE and its subcommittees, task forces, and working groups.

(b) Senior Director, Theological Education Funds Development: The Senior Director, Theological Education Funds Development shall be assigned and provided for by the Presbyterian Foundation.

~~(3) Budget~~

~~Funding for the work of the Committee on Theological Education, including related staffing costs and allocations to the seminaries on behalf of the denomination, shall be accounted for in the budget of the Theology, Formation and Evangelism Ministry.~~

~~(4) Budget~~

~~The Staff Liaison shall prepare, in cooperation with the chair of COTE, budget requests for submission to the Director of TFE and the PMA Board for the portion of the annual budget funded by the budget of the PMA Board. This request shall be submitted to the General Assembly for approval.~~

~~(4) Access~~

~~The Committee on Theological Education shall have direct access to the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. Access shall be in the form of resolutions, a yearly narrative report, comments on issues before the Assembly, and other appropriate correspondence. The yearly narrative report shall be forwarded to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Coordinating Committee for possible comment. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board's Committee to Nurture the Body will be responsible for developing relationships with the Committee on Theological Education.~~

~~(5) Assigned Functions~~

~~(a) To develop and maintain a comprehensive overview of theological education from the perspective of the whole church.~~

~~(b) To identify, develop, and propose strategies for a systemic approach to theological education within the denomination.~~

~~(c) To serve as an advocate before the whole church for theological education and to interpret the mission of the denomination's seminaries to the whole church.~~

~~(d) To provide a way for the church's needs to be addressed to the denomination's seminaries.~~

~~(e) To review the effectiveness and stewardship of the seminaries on behalf of the church.~~

~~(f) To encourage and enhance cooperation among the theological seminaries of the denomination.~~

~~(g) To relate the councils and agencies of the PC(USA), particularly those which have responsibilities for theology and worship, for education, for candidacy, and for leadership development for pastors and church members.~~

~~(h) To maintain appropriate relationships with those responsible for theological education in other branches of the church catholic.~~

~~(i) To receive and act upon requests and recommendations from the church.~~

~~(j) To receive and review reports from the theological seminaries appropriate to the work of the committee;~~

~~(k) To identify the issues, needs, and opportunities of the seminaries, individually and corporately, and, where appropriate, address these as requests and recommendations to the church;~~

~~(l) To authorize use of Theological Education Fund monies, prepare an appropriate formula for disbursements to the theological seminaries of the PC(USA), and to advocate for financial support of the seminaries.~~

~~(m) To maintain relations with educational and ecumenical associations which share common concerns with the committee.~~

~~(n) To serve as an agency of the denomination for relating to theological seminaries other than those of the PC(USA).~~

~~(o) To recommend to the General Assembly those theological seminaries which shall qualify as members of the Committee on Theological Education.~~

Item 00-Info-04

The Book of Confessions and the Doctrine of Discovery

This report is in response to *2018 Referral: Item 10-13. The Doctrine of Discovery: A Review of Its Origins and Implications for Congregations in the PC(USA) and Support for Native American Sovereignty. Recommendation 13. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Identify in the Book of Confessions How Our Confessions May Support the Doctrine of Discovery, How Our Confessions May Challenge the Doctrine of Discovery, How Our Confessions Provide Evidence for Ways the Church Can Change, and to Report Its Findings to the 224th General Assembly (2020)—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 28, 33, 295–96 of the print copy, pp. 842–53 of the electronic copy).*

In reviewing the *Book of Confessions*, we found no clear affirmation of the Doctrine of Discovery. We found passages that challenge the Doctrine of Discovery. We call attention to the fact that the *Book of Confessions* itself is evidence for how the church (generally) and this denomination (particularly) can change.

Among the points at which the *Book of Confessions* challenges the Doctrine of Discovery are the following.

1. The Confession of 1967 expresses Christ’s call to engage “powers and authorities” critically, ever alert to critique, condemn, and resist abuse of their powers:

The members of the church are emissaries of peace and seek the good of man in cooperation with powers and authorities in politics, culture, and economics. But they have to fight against pretensions and injustices when these same powers endanger human welfare. Their strength is in their confidence that God’s purpose rather than man’s schemes will finally prevail (9.25).

Note: the inclusive language version of the Confession of 1967 for the same paragraph: “The members of the church are emissaries of peace and seek the good of all in cooperation with powers and authorities in politics, culture, and economics. But they have to fight against pretensions and injustices when these same powers endanger human welfare. Their strength is in their confidence that God’s purpose rather than human schemes will finally prevail.

2. The Westminster documents, central in the history of the PC(USA), challenge the Doctrine of Discovery for being a justification of theft, which the Westminster Larger Catechism identifies as sin, a violation of the Eighth Commandment. The Doctrine of Discovery condones and encourages the injustice of the sin of theft by actively engaging in stealing the land of Indigenous peoples.

The sins forbidden in the Eighth Commandment [“Thou shalt not steal”] besides the neglect of duties required, are: theft, robbery, man-stealing, and receiving anything that is stolen; fraudulent dealing, false weights and measures, removing landmarks, injustice and unfaithfulness in contracts between man and man, or in matters of trust; oppression, extortion, usury, bribery, vexatious lawsuits, unjust enclosures and depopulations; engrossing commodities to enhance the price, unlawful callings, and all other unjust or sinful ways of taking or withholding from our neighbor what belongs to him, or of enriching ourselves; covetousness, inordinate prizing and affecting worldly goods; distrustful and distracting cares and studies in getting, keeping, and using them; envying at the prosperity of others; as likewise idleness, prodigality, wasteful gaming, and all other ways whereby we do unduly prejudice our own outward estate; and defrauding ourselves of the due use and comfort of that estate which God hath given us (*Book of Confessions*, The Larger Catechism, 7.252).

3. The Larger Catechism’s explication of what constitutes theft is developed in the GA Statement, “Living Through Economic Crisis: The Church’s Witness in Troubled Times,” a document written by the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy and approved by the 219th General Assembly (2010).¹

Despite the complexity of modern life, the rise of a global economy, and the invention of financial instruments not fully understood by even the smartest Wall Street inhabitants, the church continues to speak from its unshakable foundation: “The earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it, the world, and all those who live in it” (Ps. 24:1, NRSV).

From this foundation, this insistence that all humans belong to God and all creation is owned by God, the church asserts that the secular economy—the business of production, marketing, distribution, and consumption—exists within and under God’s management. Biblical examples of economic values abound. The Jubilee traditions in Leviticus 25 speak to the social harm caused by unrelieved debt and its resulting servitude. They speak to the response of the righteous. Those who have legally accumulated wealth due to the misfortunes of others are called upon to return it to those families from whom it originally came. Centuries of prophetic indictments of poverty caused by landowners’ abandonment of social responsibilities and absence of compassion equate justice with true knowledge and worship of God (for example, Am. 5:21–24). Jesus describes assistance to the neediest, the sick, the naked, and the imprisoned, as service to the Son of Man (Mt. 25:31–46). He proclaims woe to the

rich and sated after blessing the poor and hungry (Lk. 6:20–26). Biblical economic values demand nothing less than the establishment of economic well-being for all, those present today and those who will follow us, as the purpose of society’s economy and its faithful response to God.

Thus, any economy, regardless of size or form, is judged by its capacity to serve the needs of people, particularly the most vulnerable. This has been the historical witness of the Reformed tradition. For example, the Westminster Larger Catechism interpreted the commandment, “Thou shalt not steal,” to include these positive economic activities: ... giving and lending freely according to our abilities and the necessity of others; moderation of our judgments, wills, and affections concerning worldly goods; ... frugality; ... and an endeavor by all just and lawful means to procure, preserve, and further the wealth and outward estate of others, as well as our own” (7.251).

4. The Doctrine of Discovery is a “false doctrine.” False doctrine is a concern in the *Book of Confessions*, one that is challenged there.

The sins forbidden in the Third Commandment [“Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain”] are: the not using of God’s name as is required; and the abuse of it in an ignorant, vain, irreverent, profane, superstitious, or wicked mentioning or otherwise using the titles, attributes, ordinances, or works; by blasphemy; perjury; all sinful cursing, oaths, vows, and lots; violating our oaths and vows; if lawful; and fulfilling them, if of things unlawful; murmuring and quarreling at, curious prying into, and misapplying of God’s decrees and providence; misinterpreting, misapplying, or any way perverting the Word, or any part of it, to profane jests, curious and unprofitable questions, vain janglings, or the maintaining of false doctrines; abusing it, the creatures, or anything contained under the name of God, to charms, or sinful lusts and practices; the maligning, scorning, reviling, or any way opposing of Gods truth, grace, and ways; making profession of religion in hypocrisy, or for sinister ends; being ashamed of it, or a shame to it, by uncomfortable, unwise, unfruitful, and offensive walking or backsliding from it (*Book of Confessions*, The Larger Catechism, 7.223).

5. The Larger Catechism is not alone in condemning such false doctrine. The Barmen Declaration condemns such the condoning and legitimizing “false doctrine,” doing so in the historical context of German totalitarianism.² The Doctrine of Discovery falls into such category of “false doctrine” only in a different context and practice of the same injustice of totalitarianism.³

See the following citations from The Theological Declaration of Barmen.

“We reject the false doctrine, as though there were areas of our life in which we would not belong to Jesus Christ, but to other lords—areas in which we would not need justification and sanctification through him” (8.15).

“We reject the false doctrine, as though the church were permitted to abandon the form of its message and order to its own pleasure or to changes in prevailing ideological and political convictions” (8.18).

“We reject the false doctrine, as though the church, apart from this ministry, could and were permitted to give to itself, or allow to be given to it, special leaders vested with ruling powers” (8.21).

“We reject the false doctrine, as though the State, over and beyond its special commission, should and could become the single and totalitarian order of human life, thus fulfilling the church’s vocation as well” (8.23).

“We reject the false doctrine, as though the church, over and beyond its special commission, should and could appropriate the characteristics, the tasks, and the dignity of the State, thus itself becoming an organ of the State” (8.24).

“We reject the false doctrine, as though the church in human arrogance could place the Word and word of the Lord in the service of any arbitrarily chosen desires, purposes, and plans” (8.27).

6. Such repudiation of “false doctrine” continues to show in the recent Confession of Belhar, which challenges and condemns the political ideology of apartheid.⁴ That confession notes that its challenges and condemnations are “not aimed at specific people or groups of people or a church or churches,” but instead it can be applied “against an ideological distortion” of any church in different contexts.⁵

We believe [...]

- that the credibility of this message is seriously affected and its beneficial work obstructed when it is proclaimed in a land which professes to be Christian, but in which the enforced separation of people on a racial basis promotes and perpetuates alienation, hatred and enmity;

00 PLENARY

○ that any teaching which attempts to legitimate such forced separation by appeal to the gospel, and is not prepared to venture on the road of obedience and reconciliation, but rather, out of prejudice, fear, selfishness and unbelief, denies in advance the reconciling power of the gospel, must be considered ideology and false doctrine. (10.5)

Therefore, we reject any doctrine which, in such a situation sanctions in the name of the gospel or of the will of God the forced separation of people on the grounds of race and color and thereby in advance obstructs and weakens the ministry and experience of reconciliation in Christ. (10.6)

The *Book of Confessions* itself is evidence for how the church (generally) and this denomination (particularly) can change. The documents that make up the *Book of Confessions* have themselves been revised internally. This is particularly clear in the Westminster Confession as found in the *Book of Confessions* today. The text has been revised, differently, by the two denominations that came together to form the PC(USA) in 1983. Furthermore, adoption of the *Book of Confessions* was a significant change in the denomination, one driven by an awareness that changes in the church's context, in its understanding of the faith, and in its societal and historical context required a confessional statement that is flexible. The denomination has changed that document through the adoption of the Confession of Belhar and the adoption of a new translation of the Heidelberg Catechism.

Endnotes

1. A Social Involvement Report: LIVING THROUGH ECONOMIC CRISIS: THE CHURCH'S WITNESS IN TROUBLED TIMES, Approved by the 219th General Assembly (2010), Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Developed by The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) of the General Assembly Mission Council
2. *Book of Confessions*, 280. "The chief item of business was discussion of a declaration to appeal to the Evangelical churches of Germany to stand from against the German Christian accommodation to National Socialism. The Theological Declaration of Barmen contains six propositions, each quoting from Scripture, stating its implications for the present day, and rejecting the false doctrine of the German Christians. The declaration proclaims the church's freedom in Jesus Christ who is Lord of every area of life. The church obeys him as God's one and only Word who determines its order, ministry, and relation to the state."
3. Specific condemnation about "totalitarianism" follow those confessions that reject false doctrine and false god. The Confessional Synod of the German Evangelical Church met in Barmen, May 29-31, 1934. Here representatives from all the German Confessional churches met with one accord in a confession of the one Lord of the one, holy, apostolic Church. In fidelity to their Confession of Faith, members of Lutheran, Reformed, and United Churches sought a common message for the need and temptation of the Church in our day. With gratitude to God they are convinced that they have been given a common word to utter. It was not their intention to found a new church or to form a union. For nothing was farther from their minds than the abolition of the confessional status of our churches. Their intention was, rather, to withstand in faith and unanimity the destruction of the Confession of Faith, and thus of the Evangelical Church in Germany. In opposition to attempts to establish the unity of the German Evangelical Church by means of false doctrine, by the use force and insincere practices, the Confessional Synod insists that the unity of the Evangelical Churches in Germany can come only from the Word of God in faith through the Holy Spirit. Thus alone is the Church renewed (8.01).

"We reject the false doctrine, as though the church could and would have to acknowledge as a source of its proclamation, apart from and besides this one Word of God, still other events and powers, figures and truths, as God's revelation" (8.12).
4. See *Book of Confessions*, Introduction to the Confession of Belhar, page 300. "How should the church respond when sin disrupts the church's unity, creates division among the children of God, and constructs unjust systems that steal life from God's creation? Members and leaders of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church in South Africa faced these questions under apartheid, a system of laws that separate people by race from 1948-1994. [...] One outcome of their struggles was the emergence of the Confession of Belhar in the early 1980s. [...] The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) approved the Confession of Belhar as part of the *Book of Confessions* at the 222nd General Assembly (2016)."
5. See *Book of Confessions*, Confessions of Belhar, 306 in Accompanying Letter to the Confession of Belhar, no.3. "This confession is not aimed at specific people or groups of people or a church or churches. We proclaim it against a false doctrine, against an ideological distortion that threatens the gospel itself in our church and our country. Our heartfelt longing is that no one will identify himself with this objectionable doctrine and that all who have been wholly or partially blinded by it will turn themselves away from it. We are deeply aware of the deceiving nature of such a false doctrine and know that many who have been conditioned by it have to a greater or lesser extent learnt to take a half-truth for the whole. For this reason we do not doubt the Christian faith of many such people, their sincerity, honor, integrity, and good intentions and their in many ways estimable practice and conduct. However, it is precisely because we know the power of deception that we know we are not liberated by the seriousness, sincerity, or intensity of our certainties, but only by the truth in the Son. Our church and our land have an intense need of such liberation. Therefore it is that we speak pleadingly rather than accusingly. We plead for reconciliation, that true reconciliation which follows on conversion and change of attitudes and structures. And while we do so we are aware that an act of confession is a two-edged sword, that none of us can throw the first stone, and none is without a beam in his own eye. We know that the attitudes and conduct which work against the gospel are present in all of us and will continue to be so. Therefore this confession must be seen as a call to a continuous process of soul searching together, a joint wrestling with the issues, and a readiness to repent in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in a broken world. It is certainly not intended as an act of self-justification and intolerance, for that would disqualify us in the very act of preaching to others."

Item 00-Info-05

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc., Report to the 224th General Assembly (2020)

Vision and Mission Statement
In gratitude for God's abundance,
the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc
promotes the growth of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
bringing together the visions of church developers and
the resources of Presbyterian investors and financial partners.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc. (“ILP” or the “Program”), offers low-cost loans for capital purposes to churches, mid councils, and other organizations within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (the “PC(USA)” or the “Church”). As one of the six agencies of the PC(USA), we are the national lender for the denomination. We fund these loans from two sources, investor funds and endowment funds. The investor funds are raised through the sale of investments called Term Notes and Denominational Account Receipts. These investments provide a competitive financial return to comparable market instruments. They also provide the opportunity for investors to participate in the development of the Church through funding the loans ILP issues - what we refer to as a missional return. Investor-funded loans and the investments themselves are assets and liabilities of ILP.

The endowment funds are the result of donations from generous Presbyterians over many years dating back to 1843—donations given specifically to support the growth and development of the Presbyterian Church. ILP manages the entire loan process for both the investor-funded loan portfolio and the endowment-funded loan portfolio from beginning to end. However, the endowment funds—both the loan portfolios and the uncommitted funds for each endowment fund—are held in trust by the PC(USA) Foundation or the Presbyterian Mission Agency and sit on their respective balance sheets.

Guided by the best practices of the financial industry, ILP is committed to faithful stewardship of the resources entrusted to us for the support and growth of the mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Our deliverance issued at the 207th General Assembly (1995) directed us to lend to Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) organizations “to enable them to acquire or improve real property.” This allows us to lend for almost any “capital purpose.” We can help fund the purchase, construction, expansion, or renovation of worship and mission space. We can also fund the purchase of unimproved land for the purposes of future construction of church buildings or for parking areas. Responding to the 1001 Worshiping Communities initiative and the increased use of rental space by congregations for worship and mission, we began offering loans for leasehold improvements in 2014.

Donor restrictions attached to the endowment funds have similar restrictions allowing for only capital purpose loans. We cannot extend loans to churches for operating expenses, program or mission purposes; nor can we lend to individuals for any purpose.

The last two years [since our reporting to the 223rd General Assembly (2018)] continued the growth trend that began in 2015. (Three of the four years prior to 2015 experienced a declining loan portfolio balance.)

Primary factors stimulating this growth include (1) an increased emphasis on face-to-face meetings with mid council leadership in order to increase our exposure and their understanding of what we can offer their congregations, (2) an increased number of face-to-face meetings with congregations seeking to borrow funds, and (3) an increased exposure at national meetings through active involvement in event planning, increased sponsorships of events, and a greater presence at the actual meetings. Our expanded consulting services (more thoroughly discussed below) were clearly an important part of stimulating this growth as well.

Continuing to emphasize these areas in 2018 and 2019 delivered positive results. Greater recognition and knowledge of our Program across the denomination has broadened, keeping our pipeline of new loans healthy. Even in a time when our new loans closed reached \$31.6M (an extremely active year) and \$24.4M respectively over the past two years, we have been able to backfill our pipeline at record levels. Our pipeline of loans (loans approved not yet closed and closed loans not yet fully disbursed) remains strong at \$29.6M, our second highest year-end figure on record.

Naturally, this sustained healthy pipeline and elevated loan closings has translated into a notable increase in new loan disbursements. Our new loan disbursements over the past two years totaled \$49 million (“M”). This has brought our five-year average annual disbursements to \$24.14M compared to the 2010–2014 average of \$19.10M. The end result of this is that over the last two years we have again increased our disbursed loan portfolio. We ended 2019 with a disbursed loan portfolio of \$155.3M. This is a combined figure including both the investor-funded and endowment-funded loan portfolios. As mentioned above, only the investor-funded loan portfolio sits on ILP’s balance sheet. The endowment-funded loan portfolio remains on the PC(USA) Foundation’s balance sheet as they are the fiduciary for the endowment funds.

Looking at just the investor-funded loan portfolio, we ended 2019 up from our 2017 figure last reported to the General Assembly with a balance of \$94.6M, an increase of \$6.9M (7.9 percent). Since 2014 the total increase has been \$26.6M (39.1 percent).

Having this larger disbursed investor-funded loan portfolio reflects both the need that exists from the various PC(USA) organizations (primarily churches) for unrestricted funding (as opposed to the restricted endowment funds) and our ability to fulfill our mission in providing low-cost funding to these organizations. Equally important is that this larger portfolio enables ILP to move forward in one of our long-term goals: decreasing our net interest rate margin. For many years we have strived to decrease our net interest rate margin which, in turn, would allow us to lower the loan interest rates we charge borrowers. When our loan portfolio increases this allows us to spread our operating costs over a larger base of loans thereby reducing the pressure on the net interest rate margin needed to cover operations.

Over this period of growth in our loan portfolio we have decreased our net interest rate margin by 0.80 percent or 80 basis points. When combined with proper management of our cost of funds, we were able to pass along significant savings to our borrowers in the form of lower loan interest rates. As market rates climbed between 2015 and 2018, including nine increases in the prime rate totally 2.25 percent, we were able to limit our increase of loan rates to only 0.50 percent. This not only helped our new borrowers it helped all our borrowers as existing loans repriced. The estimated combined savings to our borrowers was \$808,000 in 2018 and \$1,224,000 in 2019.

Although the endowment-funded loans enjoyed the same benefit of lower rates, the endowment-funded loan portfolio did not experience the growth seen in the investor-funded portfolio. Although still quite active, restrictions on endowments limit the type and size of projects/loans the endowments can fund. The endowments fund the smaller projects, the smaller loans—often to the smaller churches. Although we still had many loans using endowment funds, the total dollar amounts were significantly less and insufficient to replace the loans being paid down or paid off. Therefore, the portfolio actually declined, as it has for the past ten years. First hit by the financial crisis of 2008/2009, then by the loss of churches to declining membership and denominational issues, the restrictions on the endowments have not allowed the recovery that the investor-funded portfolio has experienced.

The good news on the endowment-funded lending portfolio? Over the past two years we have been able to increase the loan pipeline dramatically, increasing by 134 percent as we have grown the overall awareness in the Program. So, although the size of the endowment-funded portfolio declined, the rate of decline slowed considerably from \$11M in 2016–2017 to \$4M in 2018–2019. More importantly, we are still meeting the borrowing needs of the Church—just more of the funds are coming from investor funds than endowment funds. We continue to work on ways to put more of these endowment dollars to work as the donors intended.

One very important development that occurred to help us more efficiently manage the endowment-funded lending was the final consolidation of operations for both endowment-funded lending and investor-funded lending. Since 2000, the marketing, underwriting, administration, and servicing of both lending programs have been combined under ILP. However, final loan approval, loan policies, and overall governance remained segregated; the ILP Board had the responsibility of the investor-funded program and the Mission Development Resources Committee, with the oversight of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, had the responsibility of the endowment-funded program.

In 2018 we completed a lengthy process of bringing together all aspects of both lending programs under ILP. This Consolidation of Mission project has achieved exactly what was intended. It has made the workings of the two loan programs more efficient with both time and cost. It has allowed the Mission Development Resources Committee to focus on the grant issuing programs with which they are charged by the General Assembly. Most importantly, it has allowed ILP to be much nimbler in reacting (and proacting) to the needs of our borrowing churches and other PC(USA) organizations.

Another significant development resulted from our desire to remain current in serving the borrowing needs of our changing Church. As the direction of mission continues to evolve throughout the PC(USA)

we were finding that more and more church and presbytery mission projects were being structured in a manner that did not allow us to provide funding. Mission initiatives are increasingly being set up as separate entities from the church or presbytery to give them more latitude in fund raising and grant generation. Given our charge to be lenders to Presbyterian owned or controlled entities, this disqualifies them as borrowers of our Program. Even if it the entity is funded and led by Presbyterians, if the bylaws do not restrict majority control to Presbyterians, we are unable to lend to the organization. We were able to change this. After taking necessary steps of review and approval, the Presbyterian Mission Agency (that has the authority within our Deliverance to approve other services ILP can offer) approved our recommendation allowing ILP to lend to organizations that were approved as validated ministries of a presbytery. This will definitely open up possibilities in the future for us to partner with churches and mid-councils in their work for vital mission initiatives.

Behind all these numbers and structural changes are many loans for new construction, major maintenance projects, real estate purchases, updates to buildings and expansions as congregations strive to create the space that best suits their everchanging mission and ministry. We also offer the refinancing of current loans. The refinancing loans have been a mix of those seeking better rates and those seeking a loan structure and terms that better fit their church's cash flow. Behind these numbers are a countless number of Presbyterians finding new ways to do mission—developing and enhancing the space they need to accomplish it.

Throughout both 2018 and 2019 ILP was able to generate a surplus, something achieved for the past nineteen consecutive years. This is very important to our regulators. As we are not a commercial bank, we are not subject to oversight from federal regulators. However, for the protection of those that purchase our investments we are reviewed on an annual basis by security administrative regulators in every state, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. These regulators generally use the North American Securities Administrators Association Statement of Policy as guidelines for their oversight. Generating a surplus is one of the primary guidelines.

In addition to meeting the regulatory requirement, surpluses help assure investors of the strength of our Program, help provide capital for future expansion of the Program, and help raise our capital adequacy ratio (another regulatory item). The combined surpluses from 2018 and 2019 have helped us toward our goal of building our capital adequacy beyond the 5 percent required by regulators. Our short-term goal of reaching the 10 percent level was met in 2016. Our next goal is to reach 15 percent. According to preliminary yearend figures, at the end of 2019, ILP had \$14.6M in unrestricted net assets which supported a capital adequacy of 13.1 percent—up from 11.4 percent two years ago. **

ILP's investment products are securities regulated under The Uniform Securities Act which is administered state-by-state. The North American Securities Administrators Association (mentioned above) establishes program guidelines for denominational investment and loan programs. At the end of 2019 ILP exceeded all of the guidelines. In addition to the capital adequacy previously discussed, ILP is expected to maintain a liquidity ratio of liquid assets to Term Notes and Denominational Account Receipts ("DARs") of at least 8 percent. At the end of 2019 our liquidity ratio was 19.9 percent. Another primary guideline is the limitation of senior secured debt to no more than 10 percent of total assets. At the end of 2019 ILP had no senior secured debt.

Our low-cost loans have low interest rates, no application fees or points, and no prepayment penalties and we also offer an opportunity that no other lender we know has, the opportunity to get back some of the interest paid. Through the "Get the Point" program, borrowing congregations earn rebates based on supporting investments. This lowers the effective interest rate on their loans. For 2019 ILP returned \$279,329 to borrowing congregations, bringing the total returned to congregations since the inception of the rebate program to over \$4.5 million. This is \$4.5 million that went right back into the mission and ministry of those congregations.

Equally important to the loans we offer is the consulting services we provide. We have issued over two thousand loans to Presbyterian organizations over the years—the vast majority to churches. We have gained a wealth of knowledge over this time. Working with congregations and presbyteries to help them determine the appropriate size project and loan amount, cash flow requirements and debt service capabilities, can help avoid severe pitfalls. We work with the congregation to determine the best loan package for their project.

Many lenders only look at the first five or seven years of the church's cash flow to determine debt service capability. We review the cash flow and debt service requirements through the life of the loan, until the debt is retired. We want the congregation to understand the short and long-term financial commitments and the leadership to set the appropriate financial expectations in front their congregation. Our goal is to help the congregation avoid a future situation where the debt service for a loan has any negative impact on their ability to fulfill the mission and ministry of their church.

Upon the request of their Board and Synod, in late 2012 we began the process of transferring the ministry of the Church Development Corporation ("CDC"), an investment and loan program of the Synod of Mid-America, to ILP. They felt that services were being duplicated and if ILP could service the borrowing needs of the synod, they would be able to use their resources for other programs. All the loans to be refinanced have been completed and all their issued investments have been reinvested with ILP or redeemed. This process took about two years longer than we had hoped due to the complexity of addressing investments to individuals who could not be found or who had passed away. We anticipate finishing the winding down of CDC late this year.

The 221st General Assembly (2014) had a tremendous amount of interest surrounding the fossil fuel issue. As a positive step in responding to the General Assembly's fossil fuel concerns, the Program and the PC(USA) Foundation met in 2014 to explore the possibility of encouraging proactive steps within congregations to advance green initiatives. A new loan product was developed in 2015 named the "Restoring Creation Loan" that is available to churches and other PC(USA) organizations for the funding of sustainable energy systems, highly efficient heating/cooling systems, or other improvements aimed at reducing their carbon footprint. This loan can be up to \$600,000 and offers very low rates, easier equity terms, and utilizes the cost savings into the debt repayment plan. Rather than just responding to borrowing needs from churches and other PC(USA) organizations, our goal is to proactively initiate renovation/construction projects that intentionally reduce our denomination's carbon footprint while moving energy savings into mission opportunities. By 2019 yearend we had issued \$13.3M of Restoring Creation Loans to help 94 churches improve their energy efficiency.

Toward the end of 2016 we introduced another loan, the Accessibility Loan. This loan not only incentivizes building projects that improve physical accessibility to PC(USA) churches and other buildings but also visual and aural accessibility. This too has a discounted interest rate to promote such projects. As of 2019 yearend we had issued \$3.5M in Accessibility Loans to help twenty churches improve their accessibility.

At the 223rd General Assembly (2018) an action was approved for ILP and the Presbyterian Mission Agency to consider forgiveness of mortgage grants established in 1968 or earlier only to congregations closing and turning over their assets to their presbyteries. With the change in the scope of ILP's authority related to endowment-funded lending discussed above, the sole authority over mortgage grants was passed to ILP.

Mortgage grants must be paid off when a church building is sold, when a congregation leaves the denomination, or (for most mortgage grants) when the building is no longer used by the PC(USA). We did implement a program whereby if an existing congregation or a presbytery responsible for a mortgage grant pays off the mortgage grant prior to any of these events occurring, the principal due would be discounted by 35 percent and all interest would be waived. We have had several grantees take advantage of this since implementation.

We have been intentional in our review of all mortgage grants issued to congregations closing, congregations not closing but selling their church building, and to congregations leaving the denomination. We have found that to be true to the stewardship of resources for the Church, to respect the wishes of those donors that gifted the endowment funds, and to be sensitive to the differing financial circumstances of the congregations and presbyteries involved, each mortgage grant situation must be reviewed and decided on a case by case basis.

All funds (principal and interest) received in the payment of mortgage grants go back into endowment funds to be issued as new loans, as grants for New Worshiping Communities programs, or as grants to financially challenged congregations applying for loans to fund essential capital improvements.

ILP has maintained careful underwriting standards. Although sensitive to the nature of church finances within our underwriting process, we believe that relaxed standards do not benefit the lender or the borrower. We maintain a review process for all lending relationships and work intentionally with presbyteries, who guarantee our loans. This process has resulted in a loan portfolio that continues to have low delinquency rates and a very high collection history. At the end of 2019, there was a total of four 30-day or longer delinquencies.

ILP continues to be in sound financial shape. The balance sheet is strong with total assets of \$111 million. As mentioned above, our financial ratios are at healthy levels. We have received an unqualified audit every year since our inception. We have been approved for the sale of our Term Notes in every state and jurisdiction for every year since we began our general offering of Term Notes. Although the size of our loan portfolio had previously fluctuated for several years, we generated surpluses every year (including during the financial crisis) through close management of assets and liabilities, operating expenses, pricing, and margins.

In November 2018, the president of ILP, James G. Rissler, was re-elected by the Board of Directors of ILP for an additional term of four years. This is Rissler's second term in this position. His election will be put forward to this General Assembly for confirmation.

We remain committed to promoting awareness of ILP throughout the Church. We continually work to maintain strong and healthy ties with General Assembly agencies and mid-councils as we firmly believe in and support the connectional nature of our denomination. We continue to build a competent and diverse staff to serve the church.

Our hope is that ILP will be the premier provider of financing for capital projects within the PC(USA). We want Presbyterians to think about ILP first when it comes to financing a capital project of any size. We have issued loans under \$25,000 and over \$8,000,000. We will not compromise our underwriting standards to grow the business but will build the kind of relationships that help congregations determine what they can afford and what they cannot. We are building an investment base of individuals that has a vision of investing for financial and mission return. We are making it possible for Presbyterians to lend to Presbyterians.

The Board of Directors of ILP is elected by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and confirmed by the General Assembly. The 2019–2020 Board of Directors includes:

Nathan Anderson	J. Herbert Nelson II, Ex-officio
Steven Bass, Chair	Manley Olson
Gregory Chan	James Parks
Sharon Core	Stephen Rhoades
Margaret Cyrus	Josephene Stewart
Kathy Lueckert, Ex-officio	Richard H. White
Thomas McNeill, Vice Chair	Donald Wingate
Rafael Medina	In Yang

The Officers of the Corporation in 2019 were:

James G. Rissler, President and Chief Executive Officer
 Lorraine Recchia, Senior Vice President Finance and Administration and Treasurer
 Clare Lewis, Vice President Sales and Marketing
 Michael Kirk, Secretary
 Laura J. Olliges, Assistant Treasurer

**Note: Audited financial statements for 2019 will be attached upon completion for presentation to the General Assembly.

Item 00-Info-06

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation Report

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation (“A Corporation”) is a corporate entity of the General Assembly. It was originally created in 1799. It holds funds and title to property in accordance with the 1986 Deliverance of the General Assembly, its Articles of Incorporation, and its Bylaws. In essence, A Corporation is the “business office” of the General Assembly, enabling the General Assembly to conduct any number of transactions with the secular world.

For several years before 2018, the members of the board of A Corporation were the same as the members of the Presbyterian Mission Agency and its predecessor bodies. The 223rd General Assembly (2018) decided to make the A Corporation board smaller and separate it from the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. This was so that A Corporation could focus on administrative and corporate work, and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board could focus on mission.

Some significant facts about A Corporation:

- A Corporation is the employer of record for the Office of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and the Administrative Services Group (478 staff, including 98 overseas mission personnel).
- A Corporation has assets of \$592 million and operating budgets of \$93 million.
- The Administrative Services Group budget in 2019 was \$14.9 million.

Governance. The A Corporation is governed by a board of directors who are elected by the General Assembly. There are designated board directors from Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (“COGA”), Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program (“ILP”) Board, Presbyterian Mission Agency (“PMA”) Board, Presbyterian Publishing Corporation (“PPC”) Board, Presbyterian Foundation Board, Presbyterian Women in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc. (“Presbyterian Women”), the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee, and the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns. There are three at-large directors.

Primary Client Relationships. A Corporation has its primary client partner relationships with the Office of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, and Presbyterian Women. The work of A Corporation is carried out by the Administrative Services Group (ASG).

Administrative Services Group

A Corporation, through the staff of the Administrative Services Group (ASG), provides the services of Finance, Accounting, Reporting, Treasury, Legal Services, Human Resources, Internal Audit, Global Language Resources Services, Information Technology, Distribution Services, Mail/Print Services, Research Services, Risk Management, and Building Services. The primary client partners of ASG are the General Assembly and its commissions, committees, and task forces, the Office of the General Assembly, and the Presbyterian Mission Agency. Services are provided on a contract basis to the PC(USA) Investment and Loan Program, Inc., Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, and Presbyterian Women. A Corporation may provide services to the Board of Pensions and the Presbyterian Foundation from time to time.

Mission. The mission of the Administrative Services Group is to support client partners so that their ministries flourish.

Goal. The goal of the Administrative Services Group is to be the preferred provider of administrative services to Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) agencies and entities.

Operating Principles. The following principles guide ASG’s work:

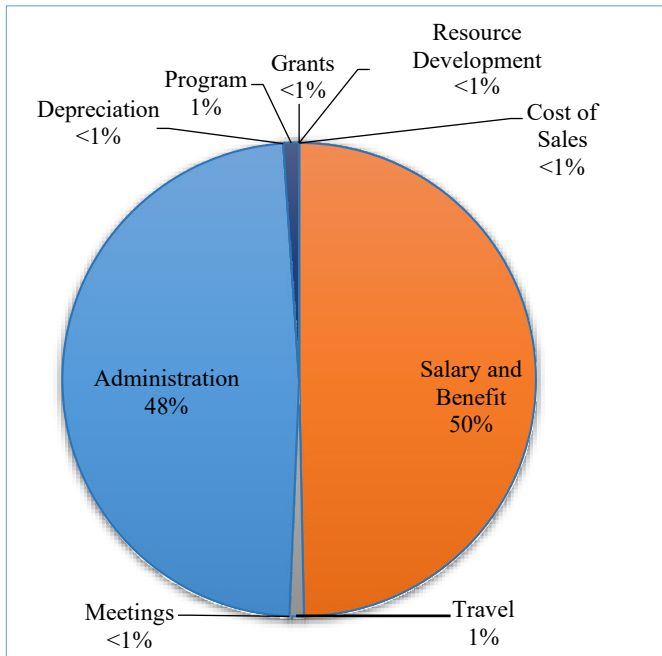
1. ASG earns trust every day by doing what we say we will do.
2. ASG provides timely, factual, neutral, and prudent information to decision makers, as transparently as possible. ASG itself does not make decisions about mission.
3. ASG provides honest, timely, professional, effective business services to client partners.
4. ASG demonstrates good stewardship of resources entrusted to the church by delivering services that are successful, simple, sustainable, and safe.

5. ASG “has the back” of the its client partner agencies and entities and their staff.

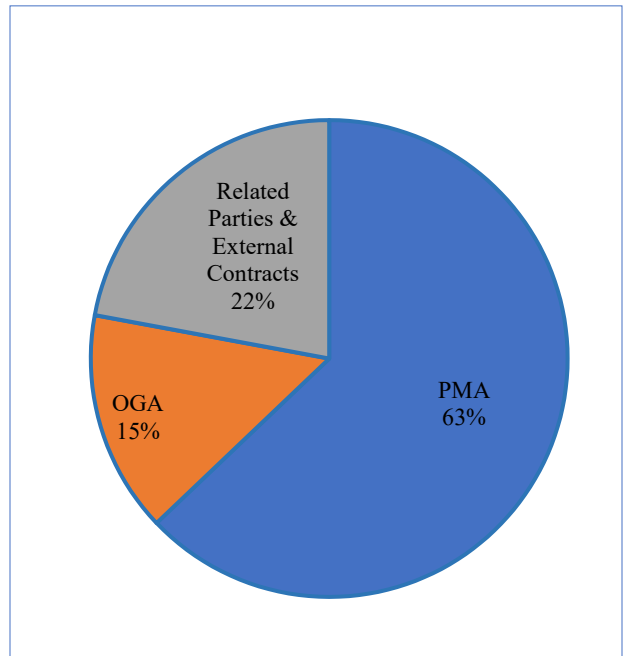
Funding and Expenses. Funding for the work of ASG comes from three sources: the Office of the General Assembly (OGA), the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA), and contracts for services (agreements with PILP, PPC, PW, and a tenant lease). See the following charts for 2019 budget information.

2019 Approved Budget

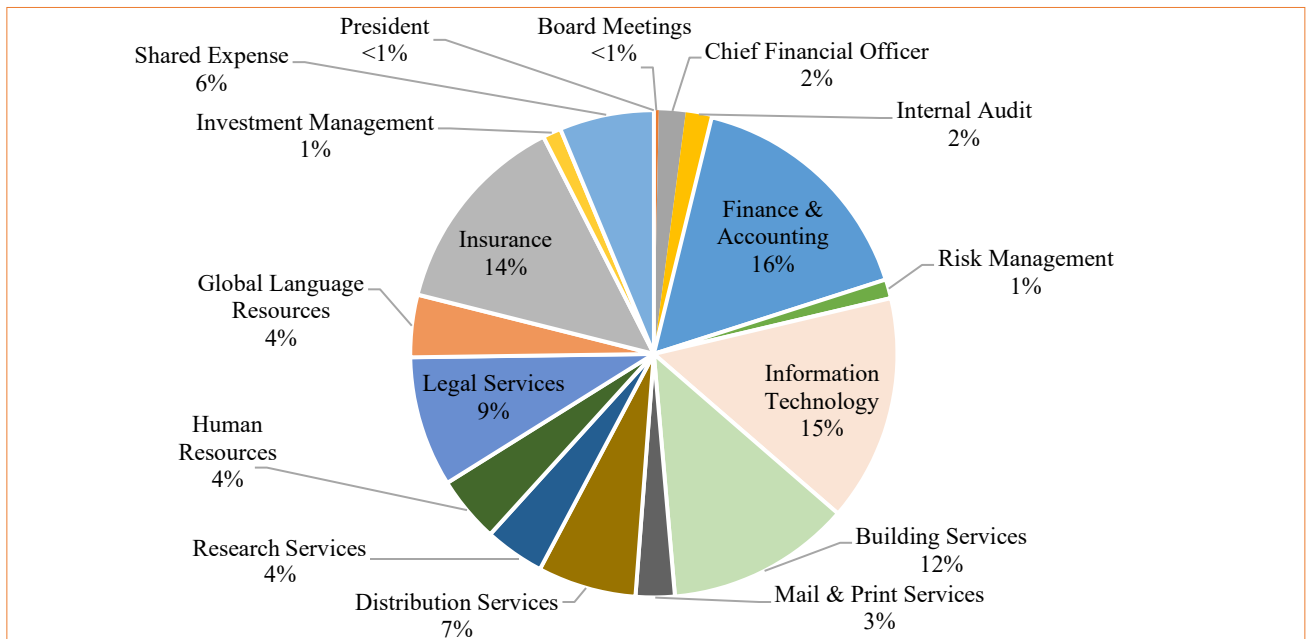
Functional Classification of Expenses



Where Does the Money Come From?



How Will the Money Be Spent?



A Corporation: 2018–2019

The Board of Directors of A Corporation began meeting in September 2018. Their work has centered on several areas: governance, relationships, personnel actions, financial actions, and Global Language Resources.

Governance

- The A Corporation board elected Bridget-Anne Hampden and Christopher M. Mason as co-chairs.
- Three committees were established and chartered: Nominating, Governance, and Personnel; Audit, Legal, and Risk Management; and Finance, Operations, and Budget.
- The A Corporation board established a Translations Task Force to fulfill the directives of the 223rd General Assembly (2018).
- Revised and approved A Corporation's bylaws to bring them into conformance with the actions of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) and approved an Ethics Policy for A Corporation board members.

Relationships

- Acknowledged the Native American people on whose land the A Corporation Board met, at every meeting.
- Focused on building strong board-to-board relationships with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.
- Supported the work of the Moving Forward Implementation Commission, including conducting a survey of ASG users as an aid in evaluating A Corporation and ASG.
- Invited the Moving Forward Implementation Commission to attend A Corporation board meetings and invited a Moving Forward member to join the Translation Task Force.
- Attended the meetings of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.
- Requested that the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly amend the *Manual of the General Assembly* to add the co-chairs of the A Corporation board, the president of A Corporation, and certain ASG staff as corresponding members of the General Assembly.

Personnel Actions

- Approved a new structure for A Corporation, with three divisions: the Office of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and the Administrative Services Group (common and shared services staff, formerly in the Presbyterian Mission Agency).
- Created the Administrative Services Group (ASG) as the staff for the A Corporation.
- Created a Universal Employee Handbook, aligning the personnel policies of the Office of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and the ASG.
- Conducted a presidential search and elected Katherine McMullen Lueckert as president of A Corporation for a four-year term, subject to confirmation by the 224th General Assembly (2020).
- Conducted a search and hired a global language resources manager.
- Conducted a search and hired a general counsel.
- Began search for chief financial officer/chief operating officer.

Financial Actions

- Received the audit report for 2018.
- Supported the work of the Financial Sustainability Task Force and the Per Capita Task Force.
- Worked collaboratively with the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency to develop a cost allocation that will fund the work of ASG.

Global Language Resources (through the Translation Task Force)

- Conducted research into how other denominations manage translation and interpretation services.
- Learned how the six PC(USA) agencies manage translation and interpretation services.
- Engaged an outside consultant to advise on translation and interpretation services.
- Held listening sessions at Big Tent and Mid Council Leader Gathering.
- Hired global language resources manager.
- Supported the global language resources manager in the request for proposal process for translation software, to be deployed in January 2020.

In the coming years A Corporation looks forward to serving the General Assembly as the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) seeks to further Christ's mission in the world.

Respectfully,

Bridget-Anne Hampden, Co-Chair, Charlotte, North Carolina

Christopher M. Mason, Co-Chair, New York, New York

Samuel Bonner, Burlington, New Jersey

Cynthia Campbell, Louisville, Kentucky

Julie Cox, Hartsville, South Carolina

Sinthia Hernandez-Diaz, Miami, Florida

Thomas McNeill, Jr, Avon, Connecticut

Thomas Priest Jr., New Bern, North Carolina

JoAnne Sharp, Stafford, Virginia

William Teng, Lake Suzy, Florida

Carol Winkler, Dayton, Kentucky

Item 00-Info-07

Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC) Agency Summary

I. Introduction

The committee is composed of twelve regular members representing African Americans, Native Americans, Latina/o Americans, Asian Americans, Middle Eastern Americans.

The 2018–20 membership of the committee is as follows:

- Thomas Priest, chair; National Black Presbyterian Caucus representative; member of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) A Corporation Board (A Corp)
- Michelle Hwang, vice-chair; Asian American, at-large; member of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB)
- Noha Khoury Bailey, secretary; Middle Eastern American, at-large; member of the committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI)
- Adebisi Shofu, chair of Study and Comment Subcommittee; at-large; liaison to the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR)
- Tony Aja, chair of Resource and Referral Subcommittee; National Hispanic/Latino/a Presbyterian Caucus representative
- Flora Wilson Bridges, African American at-large; liaison to the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC)
- Eun Sung Cho, at-large

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- Fern Cloud, Native American Consulting Committee representative
- Sarang Kang, National Asian Presbyterian Council representative
- Sameh Shaker, National Middle Eastern Presbyterian Caucus representative
- Holly Haile Thompson, Native American, at-large
- Vacancy: Hispanic/Latino/a, at-large

The committee was staffed by Courtney Hoekstra, associate for Advocacy Committee Support, Presbyterian Mission Agency, and Sherri Pettway, administrative assistant, Presbyterian Mission Agency.

II. Assigned Functions

The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC) works to fulfill its General Assembly mandate to provide advocacy and monitoring on issues affecting people of color in both church and society. The committee evaluates social trends in church and society and provides advice and counsel to the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB). The committee addresses issues, including civil rights, racial justice, environmental justice, economic justice, public education, law enforcement, health care, employment, and housing as they directly impact communities of color and thereby the entire body of Christ. The committee also monitors the implementation of programs and policies approved by the church that impact the participation and quality of life for people of color within the church. The REAC works in close cooperation with other agencies and entities within the church, including the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC), the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP), and the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) to fulfill its responsibilities. The REAC's assigned functions, as stated in the *Presbyterian Mission Agency Manual of Operations* include the following:

- a. Prepare policy statements, resolutions, recommendations, reports, and advice and counsel memoranda on racial and justice equity to the General Assembly at the request of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, or on its own initiative.
- b. Advise the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board on matters of racial and justice equity issues including statements concerning pressing issues that the council may wish to consider between meetings of the General Assembly.
- c. Provide advice and counsel to the General Assembly and its committees on overtures, commissioners' resolutions, reports, and actions before the General Assembly that have a specific racial justice impact.
- d. Assist the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy in maintaining an up-to-date and accurate compilation of General Assembly policy on issues of racial justice and equity and provide information to the church as requested.
- e. Provide the Stated Clerk, the Moderator of the General Assembly, and the President/Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board with information as they fulfill their responsibilities to communicate and interpret General Assembly racial justice policies.
- f. Monitor the implementation of racial justice policies and programs.
- g. Through advocacy maintain a strong prophetic witness to the church and for the church on existing and emerging racial justice and equity issues.

The committee has direct access to the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB). One member of REAC is also a member of the PMAB, and one member also serves as a member of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) A Corporation Board (A Corp). The REAC receives one corresponding member seat at the General Assembly.

III. Officers for 2018–2020

The 2018–2020 Executive Committee of REAC consists of Thomas Priest, chair; Michelle Hwang, vice-chair; Noha Khoury Bailey, secretary; Nahida Gordon, chair of Resource and Referral Subcommittee; Victor Hamel, chair of Study and Comment Subcommittee.

IV. Accomplishments

The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC) used its regularly scheduled meetings to explore a wide range of topics of special interest to the committee and its work. The REAC hears and responds to reports at each meeting from each of the

caucus, council, and coordinating committee representatives, as well as from liaisons to and from other groups. At most meetings in Louisville, Ky., the REAC connects with various staff people in the building to connect with the work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) and the Office of the General Assembly (OGA), in particular.

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) directed that the agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) begin each meeting with an acknowledgement of the Indigenous peoples on whose land they are meeting. The REAC has committed to this practice at the beginning of each meeting.

In 2018, following the 223rd General Assembly (2018), the committee met as follows:

a. October 17–19, 2018, in Louisville, Ky. After an orientation session for new members, the REAC’s first meeting after General Assembly focused heavily on actions taken at the General Assembly that were focused on racial justice. Based on this review and current racial justice issues in the church, country, and world, the REAC set some priorities for its work during this two-year cycle.

In 2019, the committee continued its work with the following schedule of meetings and content summaries:

b. February 26–28, 2019, in Charleston, S.C. The REAC met at St. James Presbyterian Church after participating in a “Slavery to Freedom” tour offering a history of enslaved peoples in Charleston. The REAC received greetings from the general presbyter of Charleston Atlantic Presbytery and connected with clergy from St. James, the Reverend Dr. Brian Henderson and the Reverend Cecelia Armstrong. The committee heard from Rob Fohr, director of the Office of Faith-Based Investing and Corporate Engagement, on the work of the committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI). The REAC continued to work on follow-up items from the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

c. June 12–14, 2019, in Fort Yates, N.D. The committee met at the Standing Rock Reservation and learned from LaDonna Allard about the struggles of the Indigenous people there to protect their land from corporate oil interests and government interference. The committee discussed a situation of racism in the Presbytery of Detroit and REAC’s part in working to initiate change. The REAC began to consider what items might need to be sent to the 224th General Assembly (2020).

d. October 17–19, 2019, in Baltimore, Md. The REAC spent a portion of the time meeting in conjunction with members of the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) and the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) in which they discussed collaboration and communication moving forward. The REAC met with the Reverend Dr. J. Herbert Nelson, Jr., Stated Clerk of the General Assembly and the Reverend Jimmie Hawkins, director of the Office of Public Witness. The committee discussed concerns around the all-agency Equity and Inclusion Audit and the Board of Pensions’ use of a separate auditor. The REAC worked on drafts of resolutions to the 224th General Assembly (2020).

In 2020, the committee had its final full-committee meeting prior to the 224th General Assembly:

e. January 8–10, 2020, in El Paso, Tex. The REAC was led by Amanda Craft and Teresa Waggener, both from the Office of Immigration Issues in the Office of the General Assembly, in learning about issues at the border. The committee visited Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, as well as an immigration detention center in El Paso, as well as the Hope Border Institute. Time spent in El Paso and Ciudad Juarez greatly influenced the work that the REAC has brought to the 224th General Assembly (2020). The committee discussed, drafted, edited, and reviewed resolutions to be submitted to the General Assembly.

V. Items of Business for the 224th General Assembly (2020)

1. Resolutions Submitted to the 224th General Assembly (2020)

- *A Resolution for a Mission Co-Worker on the Southern Texas Border*
- *A Resolution on Collaborating with the Hope Border Institute*
- *A Resolution to Establish a Network of Immigration Lawyers*
- *A Resolution Addressing the Lack of Installed Pastoral Leadership in People of Color Congregations in the PC(USA)*
- *A Resolution on Chartering Immigrant Fellowships*

- *A Resolution on Receiving Immigrant Pastors as Members of the Presbytery*
- *A Resolution to Make 100 Witherspoon Street a Sanctuary Space*

2. Resolutions Submitted Jointly with ACWC

- *A Resolution for Transwomen of Color*
- *A Resolution on Reproductive Justice: Black Maternal and Infant Mortality*
- *A Resolution on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two Spirit People*

Item 00-Info-08

Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) Agency Summary

“The [Holy One] is a stronghold for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble.” (Ps. 9:9, NRSV adapted)

“The Spirit told me to go with them and not to make a distinction between them and us.” (Acts 11:12a, NRSV)

“Be doers of the word, and not merely hearers.” (Jas. 1:22a, NRSV)

I. Introduction

The context of women’s advocacy is a human situation where women experience injustice because they are women. Grounded in communal faith in God, who liberated the people of Israel from oppression, covenanted with Israel that they might do justice, and motivated by painful recognition of sexism within and without, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) explicitly articulated in the Articles of Agreement its commitment to work against gender-based discrimination. The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) is a contemporary fulfillment of this promise. The *Book of Order* continues to uphold this commitment: “In Christ, by the power of the Spirit, God unites persons through baptism regardless of race, ethnicity, age, sex, disability, geography, or theological conviction. There is therefore no place in the life of the Church for discrimination against any person” (*Book of Order*, F-1.0403). Created by the mandate of the 205th General Assembly (1993) at the recommendation of the *Report of the Task Force on Shape and Form*, ACWC is charged with the responsibility of assisting the church to:

give full expression to the rich diversity of its membership as specified in the *Book of Order*, G-4.0403 . . . monitor[ing] and evaluat[ing] policies, procedures, programs, and resources regarding the way in which they impact the status and position of women in the church . . . and advocate[ing] for full inclusiveness and equity in all areas of the life and work of the church in society as a whole (*Minutes*, 1994, Part I, p. 262).

II. Assigned Responsibilities

The ACWC's assigned functions are delineated in the *Presbyterian Mission Agency Manual of Operations*.

They include the following:

- Preparing policy statements, resolutions, recommendations, reports, and advice and counsel memoranda on women's concerns to the General Assembly at the request of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, or on its own initiative.
- Advising the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board on matters of women's concerns including statements concerning pressing issues that the board may wish to consider between meetings of the General Assembly.
- Providing advice and counsel to the General Assembly and its committees on overtures, commissioners' resolutions, reports, and actions before the General Assembly that impact issues of women's concerns.
- Assisting the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy in maintaining an up-to-date and accurate compilation of General Assembly policy on women's concerns and providing information to the church as requested.
- Providing the Stated Clerk, the Moderator of the General Assembly, and the Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency with information as they fulfill their responsibilities to communicate and interpret General Assembly policies on women's concerns.
- Monitoring the implementation of women's policies and programs relative to women's concerns.
- Through advocacy maintaining a strong prophetic witness to the church and for the church on existing and emerging issues of women's concerns.

The committee has direct access to the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB), while their staff is housed in the Executive Director's office of the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA). The ACWC has organized itself with a shared leadership model of three co-chairs. There are twelve voting members of the committee; eleven members are nominated by the General Assembly Nom-

inating Committee (GANC) and elected by the General Assembly. They are chosen based on their individual qualifications and do not represent any constituencies. One member is the current vice moderator for Justice and Peace of Presbyterian Women and sent by that body. The ACWC also sends three members (or former members) to other bodies. These members hold dual memberships, one with each of the following bodies: the committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI), the PMAB, and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) A Corporation Board (A Corp).

Members who were newly elected to the committee in 2018 were Cecelia Armstrong, Madison McKinney, JoAnne Sharp (A Corp member), and Courtney Steininger (filling a two-year partial term from a vacancy). Floretta Barbee-Watkins (PMAB member) was reelected for a second term. Voting members who continued from the previous term were Terry Alexander (resigned in 2019), Jon Forbes, Mary McClintock Fulkerson, Jeanne Choy Tate, and Susan Carter Wiggins. Joy Durrant joined ACWC as Presbyterian Women vice moderator for Justice and Peace. Kerri Allen, former member of ACWC, served as the member serving on MRTI.

The committee also welcomed liaison members from the following partner groups: Flora Wilson Bridges from the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC), Philomena Ofori from the National Association of Presbyterian Clergywomen (NAPC), Catherine Knott from the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR), and Sylvia Thorson-Smith from the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

III. Gatherings and Foci

At each of ACWC's meetings, the committee reviews and evaluates its work. The ACWC has also committed to an intersectional approach to gender justice, taking into account the various intersections of women's identities, including but not limited to, race, physical and mental ability, and class. Each meeting includes reports from all liaison and dual members on the work of the groups to whom they are connected.

This cycle, ACWC divided their work priorities into three working groups:

- Gender and Leadership
- Women of Color
- Sexual and Reproductive Justice

Each group met at each face-to-face meeting, as well as electronically between meetings, in order to complete their work. The full committee had the benefit of learning from the work of each of the groups

at each meeting. Ultimately, these groups set the priorities for ACWC heading into the 224th General Assembly (2020).

2018–2020 ACWC Meeting Highlights

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) directed that the agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) begin each meeting with an acknowledgement of the Indigenous peoples on whose land they are meeting. The ACWC has made this their practice at the beginning of each meeting.

The ACWC had five in-person meetings of the full committee.

October 25–27, 2018, in Atlanta, Ga.

- Participated in cultural proficiency training with Crossroads Antiracism
- Set work priorities for the 2018–2020 work cycle
- Reviewed business and planned follow-up needed from the 223rd General Assembly (2018)

January 7–9, 2019, in Louisville, Ky.

- Participated in implicit bias training
- Met and prayed with staff at the Presbyterian Center, including the Reverend Dr. Diane Givens Moffett, President/Executive Director, PMA, and the Reverend Dr. J. Herbert Nelson, Jr., Stated Clerk of the General Assembly; they also received greetings from Cindy Kohlmann, Co-Moderator of the 223rd General Assembly (2018)

May 16–19, 2019, in Charleston, S.C.

- Connected with local members of Presbyterian Women, Charleston Atlantic Presbytery staff, and the staff of St. James Presbyterian Church, Charleston, S.C.
- Participated in Slavery to Freedom Tour
- Identified urgent current issues for ACWC to address and made work plans in working groups

November 7–9, 2019, in Louisville, Ky.

- Met with staff from PMA, the Office of the General Assembly (OGA), A Corp, and the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation (PPC) on various gender justice concerns

- Heard a presentation, “Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirit People,” by Madison McKinney
- Heard a presentation, “Black Maternal and Infant Mortality,” by Flora Wilson Bridges
- Worked on drafting resolutions for the 224th General Assembly (2020)

January 15–17, 2020, in Austin, Tex.

- Met with local clergywomen and heard their gender justice concerns
- Spent extensive time in working groups researching and finalizing General Assembly Resolutions
- Voted on recommendations for General Assembly

IV. Actions of the ACWC for Consideration of the 224th General Assembly (2020)

1. ACWC’s Resolutions to the 224th General Assembly (2020)

- *A Resolution to Advocate for the Reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act*
- *A Resolution on Preventing, Reporting, and Responding to Bullying, Harassment, and Assault*
- *A Resolution on Celebrating the Gifts of Women and their Contributions to the Life of the Church*
- *A Resolution on Reproductive Justice*

2. *Self-Study Report of the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns*

3. Resolutions Submitted Jointly with REAC

- *A Resolution for Transwomen of Color*
- *A Resolution on Reproductive Justice: Black Maternal and Infant Mortality*
- *A Resolution on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two Spirit People*

Item 00-Info-09

Presbyterian Publishing Corporation Agency Summary—2020

Mission Statement

“Building on the Reformed tradition, the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation seeks to glorify God by contributing to the spiritual vitality of Christ’s church. To that end, PPC publishes resources that advance religious scholarship, stimulate conversation about moral values, and inspire faithful living.”

Introducing the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation

The Presbyterian Publishing Corporation (PPC), one of the six agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), exists to serve and support the church’s mission. To do so, PPC combines an emphasis on the mission and ministry of the PC(USA), the needs of pastors, worship leaders, and church educators, and the publishing of cutting-edge religious scholarship with a strategic focus on customer service and the employment of sound business practices. PPC, which has a religious publishing heritage of more than 180 years, was formally incorporated in 1994 as a nonprofit corporation. PPC is financially self-sustaining, funding itself through sales of books and resources.

PPC carries out its work by building on the Reformed theological tradition and its commitment to the ministry of the Word, the life of the mind, and engagement with the needs of the world. Accordingly, PPC’s publications are intended to address the needs of the denomination, to make original contributions to religious and theological scholarship, and to examine ethical and social issues that confront church leaders, laypeople, and the wider society. These publications include but are not limited to

- educational and worship resources for Presbyterian congregations and members,
- practical and thought-provoking material for pastors and other church professionals,
- theological and religious books and other materials for use in religious higher education,
- children’s books for use in churches, homes, schools, and libraries,
- books on spirituality, Bible study, Christian living, life challenges, and social justice for mainline and other Christians and for the religiously unaffiliated.

PPC also initiates and oversees the day-to-day work of the one-stop retail shopping website for Presbyterian congregations, PCUSASore.com, working in partnership with other church agencies to provide easy access to most Presbyterian resources and products.

Organizational Overview

Presbyterian Publishing Corporation is comprised of:

- Westminster John Knox Press (WJK)—the corporation’s prestigious ecumenical academic and trade book imprint, with worldwide distribution of more than 2,500 titles;
- Flyaway Books—PPC’s newest imprint, publishing award-winning children’s books for churches, schools, and families;

- Curriculum Publishing—denominational and other curriculum resources for Presbyterian churches, formerly published by the Congregational Ministries Program Area of the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA);
- PCUSASore.com—a comprehensive selection of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) resources that provide the information and materials necessary to support new and existing congregations, leaders, study groups, and individuals, operated in partnership with other church agencies;
- TheThoughtfulChristian.com—an ecumenical marketplace dedicated to helping Christians and seekers find resources to help them understand, share, practice, and be challenged in their faith;
- *These Days*—a quarterly devotional magazine that has been a source of comfort and hope throughout the world for decades.

PPC Highlights in 2019

- Published more than fifty new books.
- Published more than ten different curriculum series in English, Spanish, and Korean.
- Provided retail marketplaces at the PC(USA) Big Tent, Association of Presbyterian Church Educators (APCE), and NEXT Church conferences, along with many smaller events.
- Continued to promote *Glory to God: The Presbyterian Hymnal* and the revised *Book of Common Worship*.
- Provided free books to churches that suffered damage from fires and hurricanes, to seminaries in the developing world, and to newly ordained PC(USA) clergy.

PPC Benevolence Programs

PPC supports the work of ministry within the PC(USA) through various benevolence programs created for the express purposes of assisting those in need and contributing to the overall mission of the PC(USA). Included in PPC's benevolence programs are the following:

Marc Lewis Books Without Borders Program—PPC provides current publications to international seminaries in need of books through a partnership with Presbyterian World Mission in a twenty-year-old program renamed for recently retired PPC president Marc Lewis.

Disaster Assistance—Churches that have experienced lost and damaged property and are recovering from a disaster receive a package of replacement resources, including copies of the Presbyterian hymnal *Glory to God* and the *Book of Common Worship*.

Resources for New Worshiping Communities, Church Developments, and Fellowships—Newly formed worshiping communities, church developments, and fellowships receive complimentary resources as they begin their ministries and build a community of faith.

Resources for Newly Ordained Ministers of Word and Sacrament—Newly ordained ministers in the PC(USA) receive complimentary resources as they begin a new phase of ordered ministry to the church.

Robert W. Bohl Internship Program—PPC provides a ten-week internship in its offices to a seminary student of color (PC(USA) preferred) who is interested in considering religious publishing as a ministry.

Additional Collaborations

PPC has engaged in many fruitful collaborations with other church entities, including:

Interpretation—Began a collaboration with Union Presbyterian Seminary, under the direction of President Dr. Brian Blount, to revise the venerated Interpretation Commentary Series.

Glory to God Hymnal and Book of Common Worship—PPC collaborated with the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) and the Presbyterian Association of Musicians (PAM) to develop and produce these resources.

PCUSAStore.com—PPC is collaborating with the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA), the Office of the General Assembly (OGA), Presbyterian Women (PW), and other agency partners to provide this central online store for PC(USA)-produced books, curriculum, and downloadable resources.

Connections—Continued a partnership with Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary on the popular new lectionary commentary series.

Vital Congregations—Provided production services to the Office of Vital Congregations in the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) to help publish their Vital Congregations workbooks; to the Presbyterian Association of Musicians (PAM) to prepare their conference programs; and to the Association of Presbyterian Church Educators (APCE) for their annual event materials.

Glory to God: The Presbyterian Hymnal

The *Glory to God* hymnal was developed by the fifteen-person Presbyterian Committee on Congregational Song (PCOCS), a volunteer committee composed of musicians, scholars, pastors, and theologians. The project was a collaborative effort between Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA), and the Presbyterian Association of Musicians (PAM). In 2012, the hymnal was commended for use in the PC(USA) by the 220th General Assembly, and it was published in September 2013. PPC assumed all the costs associated with the development and production of the hymnal. No PC(USA) mission funding was used.

FACTS ABOUT *GLORY TO GOD*

- There are 853 hymns, psalms, and spiritual songs in the new hymnal.
- *Glory to God* contains music covering all major historical and contemporary sacred genres, including African American/gospel hymns, contemporary praise songs, global music, hymns that have never been published in a Presbyterian hymnal, and more.
- *Glory to God* has several indexes, allowing congregations to use the hymnal for worship preparation and a study/devotional resource.
- *Glory to God* contains liturgical resources, including the Service for the Lord’s Day, Baptism, and Reaffirmation of Baptism.
- This excellent church resource is available in red or purple. There are also two cover editions to choose from: the Presbyterian version (which features the PC(USA) seal and the words “The Presbyterian Hymnal”) and the Ecumenical version (which features the words “Hymns, Psalms, and Spiritual Songs”).
- There are several accompanying resources, in addition to the pew hymnal, including: accompaniment editions, large-print and large-print text only editions, projection editions, a CD for families and children, a hymnal companion, Advent caroling edition, and an online edition.

Westminster John Knox Press (WJK)

Westminster John Knox Press (WJK) is one of the most respected academic religious publishers in the world. For more than 180 years, WJK and its predecessors have served scholars, students, clergy, church members, and general readers. The result has been an award-winning depth and breadth of publications for the training of seminarians, the dissemination of religion scholarship, and the spiritual and ethical formation of clergy and laity.

Books and resources published under the WJK imprint cover the spectrum of religious thought and represent the work of scholarly and popular authors of many different religions and theological affiliations. WJK publishes approximately fifty new books each year and manages a backlist of more than 2,500 titles that are sold throughout the world.

A few of the notable books published by WJK and its predecessors include:

- 1838—*The Way of Salvation Familiarly Explained in a Conversation between a Father and His Children* by Presbyterian Board of Publication;
- 1841—*Institutes of the Christian Religion* by John Calvin;
- 1958—William Barclay’s Daily Study Bible series begins;
- 1962—*Race and the Renewal of the Church* by Will Campbell;
- 1966—*The Gospel According to Peanuts* by Robert L. Short;
- 1974—*Human Liberation in a Feminist Perspective* by Letty Russell;
- 1977—*The Bible Makes Sense* by Walter Brueggemann;
- 1982—*Prophesy Deliverance!* by Cornel West;
- 1992—*Women’s Bible Commentary*, edited by Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe;
- 2008—*Feasting on the Word*, a lectionary commentary series produced in partnership with Columbia Theological Seminary;
- 2017—*Bigger Table* by well-known pastor and author John Pavlovitz;
- 2018—WJK begins publishing the new lectionary commentary series *Connections* in partnership with Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary.

Curriculum Publishing

In 2018 PPC received the transfer of responsibility for PC(USA) denominational curriculum, formerly housed in the Congregational Ministries Publishing area of the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA). PPC now publishes more than ten lines of curriculum, in English, Korean, and Spanish, and is currently developing two additional curriculums to publish in 2020 and 2021. These include the popular *Growing in Grace and Gratitude* (for children), *Feasting on the Word* (for all age levels), *Big God, Big Questions* (for youth confirmation), *Creemos en Gracia y Gratitude*, and the Korean-language *Kingdom Life* Bible studies. Fall 2020 will see the beginning of the *Growing in God’s Love* story Bible curriculum for children, and Fall 2021 will see the launch of a new, as-yet-untitled, all-ages church school curriculum.

Flyaway Books

In 2017 PPC launched a new children's book imprint, Flyaway Books. Flyaway Books are penned by a varied group of authors and illustrators, from beginners to experienced writers and artists. They are intentionally multicultural in their artwork and characters and carry themes of diversity, inclusion, self-esteem, kindness, compassion, and care for God's world. Many of them help children understand today's most pressing social issues while others retell familiar religious stories in new ways.

Many Flyaway Books are appropriate for use in public and private schools and libraries. Others are aimed at church communities in mainline, emergent, progressive evangelical, and similar traditions.

In just three years, our first books have received positive reviews in *The New York Times Sunday Book Review*, *Kirkus*, *Foreword*, and *Publishers Weekly*, and have been named selections of the Junior Library Guild. Current and future authors include bestselling children's book authors Sandy Sasso and Kathy Bostrom, noted New Testament scholar Amy-Jill Levine, beloved preacher Barbara Brown Taylor, African American Episcopal pastor and activist Michael W. Waters, children's book legend Katherine Paterson, and author and illustrator Katie Yamasaki.

Retail Marketplaces

PPC operates two online retail marketplaces to serve the church. These include the following:

PCUSASTore.com is a central online store where you can find PC(USA)-produced books, curriculum, and downloadable resources related to the Presbyterian faith. Providing excellent customer service and an overall positive shopping experience are top priorities for the PC(USA) Store team. The store is maintained by the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation in partnership with other agency partners from PMA, OGA, and Presbyterian Women.

TheThoughtfulChristian.com is an online ecumenical religious marketplace including digital and print resources that are perfect for Sunday school classes, Bible study groups, clergy and preachers, Christian educators and teachers, religious academic scholars, students, and individuals from across the Christian church who seek to grow, nurture, and ask questions to develop their faith and inform their faithful action in the world.

These Days

These Days is a quarterly devotional magazine that offers powerful daily inspirational meditations interspersed with Bible verses, reflective prayers, and action steps to encourage readers to apply what they have read to their daily lives. *These Days* is published by PPC in cooperation with the PC(USA), the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, the Presbyterian Church in Canada, the United Church of Canada, the United Church of Christ, and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America.

How to Contact PPC

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PPC Board of Directors, 2019–20

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Item 00-Info-10

General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations Agency Summary and Narrative Report.

1. Purpose

The General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations shall function to give a high profile to the vision of the ecumenical and interreligious involvement and work as central to the gospel and key to the life of the church; plan and coordinate, in consultation with the agencies and governing bodies of the church, the involvement of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in ecumenical and interreligious relations and work; connect the ecumenical and interreligious efforts of all governing body levels of the church; provide a common point for all ecumenical and interreligious efforts connecting us with those outside our church; keep a unity of vision that includes the ecclesiastical, programmatic, ecumenical, and denominational (organizational) parts of our ministries and commitments; articulate the Reformed and Presbyterian identity in the midst of our ecumenical commitments; and promote awareness of the role of the unity of all humankind in the search for the unity of the church; and promote the unity of the church as an exhibition of the kingdom to the world.

The committee is composed of sixteen members, elected by the General Assembly, four ecumenical representatives, the Stated Clerk and the Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

2. Leadership, Ministry and Accomplishments (2018–2020)

Dr. Heidi Hadsell do Nascimento and Teaching Elder Amantha L. Barbee served as chair and vice-chair, respectively. Ruling Elder John Felch and Teaching Elder Laura Brekke, and Ruling Elder Y. Dianna Wright, served as at-large executive committee members. The Executive Committee met in August 2018 to review the recommendations from the 223rd General Assembly (2018) and to develop a workplan to recommend to the GACEIR organizing their work around three major area of work—Ecumenical and Interfaith Engagement with Councils of the PC(USA), Mid Council Ecumenical Engagement, and Interfaith Theological Rationale.

The Reverend Christopher Olkiewicz from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Reverend Paul Janssen from the Reformed Church in America, and the Reverend Hyo-Jung Kim from the United Church of Christ were ecumenical representatives on GACEIR. The Reverend Nigel Leon Lovell-Martin represented the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly and the Reverend Shannon R. Vance-Ocampo represented the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

a. Meeting General Description

The General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations met in the fall of 2018, the fall of 2019, and January 2020. Each meeting included a time of worship and theological reflections around emerging issues in ecumenical and interfaith relations. A significant portion of the meetings were dedicated to the work of the subcommittees. In addition to meeting during the face-to-face meetings, subcommittees also met electronically between meetings.

b. GACIER Activities, Reports, and Actions

(1) The fall 2018 meeting included a discussion on Ecumenical and Interfaith Legacy and Leanings in Changing Times. The World Council of Churches (WCC) report, “Ecumenism in the 21st Century,” was offered as background information. At the fall meeting, we also reviewed the mandate and our role in relating to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the General Assembly. The Executive Committee proposed three work groups to further its work—Interfaith; Ecumenical Dialogues and Conciliar Relationships; and Ecumenical and Interfaith Relationships Addressing Divides of Race in Church and Society. Our ecumenical representatives shared their thoughts and reflections from their traditions; we heard reports from the Office of the General Assembly (OGA), which included updates on Ecumenical Councils, updates on Ecumenical Networking, Education and Resource Development Associates, updates on current dialogues, and a report from Presbyterian Mission Agency Ministry Areas.

(2) The March 2019 meeting was cancelled due to the untimely death of our Director of Ecumenical Relations and Associate Stated Clerk the Reverend Robina Marie Winbush. The Office of the General Assembly (OGA) gathered in May 2019 to celebrate the faithful witness and ministry of Robina to the ecumenical movement. A service of worship and conversation was held to honor her and to help us refocus our work in a conversation entitled, “Remembrance, Legacy, Call—Healing the Nations: A Theological Conversation about the Witness of the Church in These Troubles Times.” We began with a reflection on the text from Robina’s sermon at the close of the ninth assembly of the WCC in 2006, based on Revelation 22:1–5.

(3) The fall 2019 meeting met at Stony Point Center in conjunction with the Ecumenical Consultation. One of the primary purposes of meeting was to engage the ecumenical community in a conversation about our ecumenism. The consultation gathered more than fifty leaders from around the church to look at the current ecumenical landscape in the United States and to hear a word about how our context touches the work, lives, and ministry of people in other parts of the world. We came to this moment with the goal to help our commitment to ecumenism be relevant, bold, and life-giving in today's context. We also heard a report from the Special Committee of the Decade of the Churches in Solidarity with Women. The GACEIR would like to recognize, with gratitude, the great value of the Reverend Dr. Unzu Lee's report from participation in the 20th Anniversary of the Decade of the Churches in Solidarity with Women. Her long-term involvement with many aspects of PC(USA)'s and the ecumenical community's engagement in the long struggle for justice, parity, and equanimity among the genders has given this report a unique strength that encourages us to support all its recommendations. In July, the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) welcomed Dr. Dianna Wright as interim director of Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations.

(4) The January 2020 meeting focused on completing its work for this biennial term and preparing reports and work for the 224th General Assembly (2020). A paper on Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia was presented, as well as a report on the ecumenical consultation and a recommendation on writing a new confession around the issues of race. It was noted that further work on all of these areas needs to be completed before final reports are given. Other items included a response to the overture on the Gereja Masehi Injili di Manahasa (GMIM) to present to this assembly, scholarships were awarded for the Eugene Carson Blake Scholarship, the Ecumenical Service Recognition Award at General Assembly, and Churches to invite to the 225th General Assembly (2022).

(5) In all meetings, GACEIR received reports from the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) and Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) staff on their ecumenical and interfaith work, reports from bilateral dialogues and relationships, and updates on ecumenical agencies. The GACEIR selected persons and councils to receive the Ecumenical and Interfaith Service Recognition Awards. It also recommended persons to receive the Eugene Carson Blake Scholarship to study at the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey in Switzerland.

3. *Ministry and Accomplishments*

Ecumenical Service Recognition

The Ecumenical Service Recognition award is a way to recognize individuals and mid-councils seeking to give visible expression to the unity of the church and express a commitment to unity and reconciliation in our world. It is awarded every other year and presented at the General Assembly.

The nominations reviewing committee is particularly interested in recognizing ministry that is creative or innovative, effective, broadly inclusive, and could serve as model for others. The Ecumenical Service Recognition and the publicizing of recipients' activities provide Presbyterians with examples and inspiration for local ecumenical involvement.

In addition, through the recognition, the General Assembly does the following:

- Bears testimony to the belief that the Church of Jesus Christ is one, holy, catholic, and apostolic; that the Lord of the Church wills that it be visibly one in the world; and that it is the duty of believers to be obedient to that divine will;
- Affirms its commitment to mid-councils as the most appropriate means whereby the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) may demonstrate its obedience to the divine will that the Church be visibly one in each place and in all places; and
- Gives help and encouragement to those within the Church who are seeking practical ways the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) can move beyond affirmation to action in manifesting the unity that we both have and seek in Jesus Christ.

At the 224th General Assembly (2020), Tom Reid at the Miller Center for Interreligious Learning and Leadership at Hebrew College in Massachusetts, Johnathan Miller Barton from the Presbytery of the James, and the Presbytery of San Joaquin will be recognized for their ecumenical and interreligious involvement. Profiles of the recipients and their ecumenical work will be available at www.pcusa.org/ecumenicalrelations by the start of the General Assembly in June.

4. *Moving Forward*

The GACEIR will continue to nurture and grow the Ecumenical and Interfaith Interreligious Liaison Network to ensure it meets its stated purpose, publicize the Ecumenical Service Recognition and the activities of nominees, prepare to receive WCC reports into the life of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and, finally, ensure a strategic and timely roll out of the interreligious stance of the PC(USA).

Item 00-Info-11

General Assembly Nominating Committee Agency Summary

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is committed to the full participation and representation of the rich diversity of the church in its governance. Through the General Assembly Nominating Committee's comprehensive nominations process, all Presbyterians have the ability and access to be considered for elected service on more than thirty General Assembly boards, commissions, committees, and councils. The nominations process ensures that the General Assembly is afforded the opportunity to select, from the varied gifts and services of Presbyterians, the most qualified persons to serve on General Assembly entities with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love.

Presbyterians have access for sharing the gifts with which they have been equipped in elected service via the General Assembly nomination process. This process begins with a sense of call to service by the individual or by the encouragement of others who recognize the gifts the potential candidate has to offer. The nominations process is application based—an online application that is open and accessible to the broad membership of the church is available at ganominations.pcusa.org. Persons who wish to be considered for nomination must complete and submit an application form and solicit personal references. In addition to providing a way to gather consistent demographic data, the application form allows for personal and creative narrative responses to a variety of questions about the applicant's sense of call to service, qualifications, and experience. Applicants can be confident every application is reviewed during the nomination process.

The General Assembly Nominating Committee's online system and database continues to be developed and fine-tuned. Work in progress includes the ability to analyze data and statistics through the database, offer other reporting functions through the online system, as well as to offer access to the nomination application that is culturally sensitive and in multiple languages.

The General Assembly Nominating Committee (GANC) is grateful to those who offer their gifts, talents, and time to service in elected service to boards, commissions, committees, and councils. The committee recognizes that such service is not without sacrifice particularly for persons of color, young adults, ruling elders, persons living with disabilities, and parents of young children, etc. These and the changing tide of volunteerism continue to hamper the ability of persons to serve in elected service. Even with continued active recruiting by the affected entities, the General Assembly Nominating Committee received only seventy-five applications as of February 19, 2020. This is a down from the number of applications in the 2018 nomination cycle—a significant decrease from the previous cycle. The GA Nominating Committee will pay particular focus on these issues in the coming cycle. The application portal remains open until mid-March.

The GANC continues to connect with Presbyterians corporately and individually—through meetings of presbytery and synod nominating committees, participation and attendance at national and regional conferences, engagement and correspondence with leaders at all councils of the church, and other official Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) groups—in order to inform Presbyterians of the many and diverse opportunities for service.

In addition to face-to-face engagements, individuals, congregations, presbyteries, and synods can find a listing of positions open for election on the General Assembly Nomination website: www.pcusa.org/nominations.

The General Assembly Nominating Committee continues to further its efforts to deepen cultural competence and proficiency by providing educational opportunities for its members. Its April 25–27, 2019 meeting included a two-day seminar on “White Supremacy and the Obfuscation of Difference in the USA,” including the impact on the church, led by Jessica Vazquez of Crossroads Antiracism and Organizing and Training. The committee was also led in a seminar regarding Implicit Bias and potential impact to a nominations process led by Anisha Hackney, Human Resources Office of the Administrative Services Group.

The General Assembly Nominating Committee is grateful for the witness and work of the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) to share information about opportunities for elected service on General Assembly level entities. The GACOR works diligently to ensure that membership on all General Assembly entities is broadly representative of the membership of the whole church. To that end, the General Assembly Committee on Representation receives statistical data on the pool and reviews the slate of nominees prior to the submission of the slate to commissioners. Because various components of the nominations database are still in development, including reporting functions, sharing reports on statistical data must be done manually. Unfortunately, this has resulted in a delay in providing this information to the General Assembly Committee on Representation as early as desired and hoped for. It is anticipated that GACOR staff will be able to access and utilize the reporting functions by Fall 2020.

The General Assembly Nominating Committee notes that many applicants do not identify themselves as persons with disabilities even when a disability does exist. Thus, we believe that the number of persons with disabilities serving the church on committees at the General Assembly level is actually higher than reported. An effort is made to encourage persons to self-

identify so that needed accommodations may be provided for the elected member's service. The General Assembly Nominating Committee will continue to seek ways to encourage persons living with disabilities to make this information available including adding an introductory sentence, "The General Assembly Nominating Committee encourages persons living with disabilities to apply" as an invitation for persons with disability to identify themselves.

Through participation at conferences, conversations and engagement with the General Assembly Committee on Representation, racial ethnic caucuses, affinity groups, individual contact at all mid council levels as well as with pastors and ruling elders across the denomination, the General Assembly Nominating Committee strives to increase the number of racial ethnic persons and persons with differing theological perspectives in its pool of applicants.

The application form includes the following question to its nomination form: "Which of the following terms best describes your theological perspective?" Applicants are provided with the following categories (listed in alphabetical order on the form): Conservative, Evangelical, Liberal, Moderate, Orthodox, Progressive, and prefer not to answer. Applicants are encouraged to check all that apply and a space is provided for comments. In addition, the GANC has removed a question on its form, "To assist the General Assembly Nominating Committee in addressing the Presbyterian Church's commitment to theological diversity, please briefly describe your theological perspective," replacing it with, "Please name one key theological/faith issue facing our church today and explain your perspective on this issue."

The GANC continues to include the question, "Please describe a key issue of the community from which you come."

The General Assembly Nominating Committee form has been expanded so that applicants may select "self-describe" for their gender identify and/or self-identify outside the gender binary. Applicants may now share their personal pronouns.

Applicants may indicate the languages in which they are fluent as well as note whether or not they will need translation services.

Members of the General Assembly Nominating Committee relate actively to mid councils and General Assembly entities throughout the year. Each General Assembly Nominating Committee member serves as a liaison to the nominating committee of the synod in which the member resides. Each member attends at least one synod or synod nominating committee meeting every other year to explain the nominations process.

The General Assembly Nominating Committee invites all General Assembly entities to send a written report biennially concerning the specific needs of the entity regarding nominees presented to the General Assembly. In addition, the General Assembly Nominating Committee's liaison member is available to meet with the entity or be in contact by telephone or mail at the entity's invitation, so that the nominating process may be explained and that the skills and expertise needed by the entity are identified. This information, along with advice and counsel received from the General Assembly Committee on Representation, assists the General Assembly Nominating Committee in its work.

Since the 223rd General Assembly (2018) there have been three meetings of the General Assembly Nominating Committee: April 25–27, 2019, in Detroit, Michigan; November 6, 2019, via video-conference call; and March 18–21, 2020, in Houston, Texas. An orientation for new members was held September 18–20, 2018, in Chicago, Illinois.

There are sixteen members of the General Assembly Nominating Committee—one member residing in each of the sixteen synods. The General Assembly, upon the nomination of the General Assembly Moderator/Co-Moderators, elects the members of the General Assembly Nominating Committee; members serve a six-year term. The following officers were elected and served from June 2018 to June 2020: Lindsey Anderson (teaching elder), Synod of the Covenant, Moderator; Mary Paik (teaching elder), Synod of Southern California and Hawaii, Vice-Moderator; and Greg Bolt (teaching elder), Synod of the Lakes and Prairies, Secretary. Other members of the committee are: Shawna Bowman (teaching elder), Synod of Lincoln Trails; Daris Bultena (teaching elder), Synod of South Atlantic; Eva O. Carter (ruling elder), Synod of Living Waters; Craig Howard (teaching elder), Synod of Mid-America; Douglas Howard (ruling elder), Synod of the Northeast; Afaf Khoury (ruling elder), Synod of the Trinity; Il Kim (ruling elder), Synod of the Pacific; Sonya McAuley-Allen (teaching elder), Synod of the Mid-Atlantic; Marta Rodriguez-Fonseca (ruling elder), Presbiteriano Borinquén en Puerto Rico; Mary Lynn Walters, (ruling elder), Synod of the Southwest; Gene Wilson (teaching elder) Synod of the Sun; Abbie Watters (ruling elder), Synod of Alaska-Northwest; and Will Zandler (ruling elder), Synod of the Rocky Mountains.

The office of the General Assembly Nominating Committee is located in the Office of the General Assembly, 100 Witherspoon Street, Louisville, KY 40202-1396. Assistant Stated Clerk Valerie Izumi, ruling elder, serves as the manager for general assembly nominations.

Item 00-Info-12

A Report on the Six Agencies' Employment—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation.

Introduction

The General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) reports to the assembly on agencies regarding their employment as directed by actions on the report “Privilege, Power and Policy: The Church as Employer,” as approved by the 220th General Assembly (2012) as Item 11-17 (*Minutes*, 2012, Part I, pp. 45, 1103–05 of the CD; pp. 33, 250–251, 1091–93 of the print copy). The 221st General Assembly (2014) revised the action by requiring the six agencies report annually to GACOR. The 223rd General Assembly (2018) requires agencies under review to invite a GACOR member to its board meeting once a year and to reciprocally send a member to GACOR meetings in like manner. This report contains an overview of achievements by each of the six agencies in the 2015 and 2016 fiscal years.

The GACOR performs an annual review of data received from all six agencies regarding the employment of personnel and supplier diversity. The six agencies are the (1) Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc. (PILP), (2) Presbyterian Foundation (FDN), (3) Presbyterian Publishing Corporation (PPC), (4) Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), (BOP), (5) Office of the General Assembly (OGA), (6) Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA). That 2012 action can be found in Item 11-17, “*Privilege, Power and Policy: The Church as Employer*,” Recommendation 2 (*Minutes*, 2012, Part I, p. 1091).

Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program (PILP)

PILP employs fourteen individuals, 64 percent of which are exempt. The majority of PILP employees (71 percent) are white with only 29 percent of employees identifying as people of the global majority, so PILP does not meet the benchmark of 40 percent persons from racially marginalized identities. Persons who identify as women make up 86 percent of the workforce, well exceeding the 40 percent benchmark, however those who identify as women also comprised 100 percent of nonexempt employees. While persons who identify as men comprise only 14 percent of all employees, they account for the majority of compensatory spending. In 2017, all men made more than \$75,000 per year while only 50 percent of women were in this earnings range, with the other 50 percent earning \$65,000 per year or less.

Presbyterian Foundation (FDN)

The Presbyterian Foundation (FDN) reported in a timely manner. The GACOR made the following observations:

The FDN reported a total of sixty-eight employees, entailing a 6 percent increase from previous reports. Employment by gender was 38 percent identifying as men, 62 percent identifying as women. There has been a change since the last review in 2017, as female employment has decreased by 2 percent. However, female employment remains within the benchmark goal of 40 percent or more.

The persons of the global majority employment since the last review with this category has shifted from 20 percent persons of the global majority employees in 2017 to 18 percent persons of the global majority employees in 2019. This is a reduction that does not meet the standards of employing at least 20 percent persons of the global majority employment. It is also noted that 58 percent of employees are over the age of forty-five, with 28 percent being over the age of sixty-five. This entails that more than a quarter of all total employees are over fifty-five. There is no representation for persons under the age of twenty-five.

In reviewing salaries, the top third of income earners are comprised of two men and two women. However, there is a \$100,000 gap in the income between the top earning women and men, with the men receiving the larger amount. While the agency employs significantly more women, the majority of these are in lesser earning roles.

Presbyterian Publishing Corporation

The Presbyterian Publishing Corporation (PPC) reported in a timely manner. The GACOR made the following observations:

The PPC reported a total of twenty-nine employees. Employment by gender was 34 percent men, 65 percent women, a slight decrease of women from 2017. This is a change since 2017 where the ratio was 39 percent men and 61 percent women. The benchmark for employment of 40 percent women has been met.

There was a significant change in persons of the global majority employment in the past five years, moving from 26 percent in 2015 to 22 percent in 2017 and just 14 percent today. This is a reduction that no longer meets the benchmark for persons of

the global majority employment of 20 percent. Of the four persons of the global majority employed by PPC, 75 percent identified as women.

In reviewing employees who made more than \$65,000, 36 percent were women. For employees that made under \$65,000, 83 percent were women. While no men made less than \$45,000, eight women were within this category. This accounts for 27 percent of all total employees.

Board of Pensions

The BOP employment is comprised of 192 employees of which 120 employees are women. Therefore, the benchmark of employing 40 percent women has been exceeded. Women are now 62 percent of the total BOP employment. White employees have the largest exempt status, at 70 percent. Out of the twenty-four nonexempt employees, twenty-one were women, and three were men, with two-thirds of those women identifying as African American or Black women. In fact, 66 percent of all nonexempt positions were held by persons of color.

In reviewing the top third of salaries, men represented 33 percent more of these income earners, despite representing only 37 percent of all employees in the BOP.

Office of the General Assembly

The Office of General Assembly (OGA) completed and submitted their reports. The GACOR recognized the following observations.

OGA is comprised of seventy-six employees with fifty-six being women. Women represent 73 percent of all OGA employees, exceeding the benchmark of 50 percent. Women maintained the majority in the exempt and nonexempt employee categories. Persons of color comprise 33 percent of all employees, not meeting the benchmark goal of 40 percent. However, among those who identify as women employees, only 26 percent were women of color, while 30 percent of employees identifying as men were men of color.

Nineteen of the twenty-three nonexempt employees identified as women. However, among nonexempt employees, roughly half were white and half persons of color. The 33 percent benchmark of exempt workers being raced other than white is not met (26 percent, or 14 of 53 exempt).

In terms of salary, while the number of women exceeds the number of men employed by OGA, there is a disparity in salary ranges. It is of note that 86 percent of women and 80 percent of men earn less than \$95,000. However, there is an improvement in the percentage of women earning less than \$95,000, as this number has been reduced from the previous report in 2017.

Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA)

It is noted that there is a reduction in total employment, as 311 persons were employed in 2017, but 277 persons are employed in 2019. One hundred eighty-eight employees are exempt, and eighty-nine are nonexempt. This entails that 68 percent of employees are exempt. Sixty-seven percent of employees identify as women, while 33 percent identify as men. This exceeds the 50 percent established benchmark. Women account for 61 percent of the exempt positions, and men account for 39 percent of the exempt positions. In the nonexempt categories, women account for 68 percent and men account for 32 percent.

Of employees reported by PMA, 70 percent identified as white while 30 percent of employees identify as persons of color, not meeting the benchmark goal of 40 percent. In addition to this, persons of color represented 32 percent of nonexempt employees, and 52 percent of exempt employees (meeting the benchmark of 33 percent). This is an exponential increase in the number of exempt employees identifying as persons of color in 2017.

Of all employees, only 8 percent made more than \$95,000. However, among these income earners, there was an even distribution between men and women.

Most women employed by PMA are compensated at levels between \$35,000–\$65,000, while most men are compensated in the \$55–85,000 range.

It is also noted that of 277 employees, 1 percent are under the age of twenty-five, while 10 percent of employees in total were under the age of thirty-five.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the analysis by GACOR found that each agency met its respective benchmark for employment of women. GACOR found that women comprised the majority of those employed at each agency but did not find parity when reviewing compensation between men and women. Men at each agency were compensated at higher levels than women. Additionally, GACOR found that employment of persons of color was not met in any of the agencies.

Note: Data was not collected in 2018 to date and will be included in future reports to the assembly.

Item 00-Info-13***Report on the Six Agencies Supplier Diversity—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation.****Introduction*

The GACOR thanks the six agencies of the PC(USA) for providing annual Diverse Suppliers reports in the reviewed period. This new reporting is informed by the establishment of the Standard Definition of Supplier Diversity (Item 03-12) passed by action of the 222nd General Assembly (2016). The data was analyzed through a lens of anticipation for the agencies' witness to God's abundance demonstrated by the stewardship of representation becoming manifest in our denomination. Just as the diverse array of nations participated in Pentecost (Acts 2, pericopes in appendix), a diverse array of suppliers can participate in executing the work of the PC(USA). The early Christ-following communities who "distributed their proceeds to all, as any had needed," have modeled the Spirit in which our denomination can share its resources among a varied array of suppliers. This approach moves efforts for diversity beyond "bean counting" and "box checking" toward more fiscal parity with agency resources as expressions of doxology.

*Agency Highlights**Board of Pensions*

<i>PCUSA Agency:</i>		BOP		
<u>Supplier Diversity Report as of 12/31/17</u>				
		2015	2016	2017
TOTAL EXPENDED BY AGENCY	\$	8,500,000	9,300,000	7,000,000
Diverse Suppliers %	%	8.47%	13.62%	20.00%
TOTAL ALL SUPPLIERS FOR AGENCY	#	300	300	300
Diverse Suppliers %	%	6.33%	5.67%	4.67%

BOP increased its expenditure to diverse suppliers (8.47% in 2015, 13.62% in 2016, and 20% in 2017). The number of diverse suppliers decreases each year and it appears the diverse suppliers are earning more. Although Women-Owned Suppliers have decreased by 16% their earnings have doubled (50.52%). The categories of Black/African American/African, Latinx, and Multi-Racial suppliers reduced to 0 in 2017. The diversity benchmark is 10% of suppliers and it is not met in this assessment. Expenditure is 20%, so diverse suppliers are earning more as their number decreases.

PCUSA Agency: **FDN****Supplier Diversity Report as of 12/31/17**

		2015	2016	2017
TOTAL EXPENDED BY AGENCY	\$	3,881,168	3,790,165	3,524,900
Diverse Suppliers %	%	11.09%	12.25%	23.77%
TOTAL ALL SUPPLIERS FOR AGENCY	#	134	120	93
Diverse Suppliers %	%	16.42%	21.67%	19.35%

The Presbyterian Foundation [FDN] has incrementally decreased overall total dollars expended to diverse suppliers from 2015 to 2017 by approximately 9% although the overall percentage of funds expended to diverse suppliers has increased from 11.09% to 23.77% over these same three years. The total number of ALL suppliers has decreased by 31% while the number of diverse suppliers has increased by approximately 17%. In the report representing 2014-2016, Black/African American/African Suppliers (10) and Women-Owned Business (16) comprise the entire group of diverse suppliers (26).

Presbyterian Interest and Loan Program, Inc.

PCUSA Agency:**PILP****Supplier Diversity Report as of 12/31/17**

		2015	2016	2017
TOTAL EXPENDED BY AGENCY	\$	194,852	236,152	231,886
Diverse Suppliers %	%	12.52%	13.81%	8.84%
TOTAL ALL SUPPLIERS FOR AGENCY	#	22	18	25
Diverse Suppliers %	%	22.73%	16.67%	8.00%

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc. [PILP], showed an approximate 19% increase in the total expended by the agency between 20015-2017. The percentage expended to diverse suppliers appears to have decreased by 3.68% during this same three-year period. There was an approximate 12% increase in the overall total number of suppliers for PILP from 2015-2017 while the number of diverse suppliers decreased by 14.75%, meaning the 10% benchmark was not met. The constraints of this smaller agency may require more creativity in supporting supplier diversity.

Presbytery Mission Agency/Office of the General Assembly

PCUSA Agency:**PMA/OGA****Supplier Diversity Report as of 12/31/17**

		2015	2016	2017
TOTAL EXPENDED BY AGENCY	\$	20,657,019	18,375,868	15,838,433
Diverse Suppliers %	%	6.45%	9.65%	13.87%
TOTAL ALL SUPPLIERS FOR AGENCY	#	1,078	1,038	918
Diverse Suppliers %	%	11.87%	21.97%	20.15%

The Presbyterian Mission Agency [PMA] and the Office of the General Assembly [OGA] submit a joint report that reflects their shared services and record-keeping. They achieved the 10% benchmark in 2017 (and 2015, 2016). While the benchmark is based on percentage of expenditures, it is of note that PMA/OGA accomplishes the largest array of diverse suppliers across all categories (Black/African American/African, Asian/Pacific Islander/South Asian, Hispanic/Latino-a, and Native American/Alaska Native/Indigenous and while the overall number of total suppliers was reduced, the percentage of diverse suppliers increased by close to 70%. Additionally, Women-Owned Business represents approximately 68% of Diverse Suppliers (124 of 181 in total).

PCUSA Agency:		PPC		
Supplier Diversity Report as of 12/31/17				
		2015	2016	2017
TOTAL EXPENDED BY AGENCY	\$	166,314	322,135	408,625
Diverse Suppliers %	%	53.38%	59.89%	60.14%
TOTAL ALL SUPPLIERS FOR AGENCY	#	150	232	275
Diverse Suppliers %	%	69.33%	59.91%	56.36%

The Presbyterian Publishing Corporation [PPC] shows the strongest percentages of all agencies in Total Expended dollars to Diverse Suppliers. It is important to note that PPC includes authors in their reported suppliers. These numbers from PPC demonstrate that certain factors prevent “apples to apples” comparison between and among agencies. As the total dollars expended by the agency has increased each year, so has the percentage received by Diverse Suppliers. Suppliers owned by minoritized racial groups remain the growing edge of supplier diversity across all agencies.

Conclusion

With the exceptions of PILP and BOP in 2017, the remaining four agencies demonstrate reaching the benchmark in this reporting period, with OGA and PMA reporting together. GACOR will continue to review the benchmarks and consider recommendations to increase the Supplier Diversity during agency reviews.

Appendix

F-1.0403 Unity in Diversity

“As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to the promise” (Gal. 3:27–29).

The unity of believers in Christ is reflected in the rich diversity of the Church’s membership. In Christ, by the power of the Spirit, God unites persons through baptism regardless of race, ethnicity, age, sex, disability, geography, or theological conviction. There is therefore no place in the life of the Church for discrimination against any person. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall guarantee full participation and representation in its worship, governance, and emerging life to all persons or groups within its membership. No member shall be denied participation or representation for any reason other than those stated in this Constitution.

W-1.0304 Culture

God has poured out the Holy Spirit on all flesh; Scripture promises that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. The book of Acts and the New Testament epistles record the challenges and controversies of an emerging Church that would be “no longer Jew or Greek” (Gal. 3:28), but one in Jesus Christ. As the Church has grown and spread over two thousand years, it has taken root and flourished in cultures and lands all around the globe—bearing witness to the love of God for all the world and Christ’s sovereignty in every place. Finally, from the book of Revelation, we know that the company of the redeemed will be a great multitude from every nation, tribe, and people, singing praise to the Lamb of God.

Christian worship is contextual—emerging from a particular community and incorporating the words, images, symbols, and actions that best convey the good news of Jesus Christ in that gathering of God’s people. It is also cross-cultural—reflecting the diversity of traditions and cultures within and beyond the community of faith. Christian worship is transcultural—proclaiming the universal message of God’s grace in Jesus Christ and rooted in common elements of human life that transcend all cultures. It is also countercultural—asserting the scandal of the gospel and anticipating God’s reign of righteousness, justice, and peace. Finally, faithful worship should be an intercultural event—fostering mutuality, dialogue, and equality among all people.

Whenever and wherever we gather in Jesus’ name, we join the praise and prayer of the people of God in every time and place. Therefore, it is fitting that we share stories and sing songs from cultures other than our own as we pray for and with the Church throughout the world.

Acts 2:5–13, NSRV

Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. Amazed and astonished, they asked, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power.” All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” But others sneered and said, “They are filled with new wine.”

Acts 2:43–47, NSRV

Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

Endnotes

Benchmark of 10 percent diverse suppliers spend, approved in the 222nd General Assembly (2016) for OGA and PMA (Item 03-10), unchanged from previous assembly action for all agencies. Standard Definition of Supplier Diversity, Item 03-12, approved by action of the 222nd General Assembly (2016).

Data was not collected in 2018 to date and will be included in future reports to the assembly.

Item 00-Info-14

2018 Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action Workforce Analysis—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

Overview

By action of the 197th General Assembly (1985), the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) is required to report annually the equal opportunity information of all PC(USA) agencies, theological institutions, presbyteries, and synods.

At the request of the Office of Human Resources, Research Services handled the collection of data for the Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action Workforce Analysis for 2018. Based on the success of web-based data collection for previous years, we followed similar procedures for 2018.

The web-based data collection instrument was developed, tested, and deployed by Research Services. A point of contact in each organization or entity was invited by email to provide data for the organization. (The original invitation is included here as Appendix 1—Attachment A.) An initial email invitation was sent February 4, 2019. A reminder email was sent to all nonresponding organizations on February 11, 2019, and again on February 21, 2019. Responses were accepted until February 25, 2019.

Invited Organizations

The following agencies and organizations were requested to provide their workforce analysis data: Board of Pensions; Presbyterian Mission Agency; Hubbard Press; Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation; Presbyterian Investment & Loan Program, Inc.; Presbyterian Publishing Corporation; Office of the General Assembly; and all conference centers, theological institutions, presbyteries, and synods associated with the PC(USA).

Response Rate

Of 224 invited organizations, data were received from eighty-five organizations, for a response rate of 38 percent. Appendix 1—Attachment B shows organizations that provided their data. Of responding organizations, all but one used the web form.

Results

Appendix 1—Attachment C shows the results for responding organizations and presents the percentages of employees by gender and racial ethnic category.

Recommendations for the Future

Research Services recommends that the racial ethnic categories be updated to correspond to PC(USA)'s commitment to inclusivity, and by extension General Assembly's and Presbyterian Mission Agency's commitment to diversity and racial justice.

Item 00-Info-15

Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) Agency Summary

I. Introduction: Assigned Responsibilities, Strengthening Presbyterian Social Witness

Social witness is part of what it means for the church to be “salt” and “light” in the world today. Coming from Jesus's words in Matthew 5:13–14, the images of salt & light also give name to the ACSWP online newsletter. These words undergird the committee's faithfulness to its mission statement:

“The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) serves the prophetic calling of the whole Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) by providing the General Assembly with careful studies of pressing moral challenges, media for discussion and discernment of Christian responsibilities, and policy recommendations for faithful action.”

This brief narrative summarizes the committee’s responsibilities, its procedures and personnel, and its accomplishments and activities. The committee’s minutes for the past two years are also submitted to the assembly and are reviewed by designated members of the Assembly Committee on Social Justice, who then attest to their adequacy to that assembly committee. This is a basic part of Presbyterian accountability.

This year a special section of this agency summary is devoted to “New Paths for Social Witness,” which looks at changes in the church and world since 1993, when the last version of ACSWP’s mandate was adopted, building on A Brief Statement of Faith adopted in 1991. Since 1936 through reunion in 1983, both predecessor churches had elected bodies to guide the church’s social teaching. The committees were united and renamed after that time. As you read this narrative, you will see how ACSWP currently works, and then will be able to understand what may be involved in taking “new paths.” The ACSWP reformed, always reforming!

This report is organized as follows:

- I. Introduction, Assigned Responsibilities, Strengthening Presbyterian Social Witness
- II. Definition, Relation to the *Book of Confessions*, Corporate and Personal Social Witness, Key Elements to Be Taken into Discernment Process of ACSWP and Its Study Teams
- III. Policy Statements, Study Papers, the Online Journal *Unbound*, Other Communications Vehicles, the Challenge of Shorter Reports
- IV. Meetings from 223rd General Assembly (2018) to 224th General Assembly (2020)
- V. Procedures and Personnel, and Related Group: The Social Ethics Network
- VI. Accomplishments and Reports
- VII. New Paths for Social Witness in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

II. Definition, Relation to the *Book of Confessions*, Corporate and Personal Social Witness, Key Elements to Be Taken into Discernment Process of ACSWP and Its Study Teams

The term social witness is a shorthand way to combine evangelism and social justice. Witness is bigger than advocacy, but it has the moral purpose of pointing to God’s intention for some part of the world, often drawing attention to people in need or who are suffering. The key point of the mission statement is that everybody has a conscience, where the Holy Spirit speaks and what John Calvin called the “inner forum.” Yet this sense of moral concern is not just our individual “social righteousness,” to use the name of one of the six “Great Ends” of the church. The Confession of 1967 makes clear that just as individuals and congregations have prophetic responsibilities, so does the whole church, to demonstrate the “kingdom of God” to the world. As expressed notably by Martin Luther King Jr., the church is to be a “moral conscience” to the nation.

Jesus asks whether his disciples can discern “the signs of the times” of their particular time and place. The work of the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) is to help the church discern what it means to proclaim and embody the gospel in contemporary society. In this work, the ACSWP and its task forces are directed to draw upon a wealth of resources:

- the voices of the biblical text;
- the wisdom of theological discourse;
- the guidance of the Reformed confessions;
- the tradition of past policy statements;
- the insights of sociopolitical disciplines;
- the advice of members and all governing bodies of the church;
- the insights of people who are poor, victims of existing policies, and those who have not had a voice in councils of the church; and
- the counsel of ecumenical partners. (*Minutes*, 1993, Part I, p. 769).

Social witness can occur at many different points: in a church session, in a presbytery, in an advocacy group, in the participation of Christians in mission, in a meeting of the ecumenical church, in a brave Christian citizen's refusal to "go along" with injustice.

For Presbyterians, decisions about the church's social witness are made by persons elected to serve in councils (session, presbytery, synod, and General Assembly). As councils of the church meet, the elected persons are commissioned "... not simply to reflect the will of the people, but rather to seek together to find and represent the will of Christ" (*Book of Order*, F-3.0204). The advisory committee's structure and function go back to 1936, when "consecrated" and justice-oriented persons from the Christian Education Board and National Missions Board were elected to a Social Education and Action Committee. A similar process was occurring in the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.

The ACSWP engages with the "grassroots" in assisting the General Assembly to discern what it means to proclaim and embody the gospel in a world that remains too grim for too many. Experience counts. The committee's membership contains persons with expertise in theology, social ethics, and various other disciplines, most of whom hold advanced degrees.

Making a personal social witness begins with our individual ways of growing as Christians—prayerfully studying the scriptures, being inspired by Jesus, the prophets, and courageous stands of the church, gaining insight from past ethical witness, connecting one's faith with others in the Christian community, and then being faithful in the world beyond the church. The ACSWP seeks to be a partner in the ministry of reconciliation, for "each member is the church in the world" (*Book of Confessions*, The Confession of 1967, 9.38). Christians do not work alone but join with Christ Jesus who is already at work in the world.

The churchwide work of ACSWP is based on ethical guidance from the scriptures, the *Book of Confessions*, and the *Book of Order*. The 205th General Assembly (1993) policy statement, *Why and How the Church Makes a Social Policy Witness* (OGA-93-019), provides extensive documentation of key biblical passages and is a useful document in congregational interpretation of the ACSWP and its mission.

In 2018, as it was ACSWP's time for its periodic review, the committee also submitted an extensive self-study, completed by a committee member who is a sociologist and who worked in assembling data with Presbyterian Research Services. The assembly affirmed that review and its directions for the committee.

III. Policy Statements, Study Papers, the Online Journal *Unbound*, Other Communications Vehicles, the Challenge of Shorter Reports

The traditional way of transmitting the church's social witness was print. In addition to the *Minutes* of the General Assembly, since 1908 print journals provided analysis and "how to" for congregations, individuals, agencies, and councils of the church. The ACSWP has migrated partly to the online world where many of our members live, as do many others we have not yet reached. We will say a word about our online journal and mention one new digital resource.

In 2011, the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy launched an internet justice journal, with the support of the Compassion, Peace and Justice ministries area and the larger General Assembly Mission Council, now Presbyterian Mission Agency. The new journal, *Unbound: An Interactive Journal of Christian Social Justice*, was designed to strengthen the social witness of the whole church and to be an open forum on areas where new witness is needed. The URL (internet address) is <http://justiceunbound.org/>; the name "Unbound" refers not only to the lack of page binding, but to Jesus's words at the resurrection of Lazarus, "unbind him," as well as to images of prisoners freed. The journal was launched at an educational event in Denver with members of the Presbytery of Denver.

In September 2011, the then General Assembly Mission Council designated the journal to be the successor to *Church & Society* magazine, which itself continued the work of print journals going back to 1908 (*The Amethyst*, *Moral Welfare*, and *Social Progress*). Back issues of all of these journals are available through the American Theological Library Association.

A key goal of *Unbound* has been to connect twenty- and thirty-something readers with the social witness policies of the church, using an intergenerational editorial staff. The current managing editor is Lee Catoe, a recent graduate of Vanderbilt Divinity School and Presbyterian College in South Carolina, his native state. Prior to Lee, Henry Koenig Stone, a Masters' of Public Policy graduate of the University of Chicago, served as editor. Stone is also a member of the United Church of Christ, a full communion partner of PC(USA). Previously, the Reverend Ginna Bairby served as editor. She now pastors in Taos,

N.Mex. Her predecessor was the Reverend Patrick Heery, who became editor of *Presbyterians Today* before being called to the pastorate in Auburn, N.Y.

Unbound seeks to improve its methods for sharing stories and building allies for social justice and social teaching. We know from sales of print policy booklets—down to about the \$2,000 range from about \$4,000 in previous years—that accessing the policies is mainly by download (free), for both individual and adult study use.

In addition to the internet journal, the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy maintains a website and distributes an e-newsletter, “Salt & Light.” *Unbound* links to these and to the various sites of other Compassion, Peace and Justice ministries.

A new resource is a thumb drive loaded with social witness policy statements on the range of topics addressed by the church since reunion and in some cases before. This not only saves paper but also shows the changing history of how the church has addressed issues of sexuality, war and peace, labor rights, ecology, and many others. It is meant to help pastors and scholars (and scholar-pastors), as well as presbyteries, seminary and college libraries, seminarians writing papers, among others. Online access to all of these policies at <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/compassion-peace-justice/acswp/> is also available.

The challenge of shorter reports faced the committee at its January 2020 meeting when a member of the Office of the General Assembly staff brought word that no exceptions would be granted to the 2018 rule cutting the higher-end length of GA reports from 10,000 words to 5,000, partly to reduce translation costs (see [https://www.pc-biz.org/#/committee/3000005/business Item 03-20](https://www.pc-biz.org/#/committee/3000005/business%20Item%2003-20)). The ACSWP believes translation is an important part of the intercultural communication of the gospel, and features about fifteen translated past policies, primarily in Spanish.

While ACSWP has produced many shorter resolutions, perhaps most notably a one-page Social Creed for the 21st Century in 2008, the 1993 policy on social witness (see section II above) requires eight sources to be used in discernment, stressing an in-depth process that is sometimes difficult to shorten. Longer background studies will remain available to commissioners and can be printed in physical booklets and for download, but the distance between specific recommendations and the data analysis behind them will grow.

Major policy areas, such as church-state relations, hunger and economic development, environment, and racism, point to complex policies for a complex society. Report length has reflected the judgment of the volunteer experts who give their time to the studies, and ACSWP will continue to honor that judgment by use of appendices and other means. Most reports also contain summary statements or introductions, but this is a factor pointing to “new paths” in the final section below.

IV. Meetings from 223rd General Assembly (2018) to 224th General Assembly (2020)

At the 223rd General Assembly (2018) in St. Louis, Mo., the committee met briefly. Later, the committee met September 13–15, 2018, at the Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia and at the Pendle Hill Conference Center in Wallingford, Pa., sharing a meal with the Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People. The committee then had its third meeting November 8–10, 2018, at San Francisco Theological Seminary in San Anselmo, Calif. The Philadelphia meeting was designed to ground the whole committee, and especially the new members, in its history. At SFTS, the committee co-sponsored a public forum on the #MeToo movement, responding to trends in women’s treatment and empowerment in personal, public, and church life.

In 2019, the committee met February 22–24, in San Juan, P.R., with a work day at a Presbyterian Disaster Assistance site; June 4–6, in St. Paul, Minn., at the Macalester-Plymouth Union Church; and October 10–12 in Baltimore, Md., at The Center for urban mission and education of the Presbytery of Baltimore, located at First & Franklin Presbyterian Church. In each case, the committee visited or heard from regional mission leaders about challenges in their areas and also worked on draft studies and reports. In addition to these meetings, several committee members and staff led and participated in workshops at the Big Tent meeting, August 1–3 in Baltimore.

In 2020, the committee met January 16–18, at the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations in New York City and the Stony Point Conference Center in Stony Point, N.Y. The committee heard from ecumenical representatives responding to a proposal on “Reimagining the World House” and also heard from a senior UN Security Council official (and Presbyterian ruling elder), as well as leadership of the Stony Point Center. A member of ACSWP was also instrumental in gifting a vacant

church building to the Ramapough Lenape Nation, recognizing that the event brought back the extensive discussion of First Nations concerns in Minnesota in 2019. There is a projected meeting of the Advice and Counsel subcommittee set for April 17–18, a week before the Compassion, Peace and Justice Training Day and Ecumenical Advocacy Days in Washington, D.C.

V. Procedures and Personnel, and Related Group: The Social Ethics Network

As a body of persons elected to support its work, the ACSWP has direct access to the General Assembly as it meets biennially. Between sessions of the assembly, the ACSWP also assists the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB), the General Assembly Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA), and other agencies of the church as their work involves the development and interpretation of social witness policy.

The committee carries out its responsibilities in five major ways. They are the:

1. development and recommendation of new social witness and policy for approval by the General Assembly;
2. interpretation and communication of the General Assembly's social witness and policy, both to the church and the world at large;
3. provision of advice and counsel to the entities and mid councils of the church on matters of social witness policy when developments merit social-ethical attention;
4. provision of advice and counsel to the General Assembly when it meets as a governing body (in oral and memoranda form); and
5. monitoring of peace and justice concerns per mandates from the General Assembly.

The ACSWP develops and recommends new social witness policy primarily in response to referrals from the General Assembly and its entities, and in a manner consistent with the *Manual of the General Assembly*, "On Forming Social Policy." This section is based on the 1993 *Why and How the Church Makes a Social Policy Witness* document cited at the beginning of this narrative. Both the more extensive policies and shorter resolutions require depth of theological reflection, breadth of input, and diversity of participation.

The committee's Advice and Counsel group carries out the task of providing policy analysis on business items coming before the General Assembly. This group of elected committee members, together with other staff and resource persons from several offices of the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) and Office of the General Assembly (OGA), advises commissioners on social policies applicable to issues before the assembly. It may also comment on the need or direction for future social policy. Such analysis and recommendations are provided through "Advice and Counsel Memoranda," by oral testimony by resource people before assembly committees, and informally. The ACSWP chair or a co-chairperson is a corresponding member to both the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency, with voice but not vote, and can offer advice and counsel in those meetings.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) consists of twelve members, nine of whom have been at-large members elected by the General Assembly from the whole church and three who have been Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB) members confirmed by the assembly. In the last two years a smaller PMAB has moved to have only one member who is also a member of ACSWP, Kevin Johnson, Detroit, Mich. Other members are: Beverly Brewster, Sleepy Hollow, Calif.; Jacob Douylliez, Athens, Ga.; Rachael Eggebeen, Tucson, Ariz. (co-chair); Darcy Metcalfe, Coggon, Iowa; Erica Nelson, Austin, Tex; Rick Nutt, Westerville, Ohio; Sue Smith, Atlantic Highlands, N.J.; Sylvia Thorson-Smith, Tucson, Ariz.; Rob Trawick, New City, N.Y.; Gloria Tuma, Portland, Oreg.; Steven Webb, Reston, Va. (co-chair). Staffing for the committee includes Christian T. Iosso, coordinator; Lee Catoe, managing editor of the *Unbound* online journal and associate for young adult social witness; Lacey Gilliam, manager, finance and administration; and Gina Espiritusanto, part-time administrative assistant.

As invited, ACSWP Coordinator Chris Iosso, who has a Ph.D. in social ethics, assists in programming an annual gathering of the Social Ethics Network (SEN). This group is composed primarily (but not exclusively) of Christian ethicists currently or

formerly serving in seminaries, colleges, and universities related to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), usually with two or more members on ACSWP. Members of SEN often volunteer their knowledge on study teams of the committee.

Since the last General Assembly, the committee assisted with two SEN gatherings. In January 2019, the group gathered in Louisville, Ky., prior to the Society of Christian Ethics meeting there, meeting with the Stated Clerk and other PC(USA) leaders. In January 2020, SEN met prior to the Washington, D.C., meeting of the Society of Christian Ethics, meeting with James Comey, a former director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and also with the pastor of his congregation. That gathering also heard from James Winkler, General Secretary and President of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America.

VI. Accomplishments and Reports

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) members and staff make themselves available for interpretive events and preaching as requested and as time allows. Such events included presentations in presbyteries and congregations and consultations with others.

ACSWP's first meeting after each General Assembly is to discern and prioritize assignments. It meets generally three times per year to work on papers and projects. In the January before an assembly, final reports are edited and approved for submission. This year the committee has prepared the following reports to strengthen Presbyterian social witness:

- *Obstinate Hope in Central America: Challenges to the Faithful.* As directed by the General Assembly, ACSWP appointed a small but expert team and with the great assistance of mission co-workers studied conditions in five countries: Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica, looking at internal conditions and drivers of migration.

- *Jerusalem 3,2,1.* This informal title reflects the General Assembly's assignment to ACSWP and the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC), that we study the rapid changes affecting the place of 3 faiths, 2 peoples, and 1 human family in that much struggled-over city. The resulting report, also done in consultation with partner churches, updates the thorough report ACSWP did for the 222nd General Assembly (2016).

- *Energy Update.* ACSWP was directed by the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to develop a policy to respond to more of the impacts of climate change with individual and collective action. Building on existing policies, this update lifts up the intersection of environmental, economic and racial justice, to ensure that actions address how a warming planet affects all creation.

- *Epistles from Baltimore.* The 221st General Assembly (2014) approved *The Gospel from Detroit*, which led to an "urban ministry network" that reported to the 223rd General Assembly (2016) in Portland, Oreg., and a *Gospel from St. Louis*, at that city's hosted 224th General Assembly (2018). This report continues the conversation about urban ministry in the church, offering particular lessons from challenges of race and class division in Baltimore.

- *Changing Families and the Church.* This is a request to update the *Transforming Families* report of 2004 in light of greater acceptance of same-sex marriage, changes in reproductive patterns, and further ways of understanding the benefits and limitations of nuclear families in a society with the highest percentage of unmarried adults.

- *Reimagining the World House.* Faced with a wave of nationalism based in majority identity politics (white and anti-immigrant in the United States and parts of Europe; anti-Muslim minority in China, India, and Burma/Myanmar) and authoritarian tendencies in many countries, this proposes a four-year ecumenical and international study platform to lift up Christian support for human rights, democracy, and diplomacy.

- *Peacemaking: The Nations' Calling.* Related to the above but focusing on policy guidance in the current context, this resolution addresses the related threats of war and climate crisis relevant to treaties and ways to end on-going wars and new tensions.

From 2018, following their approval by the General Assembly, the committee assisted the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) in the publication of the following reports: *Honest Patriotism; Religious Freedom without Discrimination; The Pre-*

cautionary Principle: Managing Technological Risks to Protect Humanity and Our Planet; A Gospel from St. Louis; and Healing Before Punishment: Reforming Drug Policy. These resources are available online: <http://www.pcusa.org/acswp/resources.htm>.

The ACSWP works collaboratively with the four mission and ministry areas of the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) and other General Assembly agencies. The ACSWP has liaisons from the Compassion, Peace and Justice ministry area, from the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC), and the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC). The ACSWP also tests policy directions at workshops at the Ecumenical Advocacy Days co-sponsored by the Office of Public Witness in Washington, D.C., and coordinates with the Peace and Justice table of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America.

VII. New Paths for Social Witness in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

The ACSWP faces a number of changes within the PC(USA) and as result is planning a consultation at Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, Ga., in the fall to explore new approaches to strengthening the church's prophetic work. These changes include:

1. The former General Assembly Mission Council is now the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, modeled on staff-directed nonprofit boards rather than deliberative councils of the church. Hence, there is relatively little engagement with social witness policy, with more focus on overseeing the management of programs within a budget controlled by another body, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) A Corporation Board (A Corp). The A Corp has no representation from ACSWP, nor provision for regular interaction with ACSWP.

2. Whereas the Stated Clerk customarily granted exemptions to length requirements for ACSWP and its predecessors, the 5,000-word hard limit will likely change the nature, as well as the form, of the committee's reports.

3. Substantial per capita expenditure for studies is limited, and the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) has tended not to ask ACSWP to assist with "special committees" and other tasks that it was designed to address. The tendency to set up such commissions and committees effectively spends more money on the reinvention of wheels without policy history or institutional memory. The ACSWP has continued to produce thoughtful reports with smaller and shorter-term study teams, but fewer are integrated into PC(USA) educational and journalistic efforts.

4. The primary offices guided by social witness policy, the Office of Public Witness and Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations, have both had their missions reexamined, reworked, and renamed within the past ten years, though policy use in advocacy and education is largely unchanged.

5. The internet and electronic media have already made for functional revisions in *Why and How the Church Makes A Social Witness Policy* (1993), also affecting the production, posting, and dissemination of reports. Atrophy in presbytery and synod program capacity has also affected engagement with congregations and members.

6. ACSWP continues to develop the capacity of its internet journal, justiceunbound.org, and the use of its thumb-drive and online collection of past policies with academic institutions.

7. Polarization in the PC(USA) has been markedly reduced by the regrettable departure of some 425 congregations, as with them went most of the counter-dependent conservative organizing. Even on Middle East issues, there is a strong consensus that the state of Israel is not interested in a peace process, whether in two states or other means. The decline in polarization and reduced activity in many presbyteries has contributed to fewer overtures to the General Assembly.

8. Compassion, Peace and Justice ministries (much of the former National Ministries) and World Mission both encourage interest and country or region networks, partly due to staffing limitations. Some, like the Israel Palestine Mission Network, and the Cuba Partners Network, are quite strong.

9. Some enduring progressive voluntary groups in the church are reduced in energy and number, including Presbyterian Health Education and Welfare Association (PHEWA), as well as Presbyterian Voices for Justice (PV4J), and the LGBTQ+

support organizations, Covenant Network of Presbyterians and More Light Presbyterians. Presbyterian Peace Fellowship [and its Fossil Free PC(USA) project] is a different case, as is Presbyterians for Earth Care.

10. ACSWP coordinates with the Social Ethics Network (see section V above), which helps connect the committee's work to seminaries, colleges, and universities. But with fewer Presbyterians in the ethics positions in PC(USA)-related seminaries, the group ended its practice of visiting member seminaries.

11. The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC) and the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC) were left in the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) executive director's office in 2010 when ACSWP's staff was moved to Compassion, Peace and Justice. Since 2008, both advocacy committees share a single staff person whose role is primarily administrative, in order to separate those committees' advocacy (including internal monitoring of the church) from program staff within the formerly named Racial Ethnic and Women's Concerns unit.

12. The PMA's "Matthew 25 Church" emphasis can bring together more policy than the single short action of the 222nd General Assembly (2016) by that name. A significant portion of the PMA staff is currently devoted to the theme goals of antiracism and poverty eradication, while the third goal of congregational vitality is reflected in the programs 1001 New Worshiping Communities and Vital Congregations. These three themes need to be related to the confessions that also include concerns for peace, family life, justice for women, and creation care.

Since 1993, there have also been many changes in our full communion partner churches and the ecumenical movement more broadly. Most other denominations do not maintain social policy development as a separate, in-depth function, but most have some representatives authorized to address social crises and other public matters of Christian conscience. At the same time, the more thorough PC(USA) documents have been playing a key role in ecumenical coalitions on environmental, anti-poverty, and electoral reform, among others. Given the PC(USA)'s limited size and influence in society, it seems more important than ever for the churches to work together when possible on broad-scope issues, such as the Social Creed for the 21st Century (2008), or the Reimagining the World House project currently being proposed.

The consultation envisioned will look at the processes the PC(USA) has developed over time and the continuing need for Christian thinking about public policy, even in a time of political gridlock. Some scholars, in fact, see the political polarization and its intensity due partly to the weakening of a mainline Protestant "big tent" that moderated ideological differences. For some time also, the churches have not been the only Christian religious actors, as entrepreneurial organizations on the Left and Right have built constituencies and programs in Washington, D.C., and on social media. Also, "movement" organizations have seen the need for policy development, including the Poor Peoples' Campaign, which has worked with the Institute for Policy Studies, and Black Lives Matter, which provides extensive policy resources on its website.

The group assembled, then, will consider the theology of social witness as well as institutional locations for ACSWP staff and accountability and reporting mechanisms for the whole committee, in part comparing structures and definition of the task in other denominations. Leading practitioners of social change in the PC(USA) as well as PMA staff and elected persons responsible for social ministries and mission would also be invited and papers prepared looking both backward and forward, as much as possible. The goal will be recommendations to the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the 224th General Assembly (2020), as well as guidance to ACSWP itself

Item 00-Info-16

Report of the Presbyterian Mission Agency on Current Task Forces, Work Groups, and Ad Hoc Committees—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

As instructed by the 204th General Assembly (1992), the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board presents to the General Assembly, the work of all task forces, work groups, ad hoc committees, and similar bodies established by the Presbyterian Mission Agency, its divisions, or other assembly entities (*Minutes*, 1992, Part I, pp. 144, 147, 277–78).

All ministries and the Executive Director's Office were requested to disclose information on how many task forces, work groups, ad hoc committees, and similar bodies were currently at work in their area. Fifty-five (55) such groups are currently operating. Fifty-one (51) of the groups were reported as having ongoing responsibilities. The other one (1) group has set completion dates with a written report expected by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board or the General Assembly. Whenever it is possible, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board assigns tasks to an existing part of its structure. All persons serving on a board, committee, task force, or work group with an expected life of more than two years are selected through the General Assembly Nominating Committee process.

1. *Compassion, Peace & Justice*

Ongoing responsibilities: Mission Responsibility Through Investment, Presbyterian Hunger Program Advisory Committee, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Advisory Committee, Presbyterian Committee on the Self Development of People.

Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy—In most cases, a liaison member of ACSWP serving on the team will continue to track the posting, publishing, and other implementation of reports after the General Assembly, but the teams themselves will be dismissed with thanks for their volunteer service.

- a. Advisors for *Unbound*: An interactive journal of Christian Social Justice, both from the church more broadly and from staff in the building. Face-to-face meetings of outside church advisors only at General Assembly and Big Tent, with staff advisors meeting periodically in Presbyterian Center.
- b. Central America Study Team: Five members chosen for expertise and diversity.
- c. One Ad Hoc Group of three persons working on “Reimagining the World House” international relations and human rights forum project.
- d. Jerusalem Study Team: Three members chosen for expertise from within ACSWP and REAC.
- e. Urban Ministry Network/”Gospel from Baltimore” writing team: Six persons with experience in urban ministry, particularly in Baltimore.
- f. Energy Policy Update Draft & Design Team: Four persons, three members of ACSWP and one outside consultant writer, working to prepare report and study material.

2. *Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministries/Presbyterian Women*

Ongoing responsibilities: National Black Presbyterian Caucus, National Hispanic Latino Presbyterian Caucus, Native American Consulting Committee, National Caucus of Korean Presbyterian Churches, Coordinating Committee on Korean American Presbyteries, Korean English Ministries (EM) Network, National Middle Eastern Presbyterian Caucus, National Asian Presbyterian Council, President’s Roundtable of the Schools and Colleges Equipping Communities of Color, Presbyterian Women Churchwide Coordinating Team, National Cambodian Presbyterian Council, National Chinese Presbyterian Council, National Filipino Presbyterian Council, National Taiwanese Presbyterian Council, National Thai Presbyterian Council, National Vietnamese Presbyterian Council, National Burmese Presbyterian Council, National Indonesian Presbyterian Council, National Laotian Presbyterian Council, African Immigrants Network, Southeast Asian Network, National Caucuses and Councils Supporting Communities of Color, Presbyterian Intercultural Network, Presbyterian Intercultural Young Adult Network, National Black Presbyterian Women, National Hispanic Latina Presbyterian Women, National Asian Presbyterian Women, National Korean Presbyterian Women, Native American Presbyterian Women, Native American Presbyterian Men, National Hispanic/Latino Presbyterian Men, National Asian Youth Council, National Korean Youth Council, American Indian Youth Council, National Taiwanese Presbyterian Young Adult Council, Taiwanese English Ministries Network, National Association of Presbyterian Clergywomen, National Ghanaian Presbyterian Women, Kenyan Women’s Group, The Christian Women’s Fellowships in the PC(USA) (Cameroon), Mission Development Resource Committee.

3. *Theology, Formation, and Evangelism*

Ongoing responsibilities: Stony Point Center Advisory Board and Committee on Theological Education.

4. *World Mission*

Ongoing responsibility: Human Trafficking Roundtable- This group does not exist solely within World Mission. Rather, it is comprised of individuals from offices throughout the PMA as well as the OGA. U.S. Advisory Committee/Jinishian Memorial Program.

5. *Executive Director’s Office*

On-going responsibility: Power and Privilege Task Force: Power and Privilege Task Force will observe board meetings with particular attention to the dynamics of power and privilege and to use the tools developed by the General Assembly Committee on Representation to watch how diversity plays out in the collective and in business before the Board.

The Mid Council Advisory Board is a representative group of Mid Council leaders who meet with Presbyterian Mission Agency staff leaders to discuss ways that the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the mid councils can work together in partnership; Presbyterian Mission Agency and Presbyterian Foundation Working Group was formed to strengthen the working relationship between the two agencies.

6. *Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC) and Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC)*

On-going responsibility: Women of Color Joint Working Group – per the 218th General Assembly (2008), Item 09-13: *Hearing and Singing New Songs to God: Shunning Old Discords and Sharing New Harmonies*; Recommendation #3.

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) agreed to allocate the budget for the Women of Color Joint Working Group to the Black Women and Girls Task Force, a special committee created by a resolution (Item 11-07) brought to the assembly by the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC).

Discussions amongst members of the two advocacy committees are underway about how to reinvigorate the Women of Color Joint Working Group in this General Assembly cycle. They believe this permanent working group created by the General Assembly is still essential for ensuring the intersectional identities of women of color are neither ignored nor made invisible. There is still much work to be done to both celebrate the gifts of women of color and to advocate for gender and racial justice as it pertains to women of color.

7. *Mission Engagement and Support/Special Offerings*

Special Offerings Advisory Task Force. Review Task Force required every four years by *Organization for Mission*, Appendix A—final report to the 224th General Assembly (2020).

Item 00-Info-17

General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) Agency Summary

“As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise” (Gal. 3:27–29) (*Book of Order*, F-1.0403, Unity in Diversity).

Introduction

The General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) is a permanent standing committee of the General Assembly, mandated by the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), *Book of Order* (G-3.0103, Participation and Representation), *The Manual of the General Assembly* (including the Standing Rules of the General Assembly and the *Organization for Mission*) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and the Churchwide Plan for Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action. Since it was constituted at reunion in 1983, GACOR has a long history of leadership, training, and service to the denomination.

The GACOR helps the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) become what God calls it to be, a church that includes diverse persons from the abundance God provides, an inclusiveness that represents the fullness God has created. We serve the denomination, keeping our attention on the quality of its community and always pointing toward a greater openness to voices not always heard, to leaders routinely overlooked, and to seek decision-making processes that enable full participation.

Assigned Responsibilities

The GACOR, in its constitutional mandate, promotes, reviews, advises, advocates, and consults with the General Assembly and its entities, committees, councils, and divisions in order to ensure that the principles of inclusiveness and diversity are implemented. How we function as the body of Christ is important both internally (structures, procedures, ways of interacting) and externally (social witness, mission, ministry). The church seeks to live into the abundance of the gifts given to it for its mission by helping it express that diversity and more fully accomplish our common ministries. To do this most faithfully, the church needs to have the widest possible participation. This rich diversity of membership and participation particularly includes “race, ethnicity, age, sex, disability, geography, [and] theological convictions (*Book of Order*, F-1.0403). At the national level, the church (as the body of Christ) is equipped with the widest possible diversity, by election and employment, for its life and it is called to select broadly from those leaders for its bodies.

Accomplishments

Since the close of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) on June 23, 2018, in St. Louis, Missouri, the GACOR worked diligently to complete the functions assigned by the *Book of Order, Organization for Mission*, and in accordance with its *Manual of Operations*. The committee met face-to-face four times. The GACOR Executive Committee (GACORX) consists of the moderator, vice-moderator, secretary, and the two chairpersons of the two subcommittees—Gather, Advise, Translate, and Export (GATE) and Advise, Review, Report, and Recommend (ARRR). The executive committee meets monthly by Zoom teleconference or in-person when GACOR is meeting for an in-person meeting. Subcommittees meet monthly by Zoom teleconference or in-person when GACOR is meeting for an in-person meeting.

The continuing transition from more frequent face-to-face meetings to Zoom teleconference meetings has provided significant financial savings for the committee's budget.

Accomplishments over this two-year term included:

- Book discussions for GACOR study and training included *No Ashes in the Fire: Coming of Age Black and Free in America* by Darnell Moore (Nation Books, 2018)
- Four face-to-face meetings in Louisville, KY, Stony Point, NY, San Diego, CA; and Baltimore, MD.
- In October of 2018, GACOR held an orientation for new committee members at Stony Point Center, NY, and a retreat for the full committee facilitated by Dr. Elías Ortega Aponte and Rev. Dr. Derrick McQueen.
- GACOR held consultations with REAC and ACWC Representatives to discuss partnerships and collaboration.
- Maintained liaison relationships with REAC and ACWC. Liaisons commenced participation at GACOR face-to-face meetings. For the first time, GACOR, REAC, and ACWC leaders held a joint meeting in October 2019 in Baltimore.
- The GACOR held conversations with the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) and the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) 7
- GACOR observed the General Assembly's practice (directed by the Doctrine of Discovery, Item 10-13) and began each face-to-face meeting with the acknowledgment of the indigenous peoples and the land on which GACOR met.
- GACOR conducted a review of the proposed changes to the Rules of Discipline and provided advising counsel to the Rules of Discipline Task Force twice and met by Zoom once.
- GACOR by invitation of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA), recommended revisions to the Session Annual Statistical Report (SASR) form.
- GACOR reviewed and made recommendations regarding changes to Standing Rules of the General Assembly through COGA.
- GACOR wrote a letter of concern to the President and the trustees of Board of Pensions regarding their non-participation in the same Equity and Inclusion Assessment as the other entities and agencies.
- GACOR began benchmark reviews for PILP and planned for future reviews with the Presbyterian Foundation (FDN) and Board of Pensions (BOP).
- Met with the Co-Moderators of GA223 regarding appointments and nominations for special committees and commissions created by GA223.
- Members of the committee presented a workshop on the *Theology of Representation* at the Mid-Council Leaders' Gathering in Baltimore (October 2019).
- Met with the Committee in Local Arrangements (COLA) in October 2019.

- GACOR hosted a consultation with COLA and the Co-moderators of the 223rd General Assembly regarding plans for 224th General Assembly in December 2019, particularly regarding translation/interpretation, worship planning, and volunteers for GA224.

- The GACOR held consultations with committees on representation of mid councils, wherever it met. These dialogues provided insights into the ways synods and presbyteries conducted their representation work in their contexts. The GACOR listened, learned, and, where invited, consulted and shared wisdom with sister committees on representation on ways to support deeper and wider participation, representation and equity in the PC(USA).

- The following guests joined GACOR in their meetings:

- February 2018, Louisville, KY:

- Rev. Dr. J. Herbert Nelson, II, Stated Clerk of the PCUSA;

- Jim Rissler, President, PILP; and Clare Lewis, Vice President, PILP

- October 2018: Stony Point Center, NY:

- Rev. Joanne Sharpe, ACWC co-moderator, and

- Kitty Ufford Chase, Co-Director, Stony Point Center, NY

- March 2019: San Diego, CA:

- Rev. Michael Mudgett, Executive Presbyter, San Diego Presbytery;

- Rev. Mark Hong, Synod Executive of the Synod of Southern California and Hawaii; and the Moderator of National Korean Presbyterian Caucus

- October 2019: Baltimore, MD:

- Rev. Dr. J. Herbert Nelson, II, Stated Clerk;

- Rev. Carrie Finch Burriss, Chair and Sonce Reese, staff of COLA;

- The membership of REAC;

- Rev. JoAnne Sharp and Rev. Dr. Flo Barbee-Watkins ACWC Co-Chairs.

Membership:

Class of 2020: Ruling Elders: Aida Faris (SUN), Treena Parvello (SW); Members: Dr. Raj Nadella (SA), Byron Elam (LW), Teaching Elders: Rubén Ortiz Rodríguez (BPR), Taejinn Hahn (PAC), Eric Thomas (NE), Dr. Catherine Knott(LIN)

Class of 2022: Ruling Elders: Maribeth Culpepper, Mike Hauser (MAM), (SA), Ajah Hales (COV); Teaching Elders: Anna Kendig (LAK), Oghene'tega (Tega) Swann (TRI), Larissa Kwong Abazia (NE), John Molina-Moore (MAT), Dr. William Yoo

[Member designates a church member.]

Liaisons: REAC: Bisi Shofu; ACWC: Courtney Steininger

Item 00-Info-18

Report of Benefits Plan Amendments—From the Board of Pensions.

The Board of Pensions reports the following amendments to the Benefits Plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Since the 223rd General Assembly (2018), the Board of Pensions adopted amendments to add or improve the benefits offered under the Benefits Plan, effective January 1, 2021 (unless a different effective date is stated).

The amended and restated Benefits Plan, effective January 1, 2021, introduces three new improvements, consisting of the reduction of dues for enrollment in the Defined Benefit Pension Plan, the introduction of a new package of benefits for minister members called “Minister’s Choice,” and new, more affordable, coverage options for term life, disability (short-term and long-term) and an Employee Assistance Plan. The substantive amendments are outlined below.

I. Retirement Programs

A. Pension Plan:

- A **3.6 percent experience apportionment** pension benefit or pension credit increase for Plan Year **2018** (the increase was effective July 1, 2019, for members in pay status and applied to credits accrued as of December 31, 2018, for active and term vested members).
- A **2.0 percent experience apportionment** pension benefit or pension credit increase for Plan Year **2019** (the increase is effective July 1, 2020, for members in pay status and applied to credits accrued as of December 31, 2019, for active and term vested members).
- Pension dues reduced from 11 to 8.5 percent of Effective Salary beginning January 1, 2021.
- Minimum required distribution age increased from age 70½ to age 72 for participants who did not attain age 70½ by December 31, 2019.

B. Retirement Savings Plan:

- The Retirement Savings Plans documents were amended, effective July 1, 2019, permitting forfeitures to be applied to employer contributions, and permitting employers to customize vesting schedules for employer contributions.
- Minimum required distribution age increased from age 70½ to age 72 for participants who did not attain age 70½ by December 31, 2019.

II. Financial Protection Programs

A. Death and Disability Plan:

- The definition of disability applicable to members who commence disability benefits on or after attainment of age 62 was changed to the inability to perform one’s own occupation for the entire duration of disability benefit entitlement (effective 1/1/2020).
- Maximum Disability Basis increased from \$100,000 to \$110,000 (effective 1/1/2020).
- Salary Continuation Death Benefit for Retired Pensioners increased from \$9,000 to \$10,000 (effective 1/1/2020).
- Maximum Lump-Sum Death Benefit increased from \$100,000 to \$110,000 (effective 1/1/2020).
- A **2.0 percent disability benefit increase** for Plan year **2018** (effective July 1, 2019).
- A **2.0 percent disability benefit increase** for Plan year **2019** (effective July 1, 2020).

B. Term Life Plan

- Formerly known as Group Term Life, the benefits option has been expanded to offer fixed dollar levers of coverage at the lesser of one times reported salary or \$50,000.

C. Temporary Disability Plan

- New benefit offering covers 60 percent of reported salary (capped at IRS maximum pension compensation) for up to 90 days, after a 14-day exclusion period.

D. Long-Term Disability Plan

- New benefit provides an income benefit of 60 percent of reported salary (capped at IRS maximum pension compensation) covers members disabled from their own occupation for at least 90 days due to an injury or illness and, after 24 months, disabled from any occupation for which the member is fitted by education, training or experience.

III. Health Programs

A. Medical Plan:

- **Appendix F**, the summary of benefits, deductibles, and copayment maximums for the Medical Plan coverage options, has been updated for 2020.
- Medical Plan terminology has been updated to comport with the Affordable Care Act glossary of terms produced by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. For example, “copayment maximums” are now called “out-of-pocket maximums” and “copayments” based on a percentage of medical costs are now referred to as “co-insurance.”
- **Appendix G** (previously Appendix F), the summary of benefits, deductibles, co-insurance and annual out-of-pocket maximums for the Medical Plan coverage options, has been updated for 2021.
- In-vitro fertilization and hearing aid benefits are becoming covered services under the EPO option.

B. Employee Assistance Plan:

- Because EAP benefits are currently provided as part of the Medical Plan, employees who opt out of Medical Plan coverage have not had access to EAP benefits. The 2021 Benefits Plan offers the employer an opportunity to provide EAP benefits to all employees, even those who decline to enroll for Medical Plan coverage.

IV. Benefits Plan Dues

A. A chart of the required dues for all the Benefits Plan components has been inserted in **Appendix A**. (Existing appendices are re-lettered, but not reordered)

B. Benefits Plan 2021 provides a new benefits package for ministers, referred to as “Minister’s Choice,” consisting of enrollment in the Defined Benefit Pension Plan, Death and Disability Plan, Temporary Disability Plan, and Employee Assistance Plan, for dues totaling 10 percent of Effective Salary. Enrollment for other benefits, including Medical Benefits, is permitted at employer’s election.

The Board of Pensions communicates all Benefits Plan amendments when they are adopted through *The Board Bulletin* and other Board communications. The currently effective official plan documents for the Benefits Plan and the Retirement Savings Plans are available on the Board of Pension’s website (pensions.org) or by calling the Board of Pensions at 800-PRESPLAN (800-773-7752).

Item 00-Info-19

Self-Study Report—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns’ Background & Purpose

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), acknowledging the reality of pervasive societal and institutional systems of racism and sexism, established two advocacy committees with the purpose of holding the denomination accountable to its commitment to gender and racial justice. The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) was created by the General Assembly to:

assist the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to give full expression of the rich diversity of its membership as specified in the *Book of Order*, F-1.0403. The committee shall monitor and evaluate policies, procedures, programs, and resources regarding the way in which they impact the status and position of women in the church and the world and shall advocate for full inclusiveness and equity in all areas of the life and work of the church in society as a whole.¹

The committee was created to ensure the PC(USA) is faithful to its commitment to gender justice—both internally and in its witness to the wider world.² Unfortunately, left in the wake of the creation of ACWC was a major downsizing of the church’s programmatic gender justice work. What was once a full Women’s Ministry Unit became a program area within the National Ministries Division.³ Four committees—The Women’s Ministry Unit Committee, the Women Employed by the Church Committee, the Justice for Women Committee, and the Committee of Women of Color—were all eliminated just prior to the creation of ACWC.⁴ So while the creation of the advocacy committee represents a commitment of the church to maintain some element of monitoring its practices with regards to gender justice, it also represented a major reduction in the priority given to gender justice issues within the PC(USA).

With this noted, the ACWC exists because as a church based in the Reformed tradition, the PC(USA) acknowledges that sin is real and that the system will necessarily need tuning and prompting, prodding and adjusting. In a world where people are still mistreated, silenced, and ignored because of their gender, the voice of advocacy for women is still necessary. The denomination was intentional about ensuring resourcing and support to encourage gender justice within the PC(USA), because that voice helps to continually recreate the church to be a better reflection of God’s realm on earth. Sometimes the voice of advocacy calls for looking internally and making some changes within. At other times it challenges the church to be to the world a bold voice and strong example of what is just.

While categorized as a committee of the General Assembly, ACWC’s staff person is lodged in the Executive Director’s Office of the Presbyterian Mission Agency.⁵ The current requirements for the makeup of the membership of the committee are found in the Presbyterian Mission Agency Manual of Operations:

Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC)

This advocacy committee shall consist of:

2 clergy women

1 woman church lay employee

1 Presbyterian Women Churchwide Coordinating Team Vice Moderator for Justice and Peace

8 members at-large, chosen to balance the committee geographically, racially and ethnically, and with consideration to age and expertise.

At least four members of the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns shall be women of color. At least two members of the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns will be men, but no more than three members may be men.⁶

The intentionally diverse composition of ACWC results in varied experiences, knowledge, and expertise around the table. Since ACWC’s last review, the committee now sends one member each to serve as a full member on both the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB) as well as the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) A Corporation Board (A Corp). ACWC continues to send a member to serve as a full member on the committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI). All three of these ACWC members have voice and vote within both ACWC and their respective assigned committees or boards. In addition to the direct membership connections to PMAB, A Corp, MRTI, and Presbyterian Women, ACWC sends and receives liaison members to and from the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC), the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP), and the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR).

Assigned Functions for ACWC

The ACWC has direct access to both the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB), meaning it can bring policy statements, resolutions, study papers, and advice and counsel memoranda or other correspondence to either

body.⁷ One member of ACWC serves on the PMAB, and ACWC has one corresponding member (voice, no vote) at each General Assembly.

The particular functions assigned to the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns are as follows:⁸

- a. Prepare policy statements, resolutions, recommendations, reports, and advice and counsel memoranda on women's concerns to the General Assembly at the request of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, or on its own initiative.
- b. Advise the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board on matters of women's concerns including statements concerning pressing issues the Board may wish to consider between meetings of the General Assembly.
- c. Provide advice and counsel to the General Assembly and its committees on overtures, commissioners' resolutions, reports, and actions before the General Assembly that impact issues of women's concerns.
- d. Assist the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy in maintaining an up-to-date and accurate compilation of General Assembly policy on women's concerns and provide information to the church as requested.
- e. Provide the Stated Clerk, the Moderator of the General Assembly, and the Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency with information as they fulfill their responsibilities to communicate and interpret General Assembly policies on women's concerns.
- f. Monitor the implementation of women's policies and programs relative to women's concerns.
- g. Through advocacy maintain a strong prophetic witness to the church and for the church on existing and emerging issues of women's concerns.

How ACWC Fulfills Its Assigned Functions

The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns generally meets face-to-face three times per year for two to two-and-a-half days. During General Assembly years, there is an additional meeting devoted to working on advice and counsel memoranda for the overtures arriving from the presbyteries as well as the reports coming out of various task forces, committees, and commissions of the General Assembly. ACWC in some ways functions on the same two-year cycle as the General Assembly. New members are elected onto the committee at each General Assembly, with other members rotating off. Every late summer or fall after General Assembly, a good portion of ACWC's first meeting is devoted to orientation of new members. From there, the group assesses that which may have been assigned to them by General Assembly and looks at the work related to gender justice that the assembly may have assigned to various program areas of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. At this initial meeting, the group sets its goals and priorities for the next two-year cycle leading into General Assembly, focusing on gender justice issues that are particularly relevant in the church and the world at that time. The group then creates working groups as a means of completing the work of the committee. During this last cycle, ACWC functioned with three working groups: (1) Gender and Leadership, (2) Women of Color, and (3) Sexual Justice.⁹

The ACWC perpetually keeps the General Assembly-assigned deadlines for responding to referrals and submitting resolutions before them. Over the last six years, all General Assembly deadlines for work have been met by ACWC. As time creeps nearer to the next General Assembly (usually beginning in the fall of non-assembly years), ACWC starts to pull together any work that it determines should be brought to the attention of the General Assembly in the form of a resolution. Of course, there is always the chance that something essential will come up between that time and the winter deadline, at which point one of the working groups generally jumps into action to get work completed in time to be submitted to the General Assembly.

Meeting agendas are created by ACWC's three-person leadership team and staff and are focused around whatever work the General Assembly may have assigned to the committee, as well as any current issues in the church and society that ACWC may be monitoring. Each meeting begins and ends with worship and/or prayer, and the group is intentional about reconnecting with one another's lives before launching into work. An important learning of the committee during this cycle of work was the need to be intentional about prioritizing reconnection and sharing time before diving into the often-difficult subject matter involved in its work. Holding one another first and foremost as siblings in Christ whose lives extend with both joy and pain well beyond the work shared on this committee has become a core value that influences the work and worship of the committee.

Outside of the full-group check-in, the leadership team as well as each of the working groups give reports back to the full committee as to what work has been done between meetings. Also, members of the committee who have participated in any events or served as liaisons to meetings on behalf of ACWC between ACWC meetings are held accountable by being asked to give reports, which often lead into discussion about follow-up action or suggestions for collaboration with other groups.

The ACWC meets in various locations around the country, depending on the group's current focus and what resources ACWC seeks for its work. When meeting in locations around the country, ACWC has made it standard practice to reach out and connect with Presbyterians in the area. When the committee holds meetings in Louisville, members often make connections and collaborate with staff people at the Presbyterian Center.

Between meetings, the committee keeps its work moving via email and Zoom meetings. As the world moves, ACWC members are constantly tracking those movements that have a particular and direct impact on women specifically. Further, as the denomination makes decisions and implements policy, ACWC members monitor actions taken by the church that may unknowingly challenge or compromise the PC(USA)'s commitment to gender justice.

Committee Highlights and Strengths

Intersectional Gender Justice

The ACWC continues to stress the necessity of approaching gender justice considering intersectionality. As shown by the resolutions that ACWC has brought before the 224th General Assembly (2020), the intersection of gender and race has been in the forefront of much of ACWC's work during this two-year cycle. Part of the commitment ACWC has made is to participate in some kind of antiracism or cultural proficiency training as a committee within each two-year cycle of its work. This helps to shape the work and hold the intersectional focus of the committee.

Connecting Around the Denomination

The ACWC has made an effort to connect with local Presbyterians and Presbyterian leaders in the various locations where it meets. This has benefitted ACWC in building relationships, in spreading the word about the work of ACWC, and in learning from Presbyterians around the country what they believe are the most pressing gender justice issues. Chicago, El Paso, Charleston, and Austin were some of the places ACWC had the opportunity to meet with and learn from local Presbyterians. Making time in their agenda for this connecting has proven incredibly valuable and important.

The ACWC carefully studied the Gender and Leadership Study¹⁰ created by Research Services and then mailed it out directly to all executive and general presbyters and stated clerks of the 171 presbyteries of the PC(USA). They were asked to not only carefully read the results for themselves, but that they also disseminate the results of the study to all pastor nominating committees across their presbyteries in order that the entire denomination have access to and readily understand the realities faced by clergywomen in our denomination.

Self-Review and Reflection

With the often-challenging nature of the issues with which ACWC is dealing, the committee has learned how important it is to be intentional about showing care for one another in the process while assessing how the work is going. The committee has made it a practice to spend time at the beginning of each meeting reconnecting with one another and praying and worshipping together. The members also take time to evaluate the work of the committee at each meeting and suggest ways in which they can improve their work and time together.

Internal Reporting

In an effort to maintain a better connection with the various committees and boards to which ACWC sends members either as liaisons or dual members, ACWC implemented a required reporting form for all members attending other entities' meetings.¹¹ This report form keeps members intentional about bringing the gender justice advocacy lens with them to each meeting and ensures that ACWC stays abreast of what other entities are working on that is relevant to the work of ACWC.

Committee Challenges and Opportunities for Growing

Recruitment and Structure

Throughout much of the past two-year cycle of work, ACWC has operated with two vacant seats. Recruitment remains a challenge. Serving on ACWC is a major commitment, with three meetings a year and many Zoom meetings in between. Most members also serve in another capacity as a liaison to or dual member with another committee or board, making the time commitment more demanding than most people have time for, particularly younger members, parents or caretakers, students, and those employed outside the church. The obstacle of the current structure for doing the work (which matches that of other committees and boards) in recruiting and retaining new members is an ongoing conversation within ACWC (and with other partners). The ACWC believes this discussion needs to happen on a much larger scale, as other boards and committees are facing the same challenges.

Scope of Gender Justice Advocacy

The ACWC has recognized a new sense of urgency in recent years when it comes to gender justice in the church and society. From the #MeToo movement to the inequities exposed in the Gender and Leadership in the PC(USA) report,¹² the past six years have had ACWC incredibly busy. There is no shortage of advocacy needed for women. At the same time, ACWC recognizes the same urgency in their partners on the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC), and ACWC lifted up the need for more work around LGBTQIA+ advocacy at the last General Assembly. This all points to the need to prioritize and expand the resourcing for the advocacy committees in their work.

Expanding Understanding of Gender

Definitions and understandings of gender have been expanding and shifting for many years, and ACWC has recognized that within their own work, they have some catching up to do. Conversations within the committee itself have revealed the need to spend some time delineating terms and concepts regularly used by the committee. This will be a priority in the next cycle of work.

2014–2016: ACWC Held Five Regular Meetings

August 20–22, 2014, in Louisville, Ky.

- The committee spent a significant amount of time on introductions and orientation, as this was the first meeting for those elected at the 221st General Assembly (2014).
- The ACWC met with several staff people at the Presbyterian Center in Louisville to learn about their work and the connections of the work being done by the Presbyterian Mission Agency with ACWC's work.
- The committee reviewed its work at General Assembly and looked ahead to what items it would need to monitor in the coming years.
- The ACWC determined a focus for its work in the next two-year cycle, including making assignments for its two working groups.

January 8–9, 2015, in Louisville, Ky.

- The ACWC was led in a workshop titled “Interrupting the Church’s Participation in Cultural Dominance.” The workshop prompted the committee to have a conversation about the definition of culture. In addition, the committee pondered how it could create conditions for the church to reach a place of identity change and culture shift.
- The committee met with the associate for Gender and Racial Justice to hear updates on the Status of Women Theological Consultation planning and also the planning for the Women of Color Consultation.
- The committee discussed 1001 New Worshiping Communities and the need for an examination of Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) employment practices as well as the need for equality in the treatment of women and men and people of color and white people.

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- The committee held a discussion of the PMA revisions to the Affirmative Action Equal Employment Opportunity Policy, noting that ACWC and the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) would be consulted before a final version is submitted.

June 4–5, 2015, in Louisville, Ky.

- The committee reviewed the childcare policy submitted by the General Assembly Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) and agreed to thank COGA for their childcare policy.
- The committee held a conversation with Chip Hardwick, director of Theology, Worship and Education (TWE), and the director of Evangelism and Church Growth (ECG), about inclusive and expansive language.
- The committee held a conversation with Jewel McCrae, associate for Women’s Leadership Development and Young Women’s Ministries, who noted that she is working with executive presbyters to fill the open positions in her area.
- The committee held a conversation with Merri Alexander, convener of the Women’s Listening Visits, to ascertain where ACWC can be helpful.

October 29–30, 2015, in Chicago, Ill.

- The ACWC agreed to seek having PMA change its manual of operations in order to strike mandatory language requiring one church lay employee in the ACWC description. The committee came to the conclusion that while it would like finding such a person, it would also like to allow the General Assembly Nominating Committee (GANC) flexibility when a non-teaching elder woman employed by the church is not available to serve.
- The committee was joined for lunch by the Reverend Shannon Kershner, pastor of Fourth Presbyterian Church, Chicago, who shared highlights of things she has been doing since becoming the pastor of Fourth. She also addressed the challenges both professionally and personally of being female clergy in a tall steeple church.
- The committee agreed to send the Women of Color Consultation work group a letter of support and possible collaboration.
- The committee began a session of self-reflection and dreaming forward and were encouraged to be creative about how to bring about gender justice in the church.
- The committee began discussion of resolutions to General Assembly.

January 14–15, 2016, in Louisville, Ky.

- The committee met to finalize its work going into the 222nd General Assembly (2016).
- The committee held a conversation with Tony De La Rosa, interim executive director of PMA, who explained the PMA Mission Work Plan. The committee emphasized that ACWC has been a consistent voice for the denomination with integrity, insight, and intellect.

ACWC’s Resolutions to the 222nd General Assembly (2016)

- *A Resolution to Ensure Adoption and Implementation of Child Youth Protection Policies and Resources in the PC(USA)*
- *A Resolution to Ensure Just Compensation Practices for Those Employed via Third Party Contractors*
- *A Resolution to Extend Time Limits on Abuse Reporting in Instances of Gross Negligence*
- *A Resolution to Require and Expand Family Leave Policies*

ACWC's 2016 Response to Referral

- *2012 Item 11-12. Continuing the Work of Deborah's Daughters*

2016–2018: ACWC Held Five Regular Meetings

October 29–30, 2016, in Louisville, Ky.

- The committee spent a significant amount of time on introductions and orientation, as this was the first meeting for those elected at the 222nd General Assembly (2016).
- The committee reviewed its work at General Assembly and discussed best practices and places for improvement in the next cycle, as well as looking ahead to what items approved by the 222nd General Assembly (2016) it would need to monitor in the coming years.
- The ACWC determined a focus for its work in the next two-year cycle, including making assignments for its four working groups and splitting up to meet in those groups to set priorities.

February 2–4, 2017, in El Paso, Tex. and Ciudad Juarez, Mexico

- The ACWC discussed current events and the particular need to respond to sexism in U.S. culture at this time.
- The committee heard a report from ACWC member Jeanne Choy Tate about Cameron House and the history of abuse that occurred there as well as the healing work of that community.
- The committee spent the day in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, connecting with partners in ministry there and learning about gender justice work amidst the particulars of the culture there. Members also visited a portion of the border wall and learned of the impact of this barrier on all living in the area.
- The ACWC continued work in their assigned working groups, with members incorporating any relevant learnings from Mexico into their focus areas.

July 8–10, 2017, in St. Louis, Mo.

- The ACWC had the opportunity to participate in worship at the Big Tent, which some members attended prior to the meeting.
- The committee spent a day learning about Lydia's House, the domestic violence prevention and assistance organization, and members then volunteered by cleaning there. The committee's hope was to begin to connect in a more meaningful way with the city in which the 223rd General Assembly (2018) will be held in conjunction with the Stated Clerk's Hands and Feet initiative.
- The ACWC met with PMA Interim Executive Director Tony De La Rosa and discussed concerns with the PMA's Family Leave policy.
- The committee met with the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly J. Herbert Nelson, II, and discussed concerns about clergy abuse, reporting abuse, and collection of data surrounding cases of abuse.
- The ACWC heard extensive reports from each of the ACWC working groups.

November 9-11, 2017, in Washington, D.C.

- The ACWC met with Co-Moderator of the 222nd General Assembly (2016) Denise Anderson and discussed her sense of gender justice concerns in the PC(USA).
- The committee heard personal reports on immigration struggles from ACWC member Joyce Rarumangkay regarding obtaining her green card, and from the Reverend Lisa Hamel regarding international adoption.

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- Valerie Izumi, manager for General Assembly Nominating Committee, and Mary Lynn Walters, General Assembly Nominating Committee member, met with ACWC to give updates on the nominations process and what is needed from ACWC.
- The committee began to discuss resolutions to General Assembly.
- Dr. Barbara Fears from Howard Divinity School presented to ACWC in conjunction with its focus on black women and girls.

January 11–13, 2017, in Louisville, Ky.

- The ACWC received, reviewed, and approved drafts of resolutions to be submitted to the 223rd General Assembly (2018).
- The committee received and approved a joint statement with Presbyterian Women addressing the #MeToo and #ChurchToo movements.
- The ACWC participated in a community-building exercise to strengthen the internal teamwork of ACWC.
- Rhaskell Hunter, director of Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministries, met with ACWC to discuss work being done in connection to the Status of Women project.
- The committee discussed the work and proposals of the Way Forward Commission.
- The ACWC renewed its commitment to undergird work with a Reformed theological framework.

ACWC’s Resolutions to the 223rd General Assembly (2018)

- *A Resolution to Respond to Disparities Experienced by Black Women and Girls*
- *A Resolution to Require and Expand Family Leave Policies*
- *A Resolution on Determining the Need for an LGBTQ+ Advocacy Committee in the PC(USA)*
- *A Resolution on Sexual Misconduct in the PC(USA)*
- *A Resolution to Amend Book of Order D-11.0403*

For information on ACWC’s work from 2018–2020, please see ACWC’s Agency Summary.

ACWC Reporting Form for Liaisons and Dual-Members

Name:

Event/Meeting:

Dates:

Please summarize the event/meeting:

Where was gender justice especially relevant—either where it was lacking, or where there is need for advocacy/change?

If relevant, in what ways did you advocate from ACWC’s perspective?

Does ACWC need to follow up on anything related to this meeting/event? If so, how?

For liaisons and dual members: How can ACWC best support you in your role with this entity in the future?

Other Comments:

Endnotes

1. *Organization for Mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 2016*, 21. See also, *Minutes*, 1994, Part I, p. 262.
2. This was in adherence to the Articles of Agreement of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) at reunion: “The General Assembly Council in its development of a design for the work of the General Assembly shall also ensure the continuance of the advocacy and monitoring functions of the existing Councils on Church and Race (both denominations), Committee on Women’s Concerns (Presbyterian Church in the United States) and Council on Women and the Church (The United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America) until such time as the design for work of the General Assembly is completed and these functions are ensured, the existing structures and functions of these bodies shall be maintained” (Article 5.6).
3. Annette Chapman-Adisho, *Years of Strong Effort: The Development of Women’s Organizations in the Presbyterian Churches 1967–1993*, Louisville, Ky.: Women’s Ministries Program Area, National Ministries Division, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 6.
4. *Ibid.*, *Idem*.
5. According to the *Organization for Mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 2012*, “The Executive Director has the responsibility for the advocacy and advisory committees,” 21.
6. *Presbyterian Mission Agency Manual of Operations (September 2019)*, 69.
7. *Presbyterian Mission Agency Manual of Operations (September 2019)*, 70.
8. *Presbyterian Mission Agency Manual of Operations (September 2019)*, 70.
9. Summaries of ACWC’s work meetings are provided at the end of this report.
10. Gender and Leadership in the PC(USA) (2016): <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/gender-leadership-pcusa/>.
11. Reporting form is attached to this report for information.
12. Gender and Leadership in the PC(USA) (2016): <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/gender-leadership-pcusa/>.

Item 00-Info-20

Mid Councils’ Statements of Compliance with the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission Decisions

Section IV.B.2.e. of the *Organization for Mission* requires that when a decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission contains an order directed to another council, the Stated Clerk must report to the General Assembly a statement of the council’s compliance. Below is a report of the statements of compliance received by the Stated Clerk from the mid councils for cases decided by the Permanent Judicial Commission during the years 2018–2020.

1. *GAPJC Remedial Appeal 224-01, Julie Murphy, Appellant v. The Session of Westminster Presbyterian Church, Des Moines, Iowa, Appellee.*

The following orders were entered by the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission:

Order

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the Decision of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies Permanent Judicial Commission is hereby modified.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies report this Decision to the Synod of Lakes and Prairies at the first meeting after receipt, that the Synod of Lakes and Prairies enter the full Decision upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Des Moines report this Decision to the Presbytery of Des Moines at the first meeting after receipt, that the Presbytery of Des Moines enter the full Decision upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

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IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Clerk of Session report this Decision to the Session of Westminster Presbyterian Church, Des Moines, Iowa, at the first meeting after receipt, that the Session enter the full Decision upon its minutes, and an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

This decision was reported at the Synod of Lakes and Prairies Stated meeting September 30, 2018, the Presbytery of Des Moines stated meeting November 13, 2018, and the session meeting of Westminster Presbyterian Church on August 26, 2018.

2. *GAPJC Remedial Appeal 224-02, Atlantic Korean American Presbytery, Nam H. Cho and Kim Robinson, Complainants v. The Synod of the Mid-Atlantic, Respondent.*

The following orders were entered by the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission:

Order

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the Synod action of March 13, 2018, establishing an Administrative Commission is hereby suspended, pending modification of the action to delineate the powers of that Administrative Commission consistent with this decision and in compliance with G-3.0109, "The designating council shall state specifically the scope of the commission's powers and any restrictions on those powers."

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic report this Decision and Order to the Synod at its first stated meeting following the date of this Order, that the Synod enter the full Decision and Order upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from the Synod's minutes showing entry of the Decision and Order be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic deliver a copy of this Decision and Order to its Administrative Commission addressing concerns in the Atlantic Korean American Presbytery.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Atlantic Korean American Presbytery report this Decision and Order to the Atlantic Korean American Presbytery at the first stated meeting after receipt, that the Atlantic Korean American Presbytery enter the full Decision and Order upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision and Order be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

This decision was reported at the Synod of Mid-Atlantic stated meeting March 11, 2019. The Atlantic Korean American Presbytery did not comply with the order.

3. *GAPJC Remedial Appeal 224-03, Louis F. and Margo R. Gains, Appellants, v. The Session of the First Meridian Heights Presbyterian Church, Indianapolis, Ind.*

The following orders were entered by the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission:

Order

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the decision of the Synod of Lincoln Trails Permanent Judicial Commission is hereby affirmed.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of Lincoln Trails report this Decision to the Synod of Lincoln Trails at the first meeting after receipt, that the Synod of Lincoln Trails enter the full Decision upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of Whitewater Valley Presbytery report this Decision to the Whitewater Valley Presbytery at the first meeting after receipt, that the Whitewater Valley Presbytery enter the full Decision upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Clerk of Session report this Decision to the Session of First Meridian Heights Presbyterian Church, Indianapolis, Ind., at the first meeting after receipt, that the Session enter the full decision upon its minutes, and an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

This decision was reported at the Stated Meeting of the Synod of Lincoln Trails on October 11, 2019, and the Presbytery of Wabash Valley stated meeting on February 22, 2020. The Session of First Meridian Heights Presbyterian Church, Indianapolis, Ind., did not comply with the order.

4. *GAPJC Remedial Appeal 224-04: Ruling Elders Ana Aquino, Catherine Campbell-Wright, Emile Duho, Stephen Fingal, Sr., Samuel Jan, Michael Lunga, and Paul Taylor, of First Presbyterian Church in Newark, N.J., Appellants v. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), filed by the Prosecuting Committee of Newark Presbytery, Appellees.*

The following orders were entered by the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission:

Order

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the decision of the Synod of the Northeast Permanent Judicial Commission is hereby affirmed.

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IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Appellants be notified of this Decision and Order.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of the Northeast report this Decision to the Synod of the Northeast at the first meeting after receipt, that the Synod of the Northeast enter the full Decision upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of Newark Presbytery report this Decision to Newark Presbytery at the first meeting after receipt, that Newark Presbytery enter the full Decision upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Clerk of Session of the First Presbyterian Church in Newark, N.J., report this Decision to the Session at the first meeting after receipt, that the Session enter the full Decision upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

The Synod of the Northeast reported this decision at their stated meeting on September 21, 2019, and the Presbytery of Newark reported the decision at its stated meeting on May 5, 2019. The Session of First Presbyterian Church of Newark, N.J., reported the decision at a session meeting on June 1, 2019.

5. *GAPJC Remedial Appeal 224-05; David Lee Jones Th.D., Appellant v. Mission Presbytery, Appellee.*

The following orders were entered by the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission:

Order

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the Decision of the Synod of the Sun Permanent Judicial Commission is affirmed, and the complaint is dismissed.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of the Sun report this Decision to the Synod of the Sun at the first meeting after receipt, that the Synod of the Sun enter the full Decision upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of Mission Presbytery report this Decision to Mission Presbytery at the first meeting after receipt, that the Stated Clerk of Mission Presbytery convey this Decision to the Presbytery Commission on Ministry, that Mission Presbytery enter the full Decision upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

The Synod of the Sun reported this decision at its stated meeting on October 31, 2019. Mission Presbytery reported the decision at its stated meeting on October 25, 2019.

6. *GAPJC Remedial Appeal 224-06, Rev. John H. An, Appellant v. Atlantic Korean American Presbytery, Appellee.*

The following orders were entered by the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission:

Order

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the decision of the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic Permanent Judicial Commission is set aside for the reasons detailed in this Decision. Because the congregational meeting required by G-2.0901 to concur in the dissolution of the pastoral relationship has already occurred, this case is moot, and no additional action is warranted.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic report this Decision to the Synod of Mid-Atlantic at the first meeting after receipt, that the Synod of Mid-Atlantic enter the full Decision upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Atlantic Korean American Presbytery report this Decision to the Atlantic Korean American Presbytery at the first meeting after receipt, that the Atlantic Korean American Presbytery enter the full Decision upon its minutes and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

The Synod of the Mid-Atlantic reported this decision at its stated meeting on March 11, 2019. The Atlantic Korean American Presbytery did not comply with this order.

7. *GAPJC Remedial Appeal 224-07; Patrick Handlson, Appellant v. The Presbytery of Middle Tennessee.*

The following orders were entered by the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission:

Order

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the decision of the Synod of Living Waters Permanent Judicial Commission is hereby reversed.

00 PLENARY

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that all actions regarding Patrick Handlson by the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee at its meeting on February 3, 2018, are set aside and are to be considered null and void.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee consider again the Committee on Ministry recommendation (on restoring Mr. Handlson to active ministry and on granting him honorably retired status) at its next meeting, but no sooner than thirty days from this Decision, voting separately on restoration and on his retirement status, and taking actions consistent with this Decision and Order.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of Living Waters report this Decision to the Synod of Living Waters at the first meeting after receipt, that the Synod of Living Waters enter the full Decision upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee report this Decision to the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee at the first meeting after receipt, that the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee enter the full Decision upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

The Synod of Living Waters reported the decision at its stated meeting on January 27, 2020. The Presbytery of Middle Tennessee reported the decision at its stated meeting on October 12, 2019.

Item 00-Info-21

New Covenant Trust Company, N.A., a Subsidiary of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation

The Presbyterian Foundation formed a subsidiary, the New Covenant Trust Company, N.A. (NCTC), in 1998. The NCTC serves individuals and Presbyterian and related organizations by providing trustee and investment management services. The NCTC's mission statement is "New Covenant Trust Company, a vital part of the Presbyterian Foundation, is called to serve individuals, families, and institutions as a trusted advisor and investment manager, consistent with our faith heritage."

The NCTC's desire is that church institutions are healthy and vibrant, and to this end, NCTC partners with them by providing investment, trust, and financial services. Congregations, mid councils, agencies, and institutions can work with NCTC to create custom solutions aligned with its mission and values to best meet their goals and objectives. The NCTC consistently strives to deliver superior service and seeks to enhance opportunities available to Presbyterians to express their Christian faith and generous stewardship.

In 1999, the Presbyterian Foundation founded and sponsored New Covenant Funds, a family of mutual funds that are invested in accordance with the social witness principles of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The NCTC provides shareholder and social witness services to New Covenant Funds.

New Covenant Trust Company, N.A., a subsidiary of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation, was chartered by the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC) on January 2, 1998. The charter provides NCTC with trust and investment management powers in all 50 states. The NCTC is examined and audited by the OCC, internal auditors, and financial statement auditors. Donors and beneficiaries can take great comfort in knowing that regulators and auditors frequently examine NCTC to ensure that it is operating in a safe and sound manner and that NCTC abides by the terms of its governing documents.

Donald S. Hunt and Christopher Y. Nicholas have concluded their terms of service on the NCTC Board. The following individuals were confirmed by former General Assemblies and as of the submission of this report continue in their service as Directors of New Covenant Trust Company, N.A.

Foundation Trustee

Stephen C. Kelly, Banker, White, Male, Married, Lay, Over 50, Synod of Living Waters.

Former Foundation Trustee

Timothy P. Clark, Senior Bank Officer, White, Male, Married, Lay, Over 50, Synod of Living Waters.

Karen L. Garrett, Attorney, White, Female, Married, Lay, Over 50, Synod of Mid-America.

Other

Sandra Copenhaver Browne, Attorney, White, Female, Married, Lay, Over 50, Synod of the Rocky Mountains.

Richard H. White, Retired Hospital Chaplaincy Director, White, Male, Married, Clergy, Over 50, Synod of the North-east.

Item-00-Info-22

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation Agency Summary

Mission Statement

A vital part of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Foundation cultivates, attracts, and manages financial resources of individuals and institutions to serve Christ's mission.

Summary

The Foundation remains true to its original charge from the 1799 General Assembly to solicit from individuals and congregations, "pious donations and bequests in order to supply the funds which are absolutely necessary to carry on with advantage the great and charitable work" of the church.

Today we partner with congregations, councils, agencies and related ministries to gather, steward, and distribute funds for their mission and ministry. Our nationwide staff of ministry relations officers works with pastors, ministry leaders, and individual donors to develop communities of Christian generosity in support of Christ's mission in the world.

In countless ways, the Foundation offers charitable expertise and services that unite and empower Presbyterians and the ministries about which they are passionate. We strive to do so in a trustworthy, clear, and accessible manner that reflects the faith and values of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

The Foundation has much to offer the church:

Stability. The Foundation has been forging partnerships with donors, congregations and others to fund mission for more than two centuries. One of six national agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Foundation is composed of highly skilled and experienced officers and support staff trained in the areas of gift administration and compliance, accounting, law, communications, funds development, philanthropy, trust services, and more.

Connection. We work in leadership and partnership with the whole denomination to fund its mission. The Foundation does not compete with local congregations or any other institution of the church for charitable gifts. To the contrary, we are committed to strengthening these entities by developing gifts and managing funds on their behalf.

Commitment. We provide all Presbyterians with an avenue to realize their philanthropic goals through a variety of giving options. We maintain a strong focus on the Presbyterian values and principles that drive our stewardship initiatives.

Highlights of Our Work

Ministry Relations Officers

Our nationwide staff of ministry relations officers works to cultivate funds for mission and grow communities of generosity throughout the church. Combining decades of pastoral, leadership, and funds development experience, these officers help church leaders assess the financial health, generosity capacity, and stewardship practices of their congregations, then build on their strengths and address their weaknesses. Our ministry relations officers have developed meaningful, supportive relationships with pastors and lay leaders throughout the country, and we rely on them to tell us what churches and pastors need so that we can shape our programs and offerings to meet those needs. Our ministry relations officers are trusted and valued and deeply appreciated throughout the church.

Ministers of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Beginning in 2016, staff leadership and the Presbyterian Foundation Board initiated a program, not merely to achieve General Assembly goals for diversity and inclusion, but to exceed those goals among the staff and board of the Foundation. The aim was to work increasingly to enculturate the organization into one of welcome, respect, acknowledgement and inclusion of all, with a special focus on those who may have experienced exclusion based on race, class, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or under-representation. The Foundation Board roundly endorsed this effort by the end of 2016, and since that time, its strategies and tactics have continued to grow in scope and impact. These efforts were reported to the 223rd General Assembly (2018) in the Foundation's committee.

In 2019, we began a program to contract four new positions entitled Minister of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. These Foundation ambassadors represent four different racial-ethnic groups—African American, Latino/a, Korean, and Native

American. Their purpose is to assist in creating genuine two-way conversations, both to advise and educate the staff and board of the Foundation to better understand the unique challenges, values, and needs of various communities in our denomination and also to build relationships with and communicate into these communities the services and opportunities made available by the Foundation.

Stewardship Education

The Presbyterian Foundation is the denomination's hub for stewardship education. It's a natural extension of the work we've been doing since 1799—helping Presbyterians and their congregations to become people and places of joyful generosity. The Foundation provides an array of stewardship resources, including training seminars and conferences, publications, e-newsletters, planning ideas, case studies, and online tools.

In 2015, the Foundation was awarded a \$1 million grant to take part in the Lilly Endowment's National Initiative to Address Economic Challenges Facing Pastoral Leaders. The initiative supports a variety of religious organizations across the nation as they address the financial and economic struggles that can impair the ability of pastors to lead congregations effectively. In this three-year program, the Foundation is further developing stewardship resources for congregations, along with training programs in financial literacy and leadership for pastoral and lay leaders. The Foundation is working on this in close collaboration with the Board of Pensions, which also received a Lilly program grant.

In 2019, the Foundation was awarded a second \$1 million grant to expand our services to pastors and congregations. Lilly Endowment's grant allows us to offer four key activities to pastors and church leaders nationally that strengthen congregational vitality. These include the following:

- Personalized training through a new coaching network that will allow pastors and their churches to receive contextualized guidance and encouragement counseling to support their work.
- Online education and support made available to all PC(USA) pastoral leaders and congregations.
- Ministerial excellence funds that will continue to provide direct financial assistance to help pastoral leaders attend conferences, courses, and other educational opportunities.
- Partnerships with supporting organizations will help the Foundation reach broader audiences.

In addition to these programs, we started a stewardship ministry blog and accompanying e-newsletter that provides practical tips on stewardship and generosity programs in churches in "This Month in Stewardship" columns and a lectionary preview with an eye to stewardship penned each month by Presbyterian pastors and theologians.

Project Regeneration

Faithful stewardship of church resources always looks to the future because congregations go through life cycles. The reinvention of a congregation, the closing of a church building, or the merger of multiple congregations can mean more than the end of a previously vibrant ministry. It can also mean the opportunity for the sale or transformation of excess church property into funds for new ministry. It can mean freeing an existing congregation from the burden of supporting a facility that no longer meets its mission needs.

The Presbyterian Foundation is partnering with churches and presbyteries across the denomination to discover and explore creative options for ministries that need adequate funding in order to grow and prosper. Endowment funds are among the many options available to leave a lasting legacy of the faith community by naming a ministry and specific purpose for the use of the fund, and to provide support in perpetuity.

Online Giving

Presbyterians are generous by nature—we are passionate about mission and give joyfully to the projects, causes, and organizations that touch our hearts and engage our minds. To help expedite that generosity, the Foundation has created an easy-to-use online giving tool for congregations. By filling out a simple form and submitting it to the Foundation, a church can set up online giving straight from their own website with no set-up fees, and regular deposits of the funds in their accounts monthly. It makes it easy for congregations to accept online gifts. We handle all of the "back end" of online giving. Churches don't have to worry about any of the technical aspects of how it's done after they've placed the online giving button on their web site.

The growth of online giving has been exponential. In 2018, we processed \$5 million in gifts for ministries and churches,

and in 2019, that figure jumped to \$8 million. We are excited to partner with congregations and ministries to enable online giving.

Donor-Advised Funds

The fastest-growing charitable gift vehicle is the Donor-Advised Fund (DAF), and the Presbyterian Foundation offers a flexible and easy-to-use DAF program. Donors make an initial gift (which may offer immediate tax benefits), then recommend over time when to make grants from the fund, which ministries to support, and what amounts to give.

The Foundation provides online tools to manage the funds, including making gifts and grant recommendations, changing investments options, and tracking giving over time.

Donor-Advised Funds are excellent tools for teaching generosity and developing family giving patterns across generations.

Legacy Giving

Annually, the Presbyterian Foundation offers a Legacy Giving program to congregations throughout the denomination. At the program's beginning in the 1950s, wills were the main focus of gift development. Currently, that focus has shifted to remembering the church in estate planning. While simple bequests in a will are still important, now the Foundation can provide guidance for complex estate plans in coordination with an individual's tax and legal advisors.

To complement congregation-based bequest and planned giving efforts, the Foundation offers pastors a package of wills program resources including a leadership guide, website, sample appeal letters, bulletin inserts, social media content, and more. These materials are provided free of charge to any Presbyterian congregation—the only expenses are the shipping and handling costs.

Creative Investments

Beginning in the 1980s, the PC(USA) General Assembly began to urge the national offices to invest a portion of the funds titled to the Foundation, whose interest income was to benefit the work of the PC(USA)—primarily through what is now the Presbyterian Mission Agency—into often financially stressed contexts, where such funds are otherwise difficult or impossible to obtain. That General Assembly directive found only limited success until 2012 when the 220th General Assembly reiterated that directive, specifically identifying the area of Israel/Palestine as a target area to receive such investments. That General Assembly also directed the Presbyterian Foundation as the entity to lead that endeavor.

Over the next two years the staff of the Foundation sought out several possible organizations in which it might place such investments. After significant due diligence and consultation with the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Foundation placed an initial three “Transformational,” or “Creative Investments,” as we have come to refer to them, in the areas of agriculture, education, and micro-finance. These initial investments, both in terms of financial return and human flourishing, were highly successful. Since that time, the Foundation, through its board and staff, and in consultation with the Presbyterian Mission Agency, has continued to seek out other such investments in the Middle East and other areas of the world, pursuant to the original General Assembly directive to attempt to place such investments on six continents. We are further partnering with entities to bring relief in Colombia in South America and in our own country in inner-city Baltimore, Md., Puerto Rico, and Appalachia. As our focus has been on issues such as access to water, education, and the creation of small businesses, especially for women, these Creative Investments have resulted in genuinely needed help and have truly inspired our wider church.

These Creative Investment options also allow congregations and other Presbyterian institutions to invest in organizations along with the Foundation to create positive solutions to challenging situations.

Expanded Investment Options

The Foundation and its subsidiary, New Covenant Trust Company, offer a range of investment services to congregations and related Presbyterian institutions. New Covenant Funds provide an easy entry point and daily liquidity for congregations who want to self-direct their investment portfolio within the PC(USA)'s Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) framework. New Covenant Trust Company offers a variety of more customized investment options to match the congregation's policy objectives. Presbyterian Endowment Funds are held permanently by the Foundation, invested in a diverse yet socially responsible portfolio by Northern Trust, and paid out according to an established spending formula designed to provide stable funding over many years. The Presbyterian Endowment Service allows access to the Endowment Fund, spending formula, and world-class money managers while retaining title to the assets.

Care for the Environment

While Presbyterians continue to discuss how best to provide care for God’s creation and mitigate the negative effects of climate change, the Foundation’s Board of Trustees has adopted a five-pronged approach to leveraging denominational investments to address environmental concerns:

- The Foundation’s investment committee has allocated an initial investment of at least 1 percent of the Presbyterian Endowment Fund into investments that target climate change solutions.
- The Foundation has directed its investment managers to consider environmental factors in their security selection process. New Covenant Funds (a family of mutual funds created and sponsored by the Foundation) adopted ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) positive screening in 2014.
- The Foundation continues to work with MRTI in dialogue with energy companies to bring about change.
- The Foundation is utilizing a portion of the Church Loan Program, for which the Foundation is the fiduciary, for loans that implement renewable energy or carbon reduction solutions. (This effort is in partnership with the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, which administers the loans, and the Presbyterian Mission Agency’s Mission Development Resource Committee, which sets terms for loans and grants.)
- The Presbyterian Foundation subsidiary, New Covenant Trust Company, provides fossil free managed solutions to congregations, institutions, and other clients desiring a customized approach.

To learn more about the Presbyterian Foundation, visit our website at www.presbyterianfoundation.org or call 800-858-6127.

Item 00-Info-23

Committee on Theological Education (COTE) Agency Summary

Report on the Activities of the Committee on Theological Education since the 223rd General Assembly (2018)

1. Confronting the Need to Restructure

Both the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and theological institutions have changed significantly since the Committee on Theological Education (COTE) was established in 1986. These changes have created a disconnection between the purpose, functions, structure, and expectations laid out for COTE in 1986 and the present realities in the denomination and theological institutions.

Among those realities are the following:

- The functions assigned to COTE in 1986 envision it having a regulatory role that does not connect with the independence and autonomy of the theological institutions.
- The theological institutions must balance their commitment to the denomination with their need (and commitment) to attract and train students from (and for) a broad ecumenical range of church bodies.
- There has been a steady shrinking of the membership of the PC(USA), reducing the number of students it sends to PC(USA) theological institutions.
- The traditional pattern of theological education as residential preparation for ordained ministry now stands alongside other educational patterns—online education, part-time study, students preparing for work other than ordained ministry.
- Theological institutions across the United States face significant financial challenges, propelling exploration of other ways for these institutions to carry forward their mission.
- Theological institutions of all kinds are undergoing significant change. The Association of Theological Schools (ATS) reports approximately 10% of its member institutions have undergone major structural changes such as mergers in the last decade.

2. *Steps Leading to COTE's proposed revisions to its structure and Manual of Operations*

Enabling COTE to connect the denomination with theological institutions effectively amidst present realities has called for rethinking COTE's structure and functions. The COTE has been engaged in this rethinking over the last few years.

- *2014*—About 5 years ago, COTE began conversations about disconnection between its assigned purpose, functions, and structure along with the realities and needs of both the theological institutions and the denomination. Lingering assumptions that the denomination has a regulatory role over the theological institutions were (and are) particularly problematic. Conversation in COTE reflected on the need to find clarity about a non-regulatory relationship between the denomination and the theological institutions that will allow both to flourish together.

- *2015–2016*—Over these years a significant portion of COTE's meetings were devoted to discussion of the role COTE might play, consistent with the charge it was given at its formation, while also reflecting the current needs and realities of the PC(USA) and the theological institutions

- *2017*—The COTE created a task force to envision how COTE might be designed if the 1986 proposal founding COTE were written today. The task force offered ideas about a dramatically different COTE. The COTE discussed the proposal extensively, deciding to accept elements of it, while continuing discussion of concerns about the proposal that also had arisen.

- *2017 Fall–Spring 2018*—Work envisioning a new structure for COTE based on the task force report led to proposals being made to the 223rd General Assembly (2018). The COTE proposed a downsized structure, with a smaller number of members. The COTE also requested that the General Assembly suspend, for a two-year period, the existing requirements regarding its membership, meeting pattern, and its listed functions, allowing COTE to test a new structure and continue rethinking its functions.

- *2018 Fall–Fall 2019*—The COTE has used the permission granted by the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to do the following:

- try out the effectiveness of a smaller membership structure;
- educate itself on the changing nature of theological education and its future;
- pilot its revised functions such as advocacy and communication regarding theological education;
- explore with San Francisco Theological Seminary (SFTS), and now the University of Redlands and its Graduate School of Theology, to determine its relationship to the PC(USA) in light of its significantly different organizational structure; and
- utilize the insights gained from this year's work to finalize COTE's proposal to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB) and to the 224th General Assembly (2020) for revisions to its mandate, purpose, functions, and structure.

3. *The COTE and the San Francisco Theological Seminary/University of the Redlands Merger*

- The COTE first learned of the agreement in principle for a merger of San Francisco Theological Seminary (SFTS) within the University of the Redlands (U of R) in February 2019, shortly after the agreement was signed on January 21.

- From February 2019 until the signing of a formal merger agreement in June, COTE engaged in intensive work seeking a clear understanding of the exact nature of what SFTS called a partnership and a merger and that U of R has also called an acquisition. This work included conversations with SFTS, the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Foundation, the Association of Theological Schools (ATS), and persons with particular history and expertise on seminary mergers. The merger took effect on July 1, 2019.

- With the implementation of the merger, COTE again initiated conversations with the U of R and its Graduate School of Theology, which now houses the new form of SFTS, with the goal of defining some form of continuing relationship between the PC(USA)/COTE and this new entity. The COTE requested that Sandra Tracy, chair of COTE, Paul Roberts, president of Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary, Barry Ensign-George, Coordinator for Theology and Worship/Staff Liaison to COTE, and Tim Cargal, Assistant Stated Clerk, Ministry Preparation and Support, represent COTE in these ongoing conversations.

- At the time of this report, the COTE team remains in conversation with leaders of this new entity with the goal of bringing a proposal to the 224th General Assembly (2020) when such a proposal is completed.

- The COTE continues to reflect on what light this example of theological institutional change sheds on its future work regarding the link between the PC(USA) and its institutions of theological education. In many ways, the questions raised by this merger highlight the significance of COTE's newly defined purpose and functions as it serves the PC(USA) and its theological institutions.

4. *The COTE's Proposed Revisions to its Manual of Operations*

The COTE's proposed revisions to its Manual of Operations include revisions to the following, some of which affect the *Organization for Mission*, as reflected in the COTE proposed amendments to the *Organization for Mission*. These proposals embody its vision for a renewed COTE.

- *Purpose*—Highlighting COTE's commitment to serve as a bridge between the denomination and those theological institutions that are in institutional and covenant relationship with the PC(USA) and those that are providing theological education that will nourish its ministry and that of its pastoral leaders, congregations, and councils;
- *Remembering*—Proposing the addition to its Manual of Operations of a brief section telling the history of COTE;
- *Focus*—The COTE's previous Manual of Operations included at least five purposes and fifteen functions for the committee, while the proposal will reduce their number (to one summary purpose statement and six functions) and increase their focus;
- *Structure*—The COTE is seeking a structure that best matches the work to be done, one small enough that each member has a clear role to play, and large enough that the concerns and insights of both the theological institutions and the denomination can be fully expressed;
- *Membership*—The proposed revisions to the Manual of Operations will clarify and revise categories of membership and the criteria for those categories.

5. *What COTE Has Learned*

The following are among the things COTE has learned in the process of redesigning its purpose, functions, and structures for the present and the near future:

- The importance of clear communication between the seminaries and the denomination and the maintenance of relationships that sustain clear communication;
- The need for COTE to have knowledge of impending significant institutional changes in the seminaries, while recognizing and honoring the autonomy of seminary boards in making decisions about such matters;
- The need for clarity on the criteria for the various forms of seminary membership in COTE;
- The need for continued investigation of the growing range of models of theological education, some of them newly developed, and the implications of these models for the PC(USA) and its commitment to theological education for pastoral leaders and members;
- The importance for COTE to continue to stay attuned to changes in theological education and in the denomination;
- The need for clarity about how the denomination can steward the investment made by individuals, councils, the denomination (and its predecessors) in the seminaries that have played such an important role in the denomination's life.

6. *The COTE's Agenda for the Future*

The COTE is grateful for the time it has been given for deep reflection on its work, and on the relationship between the PC(USA) and the PC(USA)-related theological institutions. It believes that the proposed revisions will provide a solid basis for taking on significant work over the next few years. That work includes the following:

- Identify a process for communication between a theological institution and the PC(USA)/COTE when major structural changes are pending in one of the theological institutions or in the denomination;

- Initiate a conversation among key parties on what it means to be a PC(USA) theological institution and why it is important to the denomination to have PC(USA) theological institutions;
- Continue to explore the changing landscape of the PC(USA)'s life and the changing environment of theological education, thinking carefully about the needs and opportunities open and opening in the relationship between the PC(USA) and the theological institutions that stand in relationship with it.

Reports from COTE Member Seminaries

1. Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary

Since the last General Assembly meeting in 2018—in which Austin Seminary alumna Cindy Kohlmann was elected co-moderator—Austin Seminary has welcomed two new faculty members. Professor Bridgett Green teaches New Testament and Bobbi Kaye Jones teaches in the Louis H. and Katherine S. Zbinden Distinguished Chair of Pastoral Ministry and Leadership. A search has begun to fill a position in mission and evangelism. The Reverend J.D. Herrera has joined the Seminary's leadership team as vice president for enrollment management. The seminary revised the Doctor of Ministry program and launched a Certificate in Jewish Christian Relationship in 2019. As part of a comprehensive campaign, the seminary received the largest non-estate gift in its history—\$4 million pledged toward the Mary and Robert J. Wright Learning and Information Center. The seminary also received a gift of five years of funding for a two-year congregational residency for Presbyterian Master of Divinity graduates. Austin Seminary received reaffirmation of accreditation from The Commission on Accrediting of the Association of Theological Schools for another ten-year period.

2. Columbia Theological Seminary

Columbia Theological Seminary continues to fulfill its mission to prepare leaders for the sake of the church and the world. Our mission has been strengthened in these past two years with new faculty and programs. We were pleased in the summer of 2018 to welcome a new Dean of Faculty and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Love Sechrest. Dr. Sechrest is a New Testament scholar and an experienced administrative leader. We also welcomed two new faculty colleagues, Dr. Mitzi Smith, the J. Davidson Philips Professor of New Testament and Dr. Lisa Weaver, Assistant Professor of Worship. These colleagues add their significant gifts to our already superb faculty. Our faculty is faithfully committed to a wide range of work, including teaching, research, service to the seminary, formation of students, and service to congregations and ministries.

We remain committed to serving life-long learners as well, including pastors, other ministry professionals, and congregational members eager to deepen their learning. Our Center for Lifelong Learning has started several new colloquies that are supported by the Lilly Thriving in Ministry grant. Those colloquies include peer groups for pastors of color, pastors serving in rural contexts, women leaders, and those who experienced termination in their ministry context.

Columbia is also expanding its ability to engage contemporary issues through conferences and lectures. In 2019, Columbia hosted three international conferences on our campus, most notably the Migration and Border Crossings Conference in February, when we welcomed several hundred participants and presenters for three days of urgent and timely conversation.

In October of 2019, we celebrated the publication of a new history of Columbia Seminary written by our Emeritus Professor of Church History Dr. Erskine Clarke, *To Count Our Days: A History of Columbia Theological Seminary*, published by the University of South Carolina Press. This book has generated important conversations about the role of enslaved persons in Columbia's past. In response, the Board of Trustees has mandated a comprehensive process of repentance and restorative justice in partnership with Dr. David Hooker, who will lead us in Transformative Community Conferencing this Spring.

3. Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary

Mission and Vision—The mission of Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary (JCSTS) is to advance communities of faith, justice, and compassion through innovation in theological education. The seminary's vision is to be an agile institution providing an array of formation opportunities for both ordained and non-ordained persons actively serving the Church.

History—Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary originated in 1867 in Charlotte, N.C., as the Freedmen's Institute of North Carolina. It was created by Presbyterians who believed that education was an essential antidote to the poisonous effect of slavery. Over time, the institute became a university that included a theological seminary, and its name was changed to Johnson C. Smith University. In 1969, the seminary and university parted ways and the seminary relocated to Atlanta, Ga., to join the Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC). Throughout its 150-year history in Charlotte and Atlanta, the seminary produced prophetic leaders who challenged the status quo of racial segregation and who helped lead the way to the reunification of the denomination. To this day, JCSTS is one of the few institutional reminders of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s stated commitment to racial/ethnic diversity. In 2014, amid dramatic shifts in higher education, JCSTS disaffiliated from the ITC to

pursue a new educational model. Currently, the seminary operates as a freestanding seminary specializing in competency-based theological education.

Competency-Based Theological Education (CBTE) Defined—Competency-based learning refers to systems of instruction and assessment based on a student’s ability to demonstrate they are proficient in a specific skill or set of skills. It is highly personalized allowing students to progress at their own pace, and it focuses more on praxis and application than on classroom time. All JCSTS programs are built on a competency-based model. Eighty percent of these programs are online.

Enrollment—In the last 36 months, JCSTS has enrolled more than 150 learners in its various competency-based programs, awarded 70 Certificates in Community Organizing and Congregational Leadership, and helped train nearly 300 ministry leaders in Haiti. Our learners are the following:

- approximately 50% male, 50% female;
- ages ranging from 28 to 65 years old;
- 45% active clergy, 35% church elders or other leaders, 20% non-ordained laypeople;
- 40% African American, 50% White, 10% Asian or Hispanic/Latino.

Partnerships—JCSTS has several ongoing program partnerships. In particular, JCSTS and the Board of Pensions have partnered this year to offer a special CREDO conference for African American ministers. This CREDO is designed to address some of the challenges unique to African American Presbyterian pastors.

See and learn about JCSTS: <https://animoto.com/play/GFk2RXx2WrHw26d2yZ8kGg>.

4. *Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary*

In June 2019, the Association of Theological Schools’ (ATS) Board of Commissioners reaffirmed the accreditation of Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary for a ten-year period (2019–2029).

In March 2020, a comprehensive site visit by Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) was conducted to review standards and policy compliance. We expect a positive report from this accrediting body as well.

In January 2020, our Articles of Incorporation were modified to indicate the manner of due process employed by our Board of Trustees in the possible removal of a trustee more fully consistent with leading practices in higher education. No trustee has ever been removed from the LPTS board. There aren’t any such considerations in progress.

In October 2019, our Bylaws were revised to adjust the minimum number of trustees, and to allow the election of new trustees at any time during the year and the process of electronic voting was included.

5. *McCormick Theological Seminary*

Mission drives everything we do at McCormick. For most of our 190 years, the mission was relatively simple—prepare folks for ministry, usually meaning traditional, congregational ministry. Although that is still part of our mission, it is no longer the *only* mission. The changes in our country and in the church over the last 100 years have been profound, and many seminaries were ill-prepared for those changes. McCormick has never resisted change; we adapt, we reimagine, and we move forward. We have made great progress over the last few years—a strong and growing endowment, higher enrollments, and the hiring of new, creative, and committed faculty. But the world around us is not static; it is ever changing, and we must continue to lead, not follow, if we are to remain not just relevant, but *integral* in addressing the needs of the church, especially the urban and wider metropolitan church. Violence, poverty, mass incarceration, trauma, police reform, and criminal justice reform may not seem like traditional topics for seminary, but they are for us.

Two years ago, we launched a certificate in theological reflection program at the Cook County jail. This is one pillar of a more comprehensive effort on our part to move from the classroom to the community—to be present, partner, and organize community-centered action and reform in the city we serve.

Ultimately, we believe *our* mission, this work *beyond our walls*, will lead us into our third century of service.

6. Pittsburgh Theological Seminary

In the fall of 2018, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary introduced a completely reconstructed curriculum for theologically reflective and contextually engaged ministry in the way of Jesus. The new, semester-based curriculum, plus January (J-term) and summer terms, offers students greater access and flexibility to explore electives, deepen their writing skills, and learn more about their own faith tradition and those of others through three master's programs (Master of Divinity [M.Div.], Master of Arts in Pastoral Studies [MAPS], Master of Theological Studies), five credit-bearing certificates (Church Planting and Revitalization, Ministry, Missional Formation, Theological Studies, and Urban Ministry), and the Doctor of Ministry degree. Learn more about these curriculum changes online: www.pts.edu/reimagined-curriculum.

In the new M.Div. and MAPS curriculum, students are required to participate in an intercultural learning experience. Offered during the J-term, this four-week course begins with classroom orientation, followed by two weeks of an intercultural trip or experience in Pittsburgh, ending with a debriefing and reflection time, again in the classroom. These opportunities are offered through the seminary's Metro-Urban Institute and World Mission Initiative.

In September 2018, the seminary celebrated the reopening of our fully renovated Clifford E. Barbour Library. This project addressed the range of renovation needed to establish creative spaces that inspire people to engage with theological ideas and each other in community and collaboration; to incorporate innovation that supports theological reflection, inquiry, and research; and to preserve our collection purposefully. The renovation includes the Fred Rogers Family Room, named in honor of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary grad Fred McFeely Rogers, creator of *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*.

In partnership with Pittsburgh Presbytery, the seminary's Church Planting Initiative (CPI) is offering the Transformation and Revitalization Fellowship to form church members toward curiosity and hope, that they might listen to the Holy Spirit with their communities, discern God's presence and activity there, and develop a missional imagination in and for their neighborhoods. Through instruction, reflection, and collaborative and experiential learning, participants work together to discern and design an experiment to implement in their church. Interested in bringing this program to your presbytery? Learn more at www.pts.edu/Transformation_and_Revitalization_Fellowship or contact CPI Director the Reverend Karen Rohrer at kroh-rer@pts.edu or 412-924-1412.

Pittsburgh Seminary's new Center for Writing and Learning Support helps students from a wide range of educational, cultural, denominational, and linguistic backgrounds to refine thesis statements, tweak grammar, brainstorm ideas for final papers, develop better critical reading skills, and more.

The seminary offers a growing number of online resources for personal and corporate worship. Explore our liturgical resources, including Epiphany, Advent, and Lent; topical resources, including praying with others through difficulties and race and faith; and music for the youth in your congregation to perform during worship services. Access these resources on the Seminary's website: www.pts.edu/digital-downloads.

7. Princeton Theological Seminary

At a time when society is increasingly fragmented and polarized, Princeton Theological Seminary (PTS) is fostering community that holds us together in Jesus Christ. Princeton Seminary remains committed to providing an exceptional experience in residential theological education and is pursuing a vision for "Covenant Community," which describes the character of our life together, formed through study, worship, work, and service, to fulfill our mission of equipping leaders for the church and the world. The seminary is in the midst of several important initiatives to deepen and advance this mission.

In 2018 we released a report on the seminary's ties to slavery. Following a year-long deliberative process led by a task force of faculty, students, trustees, administrators, and alumni, the Board of Trustees approved a set of more than twenty initiatives in response to the report, which will be implemented over the next five years. These initiatives are intended as acts of repentance and designed to spark lasting change within the school. They include thirty new scholarships for students who are descendants of slaves, changes to the curriculum so that every student has significant engagement with our history, hiring a new faculty member, enhancing the Center for Black Church Studies, and deepening community partnerships.

The faculty is working on a review and redesign of the curriculum. The seminary welcomed three new faculty members last year—Dr. Heath Carter (history of American Christianity), Dr. Jay-Paul Hinds (pastoral theology), and Dr. Elaine James (Old Testament). There is currently a search underway for a professor of congregational ministry and leadership.

The seminary recently developed a partnership with the Overseas Ministry Study Center (OMSC), which will relocate to the PTS campus this summer. The OMSC is a renowned research institute for world Christianity, and its programs bring together global Christian leaders, scholars, and artists.

The seminary is writing a new strategic plan focused on the vision for community and the mission to serve congregations, both through educating the next generation of pastoral leaders and in the ongoing study and support of congregational ministry. We are also developing a campus master plan that will guide the renewal and care for campus facilities to best support community life. The seminary is also in the midst of the reaccreditation process with the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) and the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE). Both accrediting visits took place last fall, and the seminary received high marks in the initial review.

8. *Union Presbyterian Seminary*

Since the last General Assembly, Union Presbyterian Seminary (UPSem) has crafted a new five-year strategic plan (2019–2024). The plan has strategic priorities that focus on witnessing, teaching, and living into God’s Reign by addressing three directives—attracting, educating, and supporting increasingly diverse communities of learners for ministry in the church and world; broadening the impact and reach of an increasingly diverse faculty and its work through an increased use of technology, new program initiatives, and strategic partnerships; and gathering financial resources and providing infrastructure support required to respond faithfully to our call as a theological resource to the church and the world. Indeed, the seminary has focused its efforts under the mission theme *For the Church in the World*.

UPSem has established three new centers that will assist in the implementation of its strategic vision. The [Syngman Rhee Global Mission Center for Christian Education](#) is named for the moderator of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in 2000–2001 and retired professor at Union Presbyterian Seminary. The center provides educational and research opportunities for international and domestic theological students, faculty, and scholars. Participants in the work of the center will engage new perspectives, relationships, and networks and discover new ways of participating in the Reign of God in diverse global contexts. Partnerships have been established with theological institutions and churches throughout Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean. The [Katie Geneva Cannon Center for Womanist Leadership](#) is named for the late Reverend Dr. Katie Geneva Cannon, former Annie Scales Rogers Professor of Christian Social Ethics at UPSem, who in 1974 became the first African American woman to be ordained in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The center is committed to convening Black women around common issues for wisdom sharing, networking, problem solving, and mobilization, and to giving Black women thinkers, activists, and artists opportunities to expand existing efforts and connect them for sustainable collaboration. [The Center for Social Justice and Reconciliation](#) works to remind people in seminary of the significance of social justice work as part of ministry and to bring the activist community into the seminary.

The seminary continues its focus on the church in the world through its partnership with [Shalom Farms](#) to create on a parcel of its land one of the largest inner city urban farms in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Integrating the mission of the farm with the curricular focus of UPSem is one of the objectives that the seminary hopes will enable students to see theological education in the context of food production and food justice.

UPSem has also focused infrastructure matters related to its ministry. Campaigns are underway to fund a church history professor on the Charlotte, N.C., campus and to renovate the historic Westminster Hall as the location of the seminary’s Leadership Institute.

Two new degree programs have also been established. A Global Master of Arts in Christian Education, working through the Rhee Global Mission Center has been established on the Richmond, Va., campus. On both campuses, the Doctor of Ministry degree has been reengaged with a new church in the world focus. The Leadership Institute has also established the [Pathways to Learning and Leadership Online Courses](#). Offered over a two-year period, these courses provide educational preparation toward leading a congregation as a Commissioned Ruling Elder (CRE) or provide course work opportunity for any person who wants to deepen their faith knowledge.

9. *The University of Dubuque Theological Seminary*

The University of Dubuque Theological Seminary is alive and well. We provide theological education to the church and to the world in a variety of formats, ranging from our Certificate programs, which have touched most presbyteries throughout the PC(USA), to the Master of Arts, Master of Divinity, and Doctor of Ministry degrees in both a face-to-face and a hybrid online experience. We recently received a \$1 million grant from the Lilly Endowment to establish a Clergy Coaching initiative, which is now in its second full year of operation. This initiative strengthens newer ministries and renews more mature ministries in ways that have brought much joy and celebration. Finally, as a college, seminary, and graduate school connected through an ecclesial tie to the PC(USA), we celebrate a rich and vibrant Christian community that practices hospitality to other faith traditions, or to those who come to our mission with no faith commitments. Our seminary faculty extend their callings into the undergraduate curriculum through a variety of classes including *The Black Church Experiences* and *Christianity, Judaism, and Islam*.

Changes in Seminary Charters and Bylaws

The following COTE member institutions report changes in their charter/bylaws over the period 2018–2020.

1. *Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary*

- Changes made February 2019

The board approved the proposed changes to the Bylaws as follows:

- Section I.J—Adding as the last sentence of section I.J. “The Board is responsible for regular review of the Seminary’s Statement of Purpose.”
- Section IX—Inserting “UNDUE INFLUENCE AND” before “CONFLICT OF INTEREST” in the title of section IX.
- Section IX.A—Adding as the first sentence of section IX.A.: “Board members are responsible for protecting the institution from undue influence by external persons or bodies.”

- Changes made November 2019

The board approved the proposed changed to the Bylaws as follows:

- To AMEND paragraph I.L. to add an additional standing committee after the phrase “the Audit Committee” at the end of Line 2: “Education Beyond the Walls Committee,”.
- To ADD a NEW PARAGRAPH as I.L.10, (and renumbering existing paragraphs 10 and 11) as follows: The **Education Beyond the Walls Committee** shall be composed of not less than four members of the Board, with any three members of the committee constituting a quorum. It shall consider and propose to the Board, in coordination with such other committees as may be appropriate, all matters relative to the Office of Education Beyond the Walls. It shall regularly report to the Board.
- To AMEND the minimum numbers of the members of the following committees by striking “five” and replacing it with “four” in the following paragraphs: Academic Affairs Committee (I.L.2.); Investment Committee (I.L.4); and, Student Life Committee (I.L.8).

2. *Columbia Theological Seminary*

No changes.

3. *Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary*

No changes.

4. *Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary*

President Alton B. Pollard III has noted the following:

In January 2020, our Articles of Incorporation were modified to indicate the manner of due process employed by our Board of Trustees in the possible removal of a trustee more fully consistent with leading practices in higher education. No trustee has ever been removed from the LPTS board. There aren’t any such considerations in progress.

In October 2019, our Bylaws were revised to adjust the minimum number of trustees, and to allow the election of new trustees at any time during the year and the process of electronic voting was included.

5. *McCormick Theological Seminary*

No changes.

6. *Pittsburgh Theological Seminary*

The Board's Committee on Institutional Effectiveness and Nominating Committee were consolidated into its Governance Committee. This necessitated revision of terminology at two places in the Constitution and two places in the Bylaws.

7. *Princeton Theological Seminary*

No changes.

8. *Union Presbyterian Seminary*

The Restated Bylaws of Union Presbyterian Seminary were amended and approved by the Board of Trustees on November 8, 2018 to incorporate a variety of clarifications to various Board activities and governance processes.

The Restated Bylaws of Union Presbyterian Seminary were amended and approved by the Board of Trustees on April 25, 2019 to adjust the description of job duties for the Deans in Article IV, Section 4 and to add Section 10 to Article I regarding voting rights of Alumni Representatives.

9. *University of Dubuque Theological Seminary*

No changes.

Item 00-Info-24

Christian Churches Together (CCT) 2019 Yearly Ministry Report

Christian Churches Together (CCT) has been a positive and significant model of Christian relationship-building in the United States for over fourteen years. Since its inception, CCT has had a commitment to bring together Roman Catholics, Orthodox, Historic African American, Historic Mainline, Pentecostal, and Evangelical Christians for the purpose of dialogue around relevant trends and themes that engage faith. One of the distinctive characteristics of CCT is its intentional focus on relationship-building and mutual understanding, instead of theological consensus-building. This characteristic has invited these diverse Christians to come together in a unique manner that continues to gain momentum.

Vision Statement

Christian Churches Together enables churches and national Christian organizations to grow closer together in Christ in order to strengthen our Christian witness in the world.

Mission Statement

Out of the process of growing together, CCT participants discern how and when to take action together in common witness to our society.

As part of a Statement of Vision, Mission, and Process, the following three guiding principles were enthusiastically approved at the 2019 Annual Convocation:

1. Loving relationships among Christians bound together by the Spirit of God through Christ Jesus (*Loving Relationships*)
2. The desire to humble ourselves and learn theologically from each other (*Learning Theologically*)
3. A calling to lead Christians in the United States into action together that will transform the world (*Leading Actions*)

(Thanks for these categories goes to Spiritual Leadership Incorporated.)

The document states that a strong vision and mission of CCT must compel the group to engage in a process that may cause a sense of discomfort and unfamiliarity with each other and those in public society. The CCT must not be hindered by this, because Jesus Himself made many uncomfortable in proclaiming God's Kingdom. Therefore, the process (based on Loving Relationships, Learning Theologically, and Leading Actions) would be a way for CCT members to commit to working together in discernment to engage in steps that would lead to Beloved Community.

The 2018 Annual Convocation invited each participating communion in the CCT family to present an overview of what their traditions considered essential when addressing issues of life in the context of our religious, social, and cultural context. Speakers were not instructed by the organizers to address any particular area on matters of life. The outcome was very intriguing, giving the churches hope of what they can discuss and achieve together. As expected, the subject of abortion was highlighted. One would assume that this topic of abortion would be a very divisive one, but after listening to the different speakers, it was clear that the churches are not that far apart from each other.

Some churches emphasize the sanctity of the unborn, others emphasize the freedom of conscience and the dignity of women. All of the presentations on this topic clearly articulated the importance of respect for all life, from conception to death. Something we can celebrate is the fact that after many years of dialogue on issues of life pertaining the poor, the marginalized, and the oppressed, all of the participant churches in CCT are in agreement about the right to life during all stages of our lives. This does not mean there are not essential differences in the churches' approaches, but it reveals that there are possibilities for mutual understanding and agreement. The more contentious topic, one in which the traditions have a strong disagreement is human sexuality, including same-sex marriage.

The discussion on the "Unity Declaration on Poverty and Racism" was supposed to take place the second day, but from the very beginning, the issue of racism was integral in the discussion about life. The emphasis was so strong that most of the conversations during the convocation geared around this one issue. Dr. Barbara Williams-Skinner made a passionate articulation of the main points in the unity statement. The Reverend Jim Wallis joined her in the question-and-answer (Q&A) time. Even though there was much agreement on the pervasiveness and the sinfulness of racism in our country, there are still some communions that struggle with their level of involvement in social and political action.

Last year (2019) participants met for our annual convocation in Montgomery, Alabama. Given Montgomery's place in history as a former slave trade hub and first capital of the Confederacy of the United States, it was an important and timely location for our commemoration and lament of the Four Hundredth Anniversary of the forced migration and enslavement of African peoples from Angola to Fort Monroe and Jamestown, Va., in 1619. As Christian pilgrims, having experienced the Legacy Museum of the Equal Justice Initiative and its Peace and Justice Garden, we contemplated the treacherous journey, inhumane treatment, and enslavement of African peoples. This included a spiritual pilgrimage retracing the steps of the historical moments of this journey. We also considered the injustices faced by people of African descent and other enslaved peoples globally and nationally today, promoted by racist laws, racial terrorism, societal practices, and other policies that further racial inequalities and privilege certain groups over, and often at the expense of, others. The experience has also called us to question and discuss how various peoples and communities perceive or understand the concepts and notions of racism, white privilege, or racial supremacy. The very definitions of these terms are not universally recognized or understood.

These realities are complex and systemic and call us to deeper reflection and prayerful action. Due to their gravitas and intricacies, the steering committee of CCT will consider creating a process whereby participants from the Montgomery convocation will be invited to come together, explore these issues more deeply, and refine our reflections. The experience is envisioned as an opportunity for people to make a serious commitment to common prayer, the asking of honest questions, and Christian engagement with a spirit of love and solidarity. One tangible fruit of these discussions will be the development of a public and fully ecumenical theological reflection, which will articulate how we as Christians from diverse traditions find ourselves able to collaborate for the transformation of our society.

At the August 2019 steering committee meeting, a small working group was put together to reach out to other ecumenical bodies to explore the possibilities of organizing a small consultation among ecumenical leaders (stakeholders) to discuss the future of the ecumenical bodies in our country. This will be included in the work for this year.

Our executive director is actively working with several of our organizations and with other partners in the area of advocacy. The CCT's executive director has been a catalyst that actively promotes unity among churches and agencies working in the area of advocacy for hunger and poverty. The best example is the partnership with the Circle of Protection, a network of more than 50 denominations and organizations in Washington, D.C., that protects federal programs for poor and hungry Americans. The Reverend Carlos Malavé, CCT executive director, is a co-convenor of the Circle of Protection.

In November 2019, the CCT Mission Network met in St. Augustine, Fla., at the offices of the Orthodox Christian Mission Center. The networks provide a space for the senior staff on mission to build and strengthen relationships, share best practices, and discuss theological topics related to the church mission and evangelism. The main topic last year was Missions and Money. The main presenter at the gathering was Dr. Jonathan Bonk, who has written on the topic and serves as research professor of mission at Boston University, where he directs the *Dictionary of African Christian Biography*.

This year the Latino Network of CCT had plans to hold its annual gathering in San Diego, Calif. They decided to focus their gathering on the issue of immigration. They have addressed this topic during the last 2 or 3 years, but they feel that there is a sense of urgency in witnessing to the unity of Latino/a leaders in their fight for immigrant rights. Regrettably, because of the coronavirus crisis, this event was postponed for a future date.

We will continue our conversation on racism and hunger and poverty, issues that we have addressed for the last twelve years. One of the outcomes of the 2019 convocation is the need for deeper engagement on the different perspectives and effects of “white privilege.” The steering committee approved that we continue to explore the deep dimensions of racism at the 2020 annual forum.

We can identify two main challenges for CCT. First, because of the toxic and divisive environment in the life of our country, it has been challenging to attract new members into the fellowship. This is true, particularly for the Historic Protestant and the Evangelical/Pentecostal families. Many denominations in these families are reluctant to be at the same table and cooperate with the other. Much of our focus has been in nurturing the relationships between the existing members. That in itself is a difficult task. The second challenge is financial. Even when the financial contributions for many of the denominations are relatively low, many of them are unable to contribute at the expected level. This has forced CCT to adjust its budget regularly. At the present time, we are operating with a very basic budget. We thank the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. for their commitment to the vision and mission of CCT and for their financial support. Because of this support and the partnership with the other communions and organizations, even with the challenges and limitations, CCT has made a difference in the current divisive environment in our country.

We hope and pray that in the coming years CCT may fulfill more faithfully its call to bring together all Christians in our country.

Item 00-Info-25

Brief Report from the World Council of Churches (WCC) to the 224th General Assembly (2020) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

The World Council of Churches (WCC), founded in 1948, is a fellowship of 350 member churches in more than 110 countries, representing over 560 million Christians. The members include Orthodox, Protestant, Anglican, Old Catholic, and United churches. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), through its predecessor bodies, is a founding member of the WCC.

“The primary purpose of the fellowship of churches in the WCC is to call one another to visible unity in one faith and in one Eucharistic fellowship, expressed in worship and common life in Christ, through witness and service to the world, and to advance towards that unity in order that the world may believe” (WCC constitution, article 3).

The WCC plays a special role in the one ecumenical movement convening churches, councils, and world communions for common action. The WCC cooperates closely with the Roman Catholic Church and maintains relations with the World Evangelical Alliance and the Pentecostal World Fellowship. It represents the fellowship of churches with many United Nations agencies as well as other international organizations.

The WCC assembly, which takes place every eight years, is the highest governing body of the WCC. It elects seven presidents to represent the fellowship and a central committee of 150 members, which meets every two years, to provide direction. The central committee elects a moderator, two vice-moderators, and an executive committee of twenty-five people, which meets biannually to provide oversight.

The WCC publishes an annual review, audited financial reports and regular updates on its activities at oikoumene.org. What follows are highlights from the life and work of the WCC since the 223rd General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in June 2018.

Impact of COVID-19

Like the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the WCC has been affected by the coronavirus pandemic. The WCC central committee planned for March 2020 was postponed to August. The WCC staff have been working from home since mid-March.

On March 21, 2020, the WCC published guidance for faith communities in addressing the pandemic, including discrimination and domestic violence. Together with regional ecumenical organizations, the WCC issued a statement on March 26, 2020, offering pastoral, prophetic, and practical encouragement to the churches “to adapt our modes of worship and fellowship to the needs of this time of pandemic infection, in order to avoid the risk of becoming sources of viral transmission rather than means of grace.”

In preparation for Holy Week, the WCC assisted the World Health Organization in establishing “practical considerations and recommendations for religious leaders and faith-based communities in the context of COVID-19,” published on April 7, 2020. The WCC also released an online publication addressing “Health and Hope: The Church in Mission and Unity.”

Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace

Since the 10th WCC Assembly in 2013, the WCC has sought to fulfil its “primary purpose” as a pilgrimage of justice and peace—an invitation to all churches, partners, and people of good will to engage their gifts in transforming action. Churches around the world have joined the journey as a way of working together for God’s justice and peace.

As a strategic direction, the pilgrimage of justice and peace has a regional and thematic focus each year:

- 2018 focus on Latin America and the Caribbean with a thematic focus on Ecumenical *Diakonia* and Sustainable Development
- 2019 focus on Asia with a thematic focus on combating Racism, Xenophobia, and Racial Discrimination
- 2020 focus on the Pacific with a thematic focus on Caring for People, Water, and the Earth

The regional and thematic foci are not short-term responses, but seek to encourage sustained reflection, cooperation, accompaniment, and prayer among the fellowship of churches. The WCC maintains a peace-building programs to accompany churches in the following priority countries: Burundi, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria, South Sudan, North and South Korea, Palestine and Israel, Iraq, Syria and Ukraine.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

For more than 100 years churches have expressed their commitment to being one in Christ through the week of prayer for Christian unity. Each year the theme, texts, reflections, and prayer are prepared by churches in a different country and shared with the worldwide church. The WCC and the Roman Catholic Church supported the churches in the Caribbean, Indonesia, and Malta in preparing the following themes:

- In 2018 the churches in the Caribbean prepared the theme “*Your right hand, O Lord, glorious in power*” (Exodus 15:6)
- In 2019 the churches in Indonesia prepared the theme “*Justice and only justice you shall pursue*” (Deuteronomy 16:18–20)
- In 2020 the churches in Malta prepared the theme “*They showed unusual kindness*” (Acts 28:2)

Central Committee in 2018 and 2020

The WCC central committee meets every two years. In June 2018 it met in Geneva, Switzerland. It will meet in August 2020, also in Geneva. What follows are highlights from 2018 and what we look forward to in 2020.

a. New Member Churches

The central committee meeting in 2018 received two new member churches; the central committee meeting in 2020, is expected to accept the application of another church for membership in the WCC:

- Africa Brotherhood Church, Kenya, 2018
- Community of Baptist Churches in Central Africa, Democratic Republic of Congo, 2018
- Faith Apostolic Mission in South Africa, 2020

The WCC has Pentecostal member churches, but the Faith Apostolic Mission in South Africa will be the first member of the Pentecostal World Fellowship to join the WCC fellowship.

b. Policy Documents, Resources, and Directions

“*Global Ecumenical Health Strategy*”—In 2018 the central committee received a new strategy to promote health and wholeness for all by strengthening the churches as healing communities. It builds on 50 years of promoting “primary health care,” with reference to the churches contribution to fighting AIDs and the crucial role that churches played in the Ebola outbreak, promoting safe and dignified burial practices.

“*Called to Transformative Action – Ecumenical Diakonia*”—In 2018 the central committee reviewed a paper on *diakonia* that offers a common theological foundation for the ecumenical movement’s continued commitment to sustainable development. The paper, in the form of a study document, promotes reflection on the churches’ faith-based and a rights-based approach to transformation. It has been revised and will be presented to the central committee in 2020 for approval.

“Conversations on the Pilgrim Way: Invitation to Journey Together on Matters of Human Sexuality”—In August 2020 the central committee will receive a resource document for reflection and action from the WCC reference group on human sexuality. The aim of the resource is to inspire and promote conversations for those interested within and among the churches. It is a continuation of a long-term series of conversations conducted by the member churches of the WCC.

Election of a New General Secretary—In 2018 the central committee established a search committee for the next WCC general secretary. The search committee will present two candidates for consideration to the central committee in August 2020—Dr. Elizabeth Joy (Malankara Orthodox Church) and the Reverend Dr. Jerry Pillay (Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa).

The Reverend Dr. Olav Fykse Tveit (Church of Norway) completed 10 years of service as WCC general secretary in March 2020. The Reverend Professor Dr. Ioan Sauca (Romanian Orthodox Church), who serves as one of two deputy general secretaries, was appointed acting general secretary by the leadership of the central committee from April 2020.

WCC 70th Anniversary in 2018

The anniversary was celebrated throughout the year and around the world. Among the highlights was the visit of Pope Francis on his pilgrimage to Geneva to commemorate the WCC anniversary in June 2018. The historic visit signals a new era of cooperation with the Roman Catholic Church to address some of the most burning issues of our time—from migration, xenophobia, and racism to Christian witness in multi-religious world.

Next WCC Assembly

The 11th WCC Assembly will take place from September 8–16, 2021, in Karlsruhe, Germany, under the theme “Christ’s love moves the world to reconciliation and unity.” Pre-assemblies for women, youth, persons with disabilities, and Indigenous Peoples will take place just prior. A Global Ecumenical Theological Institute for younger theologians will be offered concurrently.

The assembly planning committee is developing a programme that includes inspiring prayer life, Bible study in home groups, thematic plenaries on the theme of the assembly, as well as twenty distinct ecumenical conversations on issues related to unity, mission, evangelism, justice, peace, and interfaith cooperation. Inspired by the German host churches, the assembly will include the *Brunnen* programme. *Brunnen* means “well” in German. It is a place where people come together. It will be physical hub offering workshops, exhibitions, networking zones, and more.

Invitations to member churches to nominate delegates and recommend additional delegates were issued at the end of 2019. The central committee will advance preparations at its meeting in August 2020.

Programme Highlights from 2018 and 2019

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is represented on the WCC central and executive committees; serves on a number of commissions and working groups; and is involved in many WCC activities. What follows are some highlights from the past two years where the Presbyterian Church (USA) has made a strong contribution:

a. Climate Justice

The WCC continues to coordinate global church advocacy to combat climate change. It coordinated the interfaith gatherings at the 24th Conference of Parties (COP24) of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in Katowice, Poland in 2018 and again at COP 25 in Madrid, Spain in 2019.

In March 2019 the WCC published a “Roadmap for congregations, communities and churches for an economy of life and ecological justice” with a 5-step programme to change how we deal with the economy and our ecological surroundings.

b. Gender Justice

In October 2018, the WCC hosted a “Global Consultation to Commemorate the 20th Anniversary of the Decade of the Churches in Solidarity with Women” in Kingston, Jamaica. Participants reflected on the achievements and challenges in building a just community of women and men and documented a vision of ecumenical collaboration for gender justice in the church and society. The event strengthened ecumenical advocacy against sexual gender-based violence through the *Thursdays in Black* campaign for a world without rape and violence.

The campaign is simple but profound. Wear black on Thursdays. Wear a pin to declare you are part of the global movement resisting attitudes and practices that permit rape and violence. Show your respect for women who are resilient in the face of injustice and violence. Encourage others to join you.

c. Racial Justice

In 2018 the WCC executive committee stated “that racism is on the rise in different forms in different regions; in forms of open manifestation; in new forms of discrimination and dehumanization” and affirmed that combatting racism would remain a priority. In November 2018, the WCC, together with the Roman Catholic Church, convened a “world conference on xenophobia, racism, and populist nationalism in the context of global migration” in Rome, Italy. In May 2019, the WCC convened an ecumenical strategic forum on racism, xenophobia, and racial discrimination to galvanize the continued witness of the ecumenical movement in Geneva.

The executive committee, at its meeting in May 2019, issued a statement, “Commemorating the 2019 Quad-Centennial of the Forced Transatlantic Voyage of Enslaved African Peoples,” and affirmed the churches’ participation in the UN Decade of Solidarity with People of African Descent. The moderator of the WCC central committee, Dr. Agnes Abuom (Anglican Church of Kenya); the WCC President for North America Archbishop Mark L. MacDonald (Anglican Church of Canada); and the WCC General Secretary, the Reverend Dr. Olav Fykse Tveit (Church of Norway) all joined the National Council of Churches in the U.S.A. (NCC) Christian Unity Gathering in Virginia to support the U.S. churches in their commitment to ending racism.

Throughout 2019 and into 2020, the WCC produced a series of regional webinars addressing the manifestations of racism in Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, Latin America, North America, the Middle East and the Pacific. Addressing racism ecumenically will continue to be priority for the fellowship of WCC member churches as they move toward the 11th Assembly in 2021.

d. Ecumenical Formation

Every year the Bossey Ecumenical Institute welcomes up to thirty-five young pastors and theologians from around the world for residential post-graduate studies in ecumenism, exposing them to new church traditions and new cultures, while addressing the common challenges of our times. The studies are accredited through the University of Geneva. During the 2019–2020 academic year, the WCC welcomed two students from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), whose studies were supported by the Eugene Carson Blake Scholarship Fund.

Looking Ahead

The WCC is a vibrant fellowship of churches committed to responding to Christ’s prayer that “we may all be one, so that the world may believe” (John 17:21). In 2021 the pilgrimage of justice and peace will journey with the churches in North America. The pilgrimage will engage the fellowship of churches in combatting racial discrimination and the promoting the rights of Indigenous Peoples. The year ahead culminates with the 11th WCC Assembly, setting directions for the next eight years.

The WCC is deeply grateful for the commitment of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to the search for visible unity in Christ and the quest for God’s justice and peace.

Item 00-Info-26

Report of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) 2018–2019

The National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA (NCC) has engaged in vital work and ministry over the past two years. NCC has continued its work of advancing ecumenism while responding to remarkable national and global events as well as the changing landscape within the life of the church. Our work has become increasingly important at a time of unprecedented polarization and uncertainty both nationally and internationally as we offer a leading voice and crucial witness to the living Christ in the public square.

The NCC, of which the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is a founding member, is comprised of 38 member communions numbering some 30 million Christians in approximately 100,000 local congregations. The Council numbers seven historic African American communions, nine Orthodox communions, the ‘mainline’ churches, historic peace churches, and a variety of other expressions of American Christianity.

A note of prayer and concern: The NCC deeply grieves the sudden and unexpected loss of the Reverend Robina Winbush, a faithful and loyal partner in the ecumenical movement. The NCC Governing Board paused for a time of prayer, testimony, and commemoration of her life, led by the Reverend Jimmie Hawkins, director of the Office of Public Witness. We are grateful for her years of service as the director of ecumenical relations in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s Office of the General Assembly and for her service to the National Council of Churches. Her dedication was unmatched and she worked diligently to advance the ecumenical movement, enriching the lives and witness of so many. She is, and will be, greatly missed.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has long been a major presence in the life of the National Council of Churches in the USA through its presence on the Governing Board, the NCC’s Convening Tables, the NCC staff, and through generous financial support. The National Council of Churches marks its 70th anniversary in 2020 and it thanks the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for its steadfast commitment to the NCC and the ecumenical movement.

The National Council of Churches conducts five formal interreligious dialogues, carries out Faith & Order work, owns and administers the Revised Standard Version and New Revised Standard Version of the Holy Bible, speaks out for justice and peace, oversees the International Sunday School Lessons, and works closely with the World Council of Churches and councils throughout the world.

The NCC prioritizes work to end mass incarceration and to engage in interreligious dialogue with a focus on peace. The year 2018 witnessed the launch of a third major initiative, the “A.C.T. to End Racism” campaign. A.C.T. is an acronym for Awaken, Confront, Transform, and through these principles the NCC is engaging member denominations and local congregations in the hard work of *awakening* to the truth that racism is ever-present and deeply rooted in American culture, *confronting* racism by speaking truth and standing against injustice, and, *transforming* the hearts, minds and behaviors of people and structures with the ultimate goal of ending racism. This critical emphasis brings an intersectional approach to the work of the council, recognizing the sin of systemic racism across the injustices suffered by vulnerable people.

In this report, the NCC presents brief and selected highlights of its work in 2018–2019:

A.C.T. to End Racism

The National Council of Churches held a major rally to end racism on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., on April 4, 2018, which marked the starting point of a multiyear effort to remove racism from the nation’s social fabric and bring the country together.

The rally, which brought more than 10,000 people together from across the country, including hundreds of Presbyterians, took place on the day the nation marked fifty years since the assassination of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who inspired and challenged America to confront and put an end to racism. Ecumenical leaders from the World Council of Churches and dozens of partners, as well as NCC’s member denominations, led the charge as hearts and minds were joined together to commit to a common goal—ending racism. The day began with a silent march from the MLK Memorial to the rally location on the National Mall, giving participants moments of prayer and reflection as we focused our attention both on the loss of Martin Luther King Jr. in such a tragic way fifty years earlier and on the tough road ahead of working together to end racism.

Jim Winkler, President and General Secretary of the NCC remarked, “*We have for too long lived under the scourge of racism in our society. To begin the process of healing our nation, we as Christians must join with people of all faiths in holding ourselves accountable for our complicity, and commit to righting the wrongs.*”

The front-page story in *The Washington Post* can be read here: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/acts-of-faith/wp/2018/04/04/on-the-anniversary-of-martin-luther-kings-death-faith-groups-sharpen-their-focus-on-systemic-racism/>.

Since the historic and successful rally on the National Mall, the A.C.T. to End Racism initiative has continued to engage member denominations and local congregations to work to end racism. The effort has been spearheaded for NCC by the Reverend Dr. Sharon Watkins, former NCC Board Chair and past President and General Secretary of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), who served as the Director of NCC’s Racial Justice Initiative until the end of 2019. The racial equity/dismantling white supremacy lens shapes the work of the NCC in all areas: advocacy, convening tables, board, and staff. Several additional steps in this initiative have included the following:

Awaken/Truth-Telling

The Reverend Dr. Perzavia Praylow, pastor of 15th Street Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C., has been engaged to develop a history of the National Council of Churches work against racism over the past several decades. Her scholarly work is made possible by the support of the PC(USA). Additionally, the NCC has developed a [Resource Library](#) of member communion resources for racial justice work and a [Rally Speeches](#) Discussion Guide. Work is underway to create a survey of predominantly white member communions to learn about their “truth-telling” work

Confront

The NCC formed a Racial Justice Truth-Telling Advisory Committee, co-chaired by the Reverend Brenda Girton-Mitchell, Esq., from the Progressive National Baptist Convention, and Nicholas Anton from the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. The Reverend Aundrea Alexander, Esq, NCC Associate General Secretary, is working with the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Process of the United Nations Human Rights Council, to advocate for a U.S. State Department invitation to the UN Special Rapporteur for Racism to make an official U.S. visit. The NCC is partnering with the Poor People’s Campaign/Call for a Moral Revival, the Conference of National Black Churches, and the Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference to work collaboratively to end racism.

Transform

The NCC will conduct and audit and assessment of council policies and practices, including hiring practices, to examine and root out embedded white supremacy or white normativity structures. The council will engage a consultant with racial justice expertise. The NCC intends to issue specific apologies and repentance and adopt strategies for change and repair that grow out of local conversations, member communion truth-telling processes, the NCC process audit, and the NCC history project. The NCC is undertaking this effort to end racism in conjunction with the UN Decade of People of African Descent and is working closely with UN bodies and with the World Council of Churches.

Christian Unity Gathering 2018 and 2019

The Christian Unity Gathering (CUG) is the NCC's signature annual event. The CUG includes prayer and worship, workshops and plenary sessions, meetings of the NCC Convening Tables, and a meeting of the NCC Governing Board. Member communions sponsor the presence of dozens of seminary students at the CUG. For the past two years, the Reverend Dr. Valerie Bridgement, dean and vice president of academic affairs of the Methodist Theological School in Ohio, has served as dean of the CUG seminarians.

The CUG is a time of ecumenical revival and it is where the NCC focuses on the "A.C.T. Now to End Racism" campaign and provides a platform for instruction, convening, corporate worship, and decision-making for the member communions.

The 2018 Gathering featured the Reverend Dr. David Anderson Hooker, associate professor of the practice of conflict transformation and peacebuilding at the University of Notre Dame (Indiana), as the keynote speaker. Dr. Hooker led the Gathering's attendees, a mix of denominational officials, seminary students, faith-based activists, and others, in practical exercises that can be used in churches in the work to end racism.

The 2019 CUG brought together more than 300 NCC and denominational leaders at Old Point Comfort near Hampton, Virginia, to remember the "20 and odd" enslaved Africans brought to North America 400 years ago, marking the beginning of institutionalized slavery in what would become the United States of America. In a "Day of Remembrance and Lament," NCC leaders and guests acknowledged the unique role white churches played in the institution of slavery, to recognize the black church's formation out of the suffering of slavery, and to strategize about what churches can do together now to end racism. The CUG began with an opening worship service at Bethel AME Church in Hampton, Virginia, where an inspiring message from Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, set the stage for the historic gathering.

The site of Old Point Comfort was an obvious choice for the CUG as the nation marked the quadricentennial since enslaved Africans, first captured by Portuguese and Imbangala forces from the kingdom of Ndongo, in West Central Africa, arrived aboard the White Lion in 1619 after being taken from a Spanish slave ship. Colonial officials traded these persons for food, valuing white lives above black lives, beginning the horrific legacy of race-based bondage that has defined the American experience ever since.

The second day of the CUG was a "Day of Remembrance and Lament." This powerful day of repentance and solidarity included a morning devotion from the Reverend Dr. Teresa Hord Owens, president and general minister of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and opening plenary address by the Reverend Dr. W. Franklyn Richardson, chair of the Conference of National Black Churches and NCC Governing Board member, as well as a luncheon address by the acclaimed author and speaker, Dr. Ibram X. Kendi, writer of "How to Be an Antiracist." The day culminated in a service of commitment at First Baptist Church of Hampton with guest preacher Bishop Claude Alexander of Charlotte, N.C. A panel of denominational leaders addressed how their communions were working to end racism, and the Reverend Dr. Olav Fyske Tveit, then General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, addressed the topic, "Revisiting our Present—Toward Repentance, Restitution and Repair."

Each year at the Christian Unity Gathering, the NCC presents awards that recognize exemplary leadership in the ecumenical and interfaith community. In 2019, *The National Council of Churches Award for Excellence in Interreligious Leadership* was renamed for the Reverend Dr. Gwynne Guibord, founder and president of *The Guibord Center—Religion Inside Out*, who died in August. A long-time partner of the NCC, she created the center as the culmination of nearly two decades of working closely with leaders of many faiths and traditions to explore and uphold the experience and presence of the holy. She was—and The Guibord Center continues to be—co-sponsors with the NCC of our new national Buddhist-Christian and Hindu-Christian Dialogues. She formerly served as vice chair of the National Muslim-Christian Dialogue and represented the Episcopal Church on the National Jewish-Christian Dialogue. Her legacy lives on through the dedication of this important award in her honor.

In 2019, the NCC [gave awards to four persons](#) for their exemplary work:

- The Reverend Dr. Al Moss (the Gwynne Guibord Award for Excellence in Interreligious Leadership)

- Kathryn Lohre (the J. Irwin Miller Award for Excellence in Ecumenical Leadership)
- Dr. Agnes Abuom and the Reverend Noel Andersen (the President's Award for Excellence in Faithful Leadership)

In 2018, [these awards were given](#) to Jacquelyn Dupont-Walker (the J. Irwin Miller Award for Excellence in Ecumenical Leadership), Rabbi David Saperstein (the National Council of Churches Award for Excellence in Interreligious Leadership), the Reverend Dr. Leslie Copeland-Tune (the President's Award for Excellence in Faithful Leadership).

Ending Mass Incarceration

Since at least the 1970s, the U.S. criminal justice system has been based on the harsh punishment of individuals, especially in relation to crimes where drugs are involved. Today the U.S. has the highest per capita incarceration rate in the world, with 743 per 100,000 people incarcerated for a total prison and jail population of more than 2 million people. Those imprisoned are disproportionately people of color (African American, Latino, etc.).

Today there is a growing movement to reverse this trend. Through legislation, pretrial diversion, education, re-entry work, and many other ways, the faith community has already worked closely for decades in the area of criminal justice. Taking this experience into account and working with our brothers and sisters in historic African American churches, the NCC has been working to lessen the racial disparities in the criminal justice system and encourage a focus on restoration of formerly incarcerated people and empowerment of persons of color to interrupt the cradle to prison pipeline.

At the end of 2018, the First Step Act was passed by Congress and signed into law by the president. Because we determined that it would not have a meaningful impact on communities of color, which are disproportionately affected by mass incarceration, and indeed in some cases, imposed additional burdens on incarcerated persons, NCC did not join in support of this legislation. However, NCC continues to work with denominational and faith partners as well as those in the civil and human rights communities to push for legislation that will end mass incarceration.

In addition, NCC has partnered with organizations representing currently and formerly incarcerated individuals in this work. These partnerships have opened new doors and opportunities for our ongoing work and have given a voice to those most impacted by mass incarceration. NCC will make every effort to always include the voices of current and formerly incarcerated persons in policy debates. NCC also has joined sign-on letters and meetings that advocated for a variety of other criminal legal system related matters.

UN Special Rapporteur on Racism: One major area of work that the NCC has engaged in has been with the World Council of Churches and other partners in response to the United Nation's *International Decade for People of African Descent*, which runs through 2024. NCC has partnered with international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and denominational bodies to spearhead an effort to have the United States invite the UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance to conduct an audit visit. Initially, a letter was sent to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to request that such an invitation be made. After receiving no response, further steps are being organized including a congressional briefing to further ramp up efforts to have the special rapporteur visit. The hope is that such a visit would hold the U.S. accountable to ending racism, highlight continuing areas of racial disparities in the U.S., give a more objective and accurate assessment of where the U.S. stands as it pertains to racism, and offer recommendations for how the U.S. can move forward with the goal of ending racism.

Faith and Order

The night before his death, Jesus prayed that we who believe in him might all be one (John 17:21). We want to be faithful in responding to this wish of Jesus. But we know that our churches are not simply different from one another but divided in many ways. The churches have given the Theological Dialogue on Matters of Faith and Order Convening Table the work of speaking together about the Gospel and our church communities in ways that will lead to healing our divisions while honoring our diversity.

Faith and Order affirms the oneness of the Church of Jesus Christ and keeps before the churches the Gospel call to visible unity in one faith and one Eucharist communion, expressed in worship and in common life in Christ, in order that the world may believe.

In support of the NCC's antiracism initiative, and in keeping with Faith and Order's commitment to the study of theological issues that are church dividing and church uniting, the convening table proposes the following themes for study over the next 3–5 years:

Awakening to the Reality of Racism as America's Original Sin

- Seeing racism through the categories of sin and heresy, domination and oppression
- Studying racism in terms of ontology, theological anthropology, ecclesiology, -and soteriology
- Understanding racism as a break in communion among people in church and society
- Fostering healing and healthy relationship through right thinking and right practice

Confronting White Supremacy as the Defining Myth of America

- Navigating the intersection of race and power, especially pertaining to ecclesial communities
- Analyzing structural, cultural and religious manifestations of privilege through a theological lens
- Looking at the connection between white supremacy and Christian supremacy
- Dismantling the myth, moving from accommodation to prophetic witness, changing world-views

Transforming the Church and Humanizing the Public Square

- Promoting ways to seek common ground, build civil discourse, and convert hearts
- Creating a new narrative based on Scripture, rooted in Tradition, and grounded in love
- Nurturing true human personhood, reconciliation, fellowship, and flourishing
- Providing resources for community worship, parish study, and spiritual formation

In addition, Faith and Order issued a report entitled, "[Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World](#)."

Interreligious Relations with a Focus on Peace

The world's many faiths play a crucial and significant role in building peace in their societies. This is true both on a global level and in local communities. Interreligious relationships build bridges of understanding between peoples in an increasingly interconnected world. These connections are vital as we seek to understand one another and find mutually beneficial ways to support one another.

There are many settings for Interreligious peace work. Within the U.S., partnerships between Christians, Jews, and Muslims helps reduce suspicion and anti-Muslim and anti-Semitic sentiment in society in a post 9/11 world. As Asia continues to grow, understanding religions such as Buddhism, Hinduism, and others becomes increasingly important in working together to address the conflicts and disparities present in those parts of the world. NCC will seek to strengthen its current relationships and build new ones in joint efforts to work together for peace.

New Hindu-Christian and Buddhist-Christian Dialogues:

In July 2018, the National Council of Churches initiated a national Hindu-Christian Dialogue and a national Buddhist-Christian Dialogue. These new dialogues join the national Jewish-Christian Dialogue and national Muslim-Christian Dialogue that have long been a part of the NCC's work in interreligious relations and collaboration.

The new dialogues are co-sponsored by The Guibord Center in Los Angeles, California. While national in scope, the dialogues will be based on the west coast. The inaugural sessions of the new dialogues were held at First Congregational Church in Los Angeles, where The Guibord Center has its offices. The most recent dialogue was held via Zoom conference call on April 15, 2020. An in-person gathering was cancelled due to the coronavirus global epidemic.

The Buddhist-Christian Dialogue met on July 25, 2018, and among the topics on the agenda were the Buddhist understanding of enlightenment and the Christian understanding of the presence of God. Presenters at this meeting included Venerable Dr. Walpola Piyananda of the Sri Lankan Sangha Council of America and Canada, Bishop Kodo Umezu of the Buddhist Churches of America, Bhante Chao Chu of the Los Angeles Buddhist Union, Venerable Youheng of the Fo Guang Shan Hsi Lai Temple, and Dr. Don Thorsen of the Wesleyan Theological Society.

The Hindu-Christian Dialogue met for the first time on July 17, 2018, and among the topics discussed were the Hindu understanding of illumination and the Christian understanding of salvation. Presenters included Swami Sarvadevananda of the Vedanta Society of Southern California, Swami Sarvapriyananda of the Vedanta Society of New York, and the Reverend Deenabandhu Manchala of the United Church of Christ. The most recent dialogue was held on April 16, 2020, via Zoom conference call. It was changed from being an in-person gathering to a Zoom call due to the coronavirus global pandemic.

In 2019, a new national Sikh-Christian dialogue began with a positive, hopeful tone.

“Interreligious Relations with a Focus on Peace” Policy Statement

In 1999, during the occasion of the 50th anniversary of its founding, the NCC adopted a policy statement entitled “Interfaith Relations and the Churches.” Recognizing “a changing experience of religious diversity in our country,” the NCC’s member churches saw the growing importance of nurturing relationships with communities of other faiths as central to “the work of building Christian unity and [integral to] our efforts for peace and human development” (Par. 2). The policy statement, which guides our interfaith engagements in the U.S. and around the globe, reminds us of the persistent imperative to “seek God’s grace in our common effort to understand ever more fully how to live as the body of Christ in this religiously plural and culturally diverse time and place” (Par. 1).

On the 20th anniversary of the policy statement, the NCC affirms its continued relevance for our life together—ecumenically as churches, and as a witness to our neighbors of different faiths in our country and world. We also acknowledge that our national and global contexts for interfaith relations have changed significantly since its adoption. We have experienced significant demographic changes—within Christianity itself, and in the broader religious landscape. We have seen and strongly condemned violence and terrorism, and the resultant rise of religious bigotry and extremism. In the aftermath of the attacks of September 11, 2001, the churches have participated in the corresponding rise of the interfaith movement in response—work to which the NCC has been committed for decades. We are attentive to and becoming better equipped to consider varying expressions of religious identity, affiliation, spirituality, and practice in our work—including interreligious family life and multiple religious belonging. In the midst of such changes, it is imperative that we give renewed focus to our collective interfaith engagement.

The full policy statement [can be read on our website](#).

Committee on the Uniform Series

The Committee on the Uniform Lessons Series (CUS) has shaped the church’s educational ministry for 147 years. One of the distinctive features of the CUS is a collaborative process through which denominational partners engage in the common task of developing a Guide to Lessons for use in curriculum writing.

The development of a guide for systematic study of Scripture is as valuable for the church’s educational ministry today as it was in the beginning, though CUS leadership is taking note of sweeping changes in congregational life across the Church.

At CUS annual meetings, representatives of twenty-six partner denominations and independent publishers engage in discussion and practical implementation of ways to more strongly support spiritual formation and discipleship in the writing of learning goals. In order for the church’s educational ministry to nurture koinonia within and among learners of all ages, the curricular tasks of knowing, being, and embodying must inspire teachers and learners to claim their own best possibilities, not only for themselves but for the sake of bringing Christ to bear in the world.

CUS will celebrate its sesquicentennial in 2022. This anniversary offers not only an opportunity to reflect upon the past, but to anticipate the future development of the Series.

At this year’s CUS annual meeting a new chair was elected, the Reverend Garland Pierce, who is the sixth Executive Director of the Department of Christian Education of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and the former NCC Associate General Secretary for Education and Leadership Ministries for the NCC. He succeeds the Reverend Dr. Mozella Mitchell from the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, who served as CUS chair for the past four years and who has been a member of the committee for more than thirty years. The Reverend Dr. Tammy Wiens, ordained Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) clergy, serves as NCC’s Director of Christian Education and Faith Formation.

Friendship Press and the NRSV Updated Edition

The National Council of Churches owns and administers the Revised Standard Version (RSV) and New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) of the Holy Bible. This sacred custodianship is at the very center of the life of the Council.

In January of 2018, the NCC reactivated its publishing arm, Friendship Press. Rooted in values and commitments from its past, and supported by the NCC, Friendship Press is resolute to honor these same commitments today and in the future: concern for fairness, justice, and the well-being of all peoples.

Under the management of Friendship Press, the National Council of Churches, in partnership with the Society for Biblical Literature, is conducting an update of the NRSV scripture translation. The work will result in the highest quality English translation of the Bible that is based, without exception, on the most accurate, up-to-date textual analysis. The NRSVue is scheduled to launch in 2021.

Work with Other Councils of Churches Worldwide

The ecumenical movement is worldwide in scope; therefore, a significant part of the NCC's work is to develop and maintain relationships with other councils of churches across the globe. This work is comprised of visits, statements, advocacy, and joint witness with partners, especially where matters of peace, war, and justice are at stake. Several notable examples from 2018–19 include:

Cuba: The NCC and the Cuban Council of Churches have enjoyed a close relationship for decades. This relationship continues as the councils meet together and speak to important aspects of the Cuban American relationship, especially during the current time of turmoil and shifting policies between governments.

The Cuban Council of Churches General Secretary, the Reverend Joel Dopico, who serves also as pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Varadero, hosted the NCC executive committee meeting in 2018. While in Cuba, the two councils held a packed worship service at the First Presbyterian Church of Havana to mark the 70th anniversary of the WCC.

NCC President and General Secretary Jim Winkler hosted a reception in New York City for Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel in 2018. The PC(USA) was represented by Ryan Smith, director of the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations.

The two councils have “worked together for many years not only to witness to the power of the Holy Spirit but to bring our nations together. We have stood for peace when many cried for war. We have stood for family unity when others try to divide our families. We have prayed, called and worked for an end to the blockade ([joint statement of August 30, 2018](#)).” Most recently, the two councils issued a [joint statement](#) calling for a lifting of “the economic, financial, and commercial blockade imposed on Cuba for more than sixty years” as a result of the suffering caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

This relationship continues to be one of great value to world ecumenism and human rights.

Korea: In a time when bellicose actions and rhetoric between the U.S. and North Korea have reached dangerous levels, the NCC and the National Council of Churches in Korea (NCKK) have repeatedly joined together to [celebrate successes and defy threats of war](#). Delegations from the NCKK have come to the United States for Ecumenical Advocacy Days (EAD), visited congressional offices, and held other meetings facilitated by NCC. In addition, NCC President and General Secretary Jim Winkler has made visits to Korea to further build this critical peacemaking relationship. NCC will join NCKK in marking the 70th anniversary of the Korean War in 2020 and continuing the effort to negotiate a peace treaty to end the war.

Middle East: The Middle East Council of Churches (MECC) remains an important ecumenical partner of the NCC. In one of the most important markers of this relationship, a delegation of African American Church leaders joined with a delegation from the South African Council of Churches (SACC) in a pilgrimage and fact-finding journey to the Holy Land in early 2019. This delegation viewed firsthand the complexities of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and observed parallels to the struggles for freedom for black people in the U.S. and South Africans during and post-apartheid. The delegation included “representatives of African American communities; as descendants of those who survived slavery, Jim Crow and who work now to dismantle the new Jim Crow of mass incarceration and militarization of police in our communities; and we came as representatives of the South African people who lived through the indignity of over 300 years of dehumanizing dispossession, colonialism, segregation and apartheid.”

In a [statement released after the delegation's return](#), the group said “We came to visit Israel and the Palestinian Territories in the hope of meeting Israeli and Palestinian citizens. We came seeking to better understand the realities on the ground, particularly related to the Occupied Palestinian Territories (East Jerusalem, West Bank, and the Gaza Strip). We came as people with a shared history of racial segregation, victims of injustice, people who have been dehumanized and marginalized. We came as people who stand against racism, against anti-Semitism, against Islamophobia. We came as people standing on the side of justice and equality for all.”

Relationship-building between world ecumenical bodies continues to be one of the most important components of the work of the National Council of Churches as we expand our witness beyond the borders of the U.S. and further demonstrate the unity of the Church around the world.

COVID-19 and the Future

The world will long remember the first months of 2020 when a new period began, marked by fear, social distancing, greater inequalities, illness, and death. NCC staff have been working from home and continuing to move the program of the National Council of Churches forward. The NCC is finding creative ways to lift up issues of justice, while offering hope and encouragement to a nation and world turned upside down by the coronavirus global pandemic. To continue its vital work, the NCC has taken steps to adapt to this new world by:

- Holding its National Buddhist-Christian and National Hindu-Christian dialogues via Zoom Conference
- Creating a daily Bible reading and devotional email as a source of encouragement during this trying time
- Holding the Executive Committee and Governing Board meetings via Zoom Conference
- Engaging partners to continuing the work of ending mass incarceration, especially focusing on the dangers of COVID-19 in prisons
 - Working with partners to advocate for legislation that will make sure the most vulnerable are not further compromised during the global pandemic
- Participating in a webinar with other faith organizations to encourage filling out the U.S. Census
- Pushing for measures that would protect local and national elections this year
- Issuing the following statements and news articles:
 - [US Must Not Suspend Funding to WHO](#)
 - [Joint Statement of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in USA and the Council of Churches of Cuba](#) (regarding sanctions and COVID-19)
 - [In the Time of COVID-19, Mass Incarceration Endangers Lives](#)
 - [Global religious leaders urge US to lift crippling sanctions against Iran in the face of COVID-19](#) (with the World Council of Churches)
 - [Three Ecumenical Organizations Release Unprecedented Letter](#) (with Churches Uniting in Christ and Christian Churches Together)
 - [In Historic Statement, Ecumenical Organizations Across the World Stand Together to Protect Life](#) (with the World Council of Churches)
 - [The COVID-19 Pandemic and Our Churches](#)

The NCC is grateful for its partnership with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), for the church's witness to the unity we have in Christ, and the call to justice for all of God's people. There has never been a more important moment for the church and the ecumenical movement and it is a blessing to be co-laborers with PC(USA) in this historic moment.

Item 00-Info-27

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Assessment 2020 From the Washington Consulting Group

Executive Summary

In August 2019, the 223rd General Assembly (2018) and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) [PC(USA)] commissioned Washington Consulting Group (WCG) to conduct a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Assessment of its agencies and entities individually and as a whole. The assessment examined diversity, equity, and inclusion climate from the staff perspective, providing insight into their daily experiences. The findings will help PC(USA) leadership make informed decisions towards creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for all staff and will provide baseline data that accurately describes the current

climate related to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). WCG modified the Transformation Tapestry Model³⁷ (TTM), a five-phase model used for assessing, planning, and developing interventions to enhance campus climates along with an intersectional approach as a framework to guide the climate assessment and to ensure that the desired outcomes are at the forefront of the study.

Data was gathered from staff at: Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA), Office of General Assembly (OGA), Presbyterian Foundation (FDN), Presbyterian Women (PW), Administrative Services Group (ASG), Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc. (ILP), and Presbyterian Publishing Corporation (PPC).

The report presents the findings from the climate assessment as well as recommendations to advance PC(USA)'s goal of a more welcoming and inclusive environment. The report is organized into five sections: Background and Introduction, Methodology, Findings, PC(USA) Focus Group Recommendations, and WCG Recommendations. This Executive Summary will provide the major findings from this report in a slightly synthesized version, following the organization structure of the comprehensive report.

Background and Introduction

Phase I of WCG's two-phase proposal involved an environmental scan to determine what types of diversity initiatives and inclusive activities currently exist. WCG reviewed relevant print and web-based materials developed by the PC(USA) and its agencies/entities, including curriculum, the agency/entity websites, mission and vision statements, organizational structure materials, prior and existing reports and data, and institutional policies and practices. In addition to this review, WCG conducted three site visits (Louisville, Jeffersonville, and Philadelphia) to observe and gather information on how diversity is represented visually throughout PC(USA)'s physical spaces, and met with executive leadership staff to identify concerns, interests, and desired goals of the assessment. After conducting the environmental scan, WCG conducted focus group sessions with staff of each agency and entity to identify challenges, opportunities for growth, and areas of success related to DEI. Phase II included an agency- and entity-wide survey that was informed by the environmental scan and focus group data. The comprehensive report focuses on Phase I and II of the climate assessment.

Methodology

The climate assessment incorporated a mixed-method approach. Qualitative data were obtained from two sources: focus groups conducted with support staff and administrative staff, and observations conducted at the three sites. Focus groups explored staff perceptions on issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion and identified challenges, opportunities for growth, and areas of success in these areas. The focus group findings guided the development of the survey instruments. Quantitative data were collected from an agency- and entity-wide survey instrument.

Focus Groups

Staff of each agency and entity were invited to participate in focus groups through a self-identification process based on their self-disclosed social identities (i.e., race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, job title/position). Seventeen focus groups were conducted with a total of eighty-three participants as follows. There were thirteen virtual focus groups conducted across the five agencies and two entities with general staff, staff of color, leadership, managers, and Stony Point housekeeping staff. Four specialized focus groups were conducted with staff and leadership across ALL agencies/entities.

While designed to accommodate eight to ten participants, the focus groups ranged from three to fifteen participants based on availability and willingness of individuals to participate. Low numbers of staff in the agencies/entities who matched the characteristics of the various affinity groups created some challenges in formulating some affinity-based sessions. Focus group sessions were audio-recorded and facilitated by two WCG team members using a semi-structured focus group guide. They were transcribed and entered in Dedoose software package using applied codes that pulled dominant themes and subthemes. Names were replaced with pseudonyms. Focus group findings aided the development of the agency- and entity-wide survey instrument.

Agency-Wide Surveys

Agency- and entity-wide surveys captured staff perspectives on: (1) diversity, equity, and inclusion; (2) level of comfort interacting with fellow staff; (3) experiences with discrimination, harassment, and intimidation; (4) perceptions and experiences with the promotion process; and (5) perceptions of accessibility and challenges encountered by those who are differently abled. The survey instruments were developed based on review of existing instruments and from themes that emerged from the focus group sessions. Agency/entity representatives reviewed the surveys to ensure applicability and context. The survey questions were created in English and Spanish to reach a larger population and were administered electronically to all staff. Participants

³⁷ Rankin, S., & Reason, R. (2008). Transformational tapestry model: A comprehensive approach to transforming campus climate. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, 5 (1), 262-274. doi: 10.1037/a0014018

were allowed to stop and start the survey to encourage response and completion rates and could withdraw from the survey at any time before submission. Participants were not asked to provide any identifying information.

Data from the surveys were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) Version 24. Missing patterns were assessed and individuals with missing data on all variables were removed from the analysis. Descriptive analysis (i.e., univariate and bivariate) was conducted for all agencies and entities based on affinity groups (e.g., racial/ethnic identity, sexual orientation, and disability status). Based on the relatively small number of responses, some of the categories (e.g., race/ethnicity) were merged to allow for greater comparison. Information presented throughout this report used valid percentages and number of responses (*n*). Some tables in the comprehensive report did add to the total *N* due to missing data or the removal of the “*prefer not to answer*” responses.

Response Rates

The response rate for each agency was relatively good and aligned with comparable DEI assessments. The response rates were highest for PW (100%) and PPC (97%) and lowest for PMA (38%) and ASG (59%). The total response rate across all agencies and entities was 56%. Overall, the largest response rate in the survey among racial groups was among Others (84%) and Whites (54%). For gender groups the response rate was highest for females (62%), and response rates were evenly distributed among age groups.

The majority of respondents identified as White (72%), women (73%), heterosexual (81%), and over 50 years old (52%). Participants who identified as lesbian (0.7%), individuals younger than 20 years old (0.3%), and participants of other racial ethnic groups (5%), which included Native Americans and multiracial groups, had the lowest representation. PMA (28%) had the highest representation and ILP (4%) had the lowest representation. Exempt non-managers (39%) and full-time staff (94%) had the highest representation.

Findings

The comprehensive report findings are organized by the following categories (a) equity, (b) diversity, (c) inclusion, (d) employment practices, (e) discrimination, (f) physical accessibility, and (g) recommendations. Each issue was examined within and across all of the agencies and entities in an aggregate manner as well in relation to the relevant identity (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender/gender identity, sexual orientation, and disability status). Sample sizes for certain identity groups or categories that are fewer than five respondents are not included in this report to maintain confidentiality.

Perceptions of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

PC(USA) staff were asked a set of questions regarding: (1) experiences and perceptions of DEI at their respective agencies/entities, and (2) satisfaction with their agency’s/entities’ prioritization around DEI. Across all agencies and entities, survey respondents placed a strong personal value on diversity (100%) and equity (99%). However, employees’ views of the extent to which PC(USA) agencies and entities value diversity (97%) and equity (93%) were less strong. This difference is also highlighted by findings that show higher levels of disagreement around the extent to which PC(USA) promotes a culture that is supportive of DEI.

Perceptions of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion by Race and Ethnicity

Almost all racial groups across the seven agencies and entities placed a strong value on equity, with the exception of Other (86%). While most of the racial and ethnic groups perceived that equity is important at their agency/entity, Hispanics (20%) and Others (14%) had a higher level of disagreement that equity is important at their agency/entity. All racial groups had some level of disagreement that there is a positive atmosphere at their agency/entity that promotes equity among staff, with a higher level of disagreement for Asians (38%), Other (33%), Hispanics (30%), and Blacks/African Americans (27%). There was a relatively high level of disagreement that agencies/entities provide channels to facilitate their feedback in order to improve equity.

Across all agencies, almost all racial groups placed a strong value on diversity and the general perception is that diversity is important at their agency/entity. However, almost all racial groups had a relatively higher level of disagreement that their agency/entity was diverse. Asians (54%), Other (46%), African American (42%), and Hispanic (30%) had the highest levels of disagreement that their agency/entity was diverse. There was a relatively high level of disagreement that the agencies/entities provide channels to facilitate their feedback in order to improve diversity, with Asians (38%), Other (33%), and Hispanics (30%) reporting higher levels of disagreement that their agencies/entities provide channels to facilitate their feedback in order to improve diversity.

In general, the perception of inclusion at the agencies/entities had the greatest levels of disagreement (see Figure 4a and 4b). For example, Asians (46%), Other (27%), Hispanic (20%), and Blacks/African Americans were more dissatisfied with the

sense of belonging at their agency/entity. Relatedly, there was a high level of disagreement that all staff members experience a sense of belonging at their agency/entity (see Figure 4b found in The General Assembly Comprehensive Report). Blacks/African Americans and Other (43%), Hispanics (40%), Asians (33%), and Whites (25%) disagreed that all staff members experience a sense of belonging at their agency/entity. One of the single most salient findings of this assessment was regarding the level of tension in the agencies/entities. Notable was the high levels of disagreement that the agencies/entities are free from tensions related to racial differences. Asians (58%), Blacks/African Americans (42%), Other (40%), White (31%), and Hispanics (30%) disagreed that their agency/entity is free from tensions related to racial differences.

In general, there were high levels of agreement across agencies and entities regarding perceptions of equity, with responses of “*somewhat agree*,” “*agree*,” and “*strongly agree*.” Between 95–100% of agencies/entities agreed that equity is important to them; 91–100% agreed that equity is important at the agency/entity; 67–98% agreed that there is a positive atmosphere at their agency/entity that promotes equity among staff; 64–94% agreed that their agency/entity provides channels to facilitate their feedback in order to improve equity.

There were high levels of agreement across all agencies/entities that equity was important to them, with 100% of respondents from OGA, ILP, PPC, and PW, respectively, indicating agreement with this statement. Although levels of agreements were very high for the remaining agencies/entities in general, there was some disagreement, with responses of “*strongly disagree*” or “*somewhat disagree*” among some ASG (5%), FDN (2%), and PMA (1%) participants. There were high levels of agreement that equity is important at the respective agencies/entities (ILP at 100%, PW at 100%, ASG at 91%, FDN at 96%, OGA at 89%, PPC at 91%, and PMA at 94%).

There was an increase in the levels of disagreement that there is a positive atmosphere at their agency/entity that promotes equity among staff, despite still having high levels of agreement. More specifically PW (33%), OGA (20%), PMA (18%), ASG (16%), ILP (10%), PPC (10%), and FDN (2%) respondents disagreed that there is a positive atmosphere at their agency/entity. Also, there were increased levels of disagreement among participants that their agency/entity provides channels to facilitate their feedback in order to improve equity. Notably, 36% of PW, 32% PMA, 30% ILP, 28% PPC, 20% OGA, 18% ASG, and 6% FDN participants disagreed with this statement.

Analyses exploring the importance of diversity found, in general, high levels of agreement across all agencies/entities that diversity is important—with 100% agreement, with the exception of FDN (98%), that diversity was important to them. Relatively high levels of agreement were also noted among participants that diversity is important at their agency/entity, with 100% agreement among ILP and PW participants; 98% agreement among FDN and PMA participants respectively; 96% for ASG and OGA participants; and 94% of PPC participants.

The greatest disagreement was that there is a positive atmosphere at their agency/entity that promotes diversity among managers. Participants from PPC (28%) had the highest disagreement followed by ILP (22%), ASG (19%), PMA (15%), OGA (14%), FDN (13%), and PW (8%). Overall, there seems to be more disagreement with the statement that diversity is important at the agency/entity and that there is a positive atmosphere at their agency/entity that promotes diversity among managers, with respondents from PPC indicating higher disagreement in comparison to the other agencies/entities.

High levels of disagreement were found around perceptions of inclusivity across agencies/entities with the exception of FDN and ILP. In general, 6–14% of respondents disagreed that they were satisfied with the diversity at their respective agency/entity; 9–20% disagreed that they have a sense of belonging at their agency/entity; and 4–50% disagreed that all staff members experience a sense of belonging at their agency/entity.

Participants from the various agencies/entities indicated disagreement that they were satisfied with the diversity at their respective agency/entity despite having more than 50% agreement with this statement. More specifically, PPC (41%), PW (36%), PMA (29%), ASG (19%), OGA (14%), ILP (10%), and FDN (6%) disagreed with this statement. Similar patterns were identified in response to having a sense of belonging at their respective agency/entity. Notably, respondents from PMA (20%), ASG (18%), OGA (14%), PPC (12%), and PW (9%) disagreed with this statement. On the other hand, 100% of participants from FDN and ILP agreed that they had a sense of belonging at their respective agency/entity.

With the exception of members from ILP (100% agreement), participants from all other agencies/entities disagreed that all staff members experience a sense of belonging at their agency/entity. Participants from OGA indicated the greatest disagreement (50%) followed by PMA (41%). Similarly, PW (27%), ASG (26%), PPC (16%), and FDN (4%) participants disagreed with this statement.

Overall, participants from PPC had the highest disagreement that they are satisfied with the level of diversity at their agency/entity when compared to participants from the other agencies/entities. Members from PMA had the highest level of disagreement among the agency/entity regarding having a sense of belonging at their agency/entity; and when compared to participants from the other agencies/entities those from OGA had the highest level of disagreement that they are satisfied with the level of diversity at their agency/entity. Furthermore, despite indicating some level of disagreement that they are satisfied

with the diversity at their agency/entity, participants from ILP had 100% agreement that they have a sense of belonging at their agency/entity and that all staff members experience a sense of belonging at their respective agency/entity.

PC(USA) staff were asked about their overall satisfaction with diversity, equity, and inclusion. While the majority of PC(USA) employees are satisfied with diversity (81%), equity (72%), and inclusion (78%), between 19–38% of staff have some levels of dissatisfaction around DEI.

Several factors could provide some context around staff's discontent with DEI. Employee's indicated dissatisfaction with the PC(USA) general training on DEI (10–12% dissatisfaction) and on skills building for engaging in and navigating conversations about DEI (20% dissatisfaction). Employees' sense of belonging at their respective agencies may also be a factor as many expressed a personal sense of belonging (86%), but fewer felt this was shared by their colleagues (71%). Another factor is that PC(USA) staff noted tensions related to racial differences (most noted), gender differences, sexual orientation, and age.

A closer examination of demographic differences around DEI dissatisfaction found that the 51 participants who reported dissatisfaction with *diversity* at PC(USA) are disproportionately forty and younger (39%), staff of color (44%), and LGBTQ (29%). They represent approximately 26%, 27%, and 19% of the sample, respectively. Of the seventy-six participants who reported dissatisfaction with *equity* at PC(USA), they are disproportionately forty and younger (40%), staff of color (42%), and LGBTQ (28%) and represent approximately 26%, 27%, and 19% of the sample, respectively. Of the sixty participants who reported dissatisfaction with *inclusion* at PC(USA), they are disproportionately forty and younger (48%), staff of color (42%), female (83%), and LGBTQ (30%), and represent approximately 26%, 27%, 76%, and 19% of the sample, respectively.

Discrimination

All PC(USA) staff were asked about their experiences of discrimination in twelve categories: age, biological sex, disability, gender identity or expression, language proficiency, military experience/veteran status, nationality/citizenship status, political beliefs, race/ethnicity, religious/spiritual beliefs, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status. Respondents had the option to select more than one category; however, it is not clear from the data that these responses represent unique instances, or one instance based on multiple categories. The overall number of both experienced and observed instances was quite low, and as a result, individual numbers are not reported. While the majority of the participants had not experienced any form of discrimination (79%), there were differences as a function of employee identity among those who had. Race/ethnicity discrimination was the most frequently occurring form of discrimination (9%).

Employees noted that discrimination most often took the form of being deliberately ignored, isolated, left out, or excluded (11%); receiving or witnessing derogatory remarks (9%); and racial/ethnic profiling (4%). There were no reported incidents of derogatory posts on social media.

Any Form of Discrimination Experiences

Demographic differences in any form of discrimination experiences were more closely examined. The data indicated that experiences with any form of discrimination occur at disproportionate rates across the age groups with younger employees, who represented about a quarter of the sample, reporting they experience forms of discrimination at higher rates than expected—representing a third of the sample reporting experiences of discrimination.

Similarly, disproportionate rates of discrimination experiences were found across racial/ethnic groups with PC(USA) staff who identify as Asian, Black or African American, Hispanic, and Other experiencing higher rates than expected, and White PC(USA) staff reporting lower rates than expected.

Experiences with discrimination at PC(USA) also occur at disproportionate rates across the gender groups. Specifically, women represented about 76% of the sample overall, but represent 82% of the sample who report experiences of discrimination. While males represent about a quarter of the sample overall, but are 18.3% of the sample who reported experiences of discrimination.

Experiences with discrimination at PC(USA) also occur at disproportionate rates across the sexual orientation groups. Staff who identify as LGBTQ represent about 19% of the sample overall, but they represent 22% of the sample who report experiences of discrimination. Yet staff who identify as heterosexual represent about 81% of the sample overall, but 78% of the sample who reported experiences of discrimination.

Age Discrimination

Of the nineteen PC(USA) staff members who reported experiences with age discrimination, staff members who are forty years old and younger are more likely than their counterparts to report experiences of age discrimination. They represent 57.9% of staff who reported age discrimination experiences but represent a quarter of the sample.

Gender Discrimination

Of the eight PC(USA) staff members who reported experiences with gender discrimination, women represent 88% of staff who reported gender discrimination experiences but represent 76% of the sample. The opposite pattern is true for males who represent 13% of staff reporting gender discrimination but represent 24% of the sample overall.

Race/Ethnicity Discrimination

Race/ethnicity discrimination at PC(USA) is experienced at disproportionate rates across race/ethnic groups. Of the twenty-four PC(USA) staff members who reported experiences with race/ethnicity discrimination, staff of color report more experiences of race/ethnicity discrimination than expected, while the opposite pattern is true for who represent 73% of staff reporting race/ethnic discrimination but represent 29% of the sample overall.

Sexual Orientation Discrimination

Sexual orientation discrimination at PC(USA) is experienced disproportionately for staff who identify as LGBTQ. Of the four who reported sexual orientation discrimination, 100% of them identify as LGBTQ. LGBTQ staff represent 18.7% of the staff overall.

Religious Discrimination

Religious discrimination at PC(USA) is experienced disproportionately for staff who are Non-Presbyterian. Of the eight who reported religious discrimination, 100% of them identify as Non-Presbyterian. Non-Presbyterian staff represent 61.7% of the staff overall.

Differential Treatment

PC(USA) staff across all agencies and entities indicated the extent to which they agreed that they had been treated differently because of various identities they hold. Differential treatment was experienced the most frequently on the basis of job position (38%, $n = 103$) and race/ethnicity (21%, $n = 57$).

Differential Treatment by Site

More than half (54%) of respondents who agree to some extent that they are treated differently based on their race/ethnicity are people of color, although people of color make up only 27% of staff overall. The largest percentages of people of color who agree that they experience race-based differential treatment are staff working at Presbyterian Women (100%, $n=2$), Presbyterian Foundation (67%, $n=2$), and Administrative Services Group (58%, $n = 7$).

About one-third ($n=103$) of the respondents overall agree with the statement that they are treated differently based on their job title or position in their organization. Most (more than two-thirds) are not senior staff. Presbyterian Foundation (82%, $n= 9$), Presbyterian Women (80%, $n= 4$), Administrative Services Group (73%, $n= 8$), and the Office of General Assembly (72%, $n= 13$) had the largest percentages of non-supervisors reporting role-based differential treatment. Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program (100%, $n= 2$), and Presbyterian Mission Agency Stony Point Center (100%, $n= 2$) have the largest percentages of supervisors reporting role-based differential treatment.

Perceptions of Physical Accessibility

In their responses to questions about perceptions of physical accessibility at their respective agencies and entities, respondents noted that automatic door openers, elevators, bathrooms, access to office buildings, workstations, and workspace equipment and resources were mostly “*somewhat accommodating*,” “*accommodating*,” or “*very accommodating*.” Half of differently-abled staff across PC(USA) agencies/entities are reluctant to disclose the nature of their disabilities, although 53% report feeling supported and 57% are satisfied with their experience as a differently-abled staff member.

Perceptions of Employment Practices

In response to questions about the promotion and annual review process at their respective PC(USA) agency/entity, the strongest agreement was about the fairness of promotion standards (60%). There were large percentages of disagreement around the promotion process being clear (56%), and promotion standards and procedures being provided equally to all staff (56%).

Gender Differences in Perceptions of Employment Practices

Men (55%) were more likely than women (41%) to agree that promotion standards are fair at their agencies/entities. However, women disagreed that the promotion process is clear (59%) and that promotion standards/procedures are provided equally to all staff (61%), compared with 45% and 42% of men respectively.

Sexual Orientation Differences in Perceptions of Employment Practices

Heterosexuals (63%) are more likely than LGBTQ staff (45%) to agree that promotion standards are fair. LGBTQ staff (69%) are more likely than heterosexuals (53%) to disagree that the promotion process is clear at their respective agencies and that promotion standards/procedures are provided equally to all staff (LGBTQ staff at 69% and heterosexuals at 54%).

Race Differences in Perceptions of Employment Practices

White staff (63%) are more likely than people of color (51%) to agree that promotion standards are fair at their respective agencies/entities. On the other hand, people of color (60%) are more likely than White staff (54%) to disagree that the promotion process is clear at their respective agencies. People of color (62%) are more likely than White staff (55%) to disagree that the promotion standards and procedures are being provided equally to all staff at their respective agencies or entities.

PC(USA) Focus Group Recommendations

PC(USA) focus group participants provided the following recommendations on how PC(USA) could improve equity, diversity, and inclusion within PC(USA) and its agencies/entities.

Administrative Services Group Recommendations

- Recruit and hire diverse staff who can present different perspectives and expand outreach to nontraditional communities.
- Recruit staff from a national pool for all positions.
- Strengthen the diversity training curriculum and provide professional development to advance individual skills and capabilities for practicing inclusivity.
- Provide greater clarity on the roles and responsibility of ASG.

Presbyterian Foundation Recommendations

- The agency should focus on generational diversity and inclusion.
- The agency should provide greater opportunities for staff of color to advocate for themselves.

Office of General Assembly Recommendations

- Avoid assumptions about individuals based on their backgrounds but instead “really hear from people [about] where they’re coming from and their particular experience.”
- Educate constituents about efforts made by the agency to increase and improve equitable practices.
- Create a “flatter organizational structure” to increase equity among staff.
- Provide “ongoing culture proficiency, anti-bias, racial equity training,” and “coaching.”
- Offer training opportunities that are intentional and not done online when staff “are in the middle of a lot of work ... [where] it feels like I am just checking that box.”
- Post every position “publicly ... even if we know that there are potential great internal candidates.”
- Find creative ways to include more diverse people in OGA’s work without having the excluded groups doing all the work to “step in” but instead “the Office of the General Assembly can ... put the onus of that work on the dominant culture” [White individuals].

Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc. Recommendations

- Create additional opportunities for open discussions regarding race-related issues to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Solicit engagement from lower level staff regarding organizational issues and decisions.

Presbyterian Mission Agency Recommendations

- Make sure all employees feel valued.
- Create more opportunities to talk about diversity and inclusion issues in groups that are mixed and as well as potentially creating groups that are not mixed by affinity.
- Develop more resources to communicate and execute the Matthew 25 initiative.
- Seek opportunities to improve practices related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Presbyterian Publishing Corporation Recommendations

- Seek opportunities to improve practices related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Presbyterian Women Recommendations

- Increase opportunities for more open discussions regarding race-related issues to improve the feeling of sisterhood in PW.
- Continue PW's work with the Racial Equity Committee that created an opportunity to talk about race and about issues staff are uncomfortable discussing.
- Be more proactive in engaging diverse writers, rather than waiting until the last moment to engage them. Relatedly, staff shared that this issue, in part, reflects a general issue of less than optimal planning.

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Comprehensive Recommendations

- Seek opportunities to improve practices related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Create additional opportunities for open discussions regarding race-related issues to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion across differing racial/ethnic groups.
- Create a “flatter organizational structure” to increase equity among staff.
- Solicit engagement from lower level staff regarding organizational issues and decisions.
- Recruit and hire diverse staff who can present different perspectives and expand outreach to nontraditional communities.
- Recruit staff from a national pool for all positions.
- Post every position “publicly ... even if we know that there are potential great internal candidates.”
- Provide “ongoing culture proficiency, antibias, racial equity training” and “coaching.”
- Strengthen the diversity training curriculum and provide professional development to advance individual skills and capabilities for practicing inclusivity.
- Place agency focus on generational diversity and inclusion.
- Increase flow of information among staff regardless of job description.

Washington Consulting Group's Recommendations for Next Steps

Based on the findings from the DEI assessment, Washington Consulting Group has developed the following recommendations for PC(USA) to facilitate a more welcoming and inclusive work environment.

Washington Consulting Group's Recommendations for Next Steps

1. Convene a meeting with senior leadership from PC(USA) to review and discuss findings from the Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Assessment.
2. Conduct organized small-group feedback sessions with senior leadership, managers/supervisors and staff to present the findings from the (DEI) assessment and to begin discussion for next steps for PC(USA) as a whole and each agency and entity in moving toward a diverse, equitable, inclusive environment for all.
3. Participation rate in the DEI assessment was relatively low for some groups of identities that may be the results of the reluctance of person who marginalized identities to participate in focus groups and the survey. In light of some of the findings from this DEI assessment, WCG encourages leadership from each of the agencies and entities to seek additional ways beyond this DEI assessment to learn about the experiences of marginalized and underrepresented populations such as those who are under age 40, staff of color, and the LGBTQ community to consistently measure progress and growth toward centering these communities and creating a greater sense of personal satisfaction with diversity, equity, and inclusion.
4. Engage Diverse Voice Table (DVT) to work directly with agency and entity leadership to strategically advance the equity, diversity, and inclusion goals based on the findings of this climate assessment. DVT will need to be intentional in providing guidance, education, coordination, and accountability on all matters related to equity, diversity, inclusivity, equal access, and the prevention of discrimination, harassment, and intimidation. If DVT for whatever reason is unable play this role, PC(USA) should consider soliciting an external entity to work with each agency and entity.
5. The response rate for mission staff was relatively low in comparison to other PC(USA) staff. As such, PC(USA) should consider conducting an assessment to further examine the experiences of PC(USA) mission staff members working outside of the United States.
6. Consider implementing periodic DEI assessments (e.g., every two to three years) in an effort to be more responsive to demographic changes that may be occurring in each of the agency and entities. Furthermore, future assessments could be used to monitor the goals and objectives of the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategic Plan, as well as to determine the “effectiveness” and “impact” of services and activities.
7. Establish a clear communication plan that involves all stakeholders regarding equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts at PC(USA).

Actionable Recommendations

In the following section Washington Consulting Group offers six actionable recommendations based on our findings that PC(USA) may wish to act on in more immediate ways to improve the climate of diversity, equity and inclusion.

Recommendation 1: Increase diversity throughout its agencies and entities. A key theme that emerged related to attending to issues of diversity seem to center around the longevity and tenure of staff where there is a relatively small amount of staff turnover. As PC(USA) continues to attend to its diversity, with a greater focus on the proportion of persons of color in each agency and entity, particularly persons who identify as Asian and Black/African American. PC(USA) should consider establishing clearly defined and shared goals for diversity and monitor the extent to which these goals are being met on an annual basis.

Recommendation 2: Develop an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategic Plan to serve as the foundation for intentional programming and activities for each agency and entity. The plan should delineate specific goals and recommendations to advance equity, diversity, and inclusion over a specific time period (e.g., five years). For a goal to be effective in driving PC(USA)'s performance around DEI, it needs to be specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, time-based, inclusive, and equitable (SMARTIE). The inclusion of SMART goals and objectives will allow for monitoring and evaluation against the findings of the DEI assessment. The PC(USA) Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategic Plan should be used to inform the development of agency- and entity-specific plans.

Recommendation 3: Create an Office for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion and/or appoint an individual to guide the work toward inclusive excellence on an ongoing basis for sustainability and intentionality and that/who hears and manages concerns related to diversity, equity, inclusion, and forms of discrimination. The principle goal of this office/person would be to provide strategic leadership for diversity efforts to promote a culture at PC(USA) that values and supports diversity, equity, and inclusion. More specifically, this office/person would facilitate the creation of a climate of inclusion reflected in the agencies and entities, policies and practices; the demographics of the PC(USA); the attitudes and values of its staff and leaders; and the quality of personal interactions.

Recommendation 4: Provide specialized training related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. The training should focus on raising personal competency as well as provide tools and resources to create an inclusive and equitable work environment. These professional development learning opportunities and/or forums should be conducted consistently at all levels, including senior leadership. Potential topics could include: (1) racial and ethnic identity; (2) gender and gender identity; (3) sexual orientation and LGBTQI awareness; (4) physical and cognitive disability awareness; (5) discrimination, unconscious and implicit bias; (6) cultural competency; and (7) micro-messaging, interpersonal skills, class, and power differential. PC(USA) should consider making these professional development learning opportunities and/or forums a requirement to ensure agency- and entity-wide engagement and greater accountability. The PC(USA) could use these professional development learning opportunities and/or forums to inform staff that diversity, equity, and inclusion is a priority. In addition, the forums can be used to engage marginalized populations to better understand their experiences related to diversity and inclusion.

Recommendation 5: Create an anonymous method of reporting or informing senior leadership of issues related to discrimination based on social identities and general inequitable practices. A proposed method of reporting may include a visibly positioned statement on each agency and entity website to provide feedback with the aim of improving practices related to diversity and inclusion.

Recommendation 6: Take a closer look at its search, recruitment, and employment practices for staff. PC(USA) needs to consider staff recruitment strategies that exceed outreach to the local area and within the state by identifying recruitment tools and resources that can access prospective national applicants. The recruitment strategies could include, for example, examining where job positions are posted or announced and how positions are described for each department and division. PC(USA) should consider posting job announcements on national platforms. Each agency and entity should also intentionally diversify its search committees to reduce the likelihood of implicit bias in the hiring of staff. Related, PC(USA) should consider conducting an examination of current internal staff promotion practices to ensure standards are equitable and transparent to all staff.

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COMMENT ON ITEM 00-INFO-027

Response of PC(USA) Agency and Entity Leaders to the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Audit to the 224th General Assembly (2020) Commissioners.

The undersigned Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) entity leaders submit this report, having participated in and reviewed the results of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Audit, commissioned by the 223rd General Assembly (2018) and completed with the assistance of agency representatives of the Diverse Voices Table and the Washington Consulting Group. We recognize that this comprehensive audit will play a key role as our agencies work toward constant improvement and plan for the future. Moreover, we appreciate having this information available to assist us in modeling, as well as doing, Christ's work through our national offices on behalf of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Each agency took great care in encouraging employees to fully participate in the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Audit process. Entity leaders sent personal emails to their staff notifying them of all relevant times and dates wherein they could participate in the audit. They further encouraged them by guaranteeing their confidentiality and asked for their candid feedback, recognizing that this would only help us grow as organizations. The entity leaders recognized that it was only by offering confidentiality that the feedback would be genuine, forthright and helpful. These reassurances were instrumental in the strong staff participation at our agencies. We are truly grateful for the staff who shared candidly their thoughts and experiences.

For each of us, the results from this important project will be woven into our work plans for mission and ministry during the next two years and revisited again when we gather at the 225th General Assembly (2022) in Columbus, Ohio, (the Lord willing). Each entity has committed to study and consider the implications of what we have learned thus far, and how these findings might change how we work, how we interact with one another, and how we administer our organizations. While we are one church, each entity also recognizes that, in most cases, each has its own ethos and its own individual charge from the General Assembly. Thus, each entity will create plans that honor its work and calling, even as we consider how the audit informs us how to best value those with whom we serve.

That said, all entities are considering common tools to continue learning about our own people as we seek to improve our places of work and service. These tools include focus groups, lunch and learn sessions, collective and individual ongoing discussions and education, and other means of continuing to transform our internal cultures, so that we place the highest value on broad diversity, true equity, and full participation and inclusion at all levels of service.

This important study is just the start of what will be positive changes at each entity in the PC(USA). While each entity can point to several places of improvement in recent years that were not discussed in the audit, the study will nonetheless function as a baseline to help measure the health of our organizations. For all of us, this is a way to agree on common terminology as we determine which criteria are important in establishing a system for measuring growth in the areas that the audit undertook to study.

We are reminded in Romans 2:11 that God does not show favoritism, yet we fail time and again to fully love, include, recognize, and offer opportunities at the highest levels for all of God's family to serve. As we live out our calls to lead in Christ's mission at the national offices, guided by the Holy Spirit, we are committed to pray and work regularly together, constantly reminded of our duty of care for one another and for all those whom we serve and serve with. We pray that the 2019 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Audit will draw all of us and our organizations closer to the Lord's high expectations and callings of us as servant leaders.

Faithfully Yours,

David Dobson, President and Publisher, Presbyterian Publishing Corporation
 Susan Jackson Dowd, MACE, Ed.D., Executive Director, Presbyterian Women
 Kathy Lueckert, President, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) A Corporation, Administrative Services Group
 The Reverend Dr. Diane Givens Moffett, President and Executive Director, Presbyterian Mission Agency
 The Reverend Dr. J. Herbert Nelson, Stated Clerk, Office of the General Assembly
 James Rissler, President and CEO, Investment & Loan Program, Inc.
 The Reverend Tom Taylor, J.D., Ph.D., President and CEO, Presbyterian Foundation

Item 00-Info-28***PC(USA) Audit***

Item 00-Info-29

Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC) 2020 Agency Summary

Assigned Responsibilities

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution (“ACC”) is composed of nine voting members as established by the *Book of Order*, G-3.0501c and G-6.02. The nine voting members, teaching and ruling elders, are required by the current Manual of the General Assembly to be stated clerks or former stated clerks of synods or presbyteries, former members of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly, polity professors, or other qualified persons with knowledge of and experience with the Constitution and polity of the church. The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly is a member ex-officio without vote.

With regard to questions requiring an interpretation of the *Book of Order*, the ACC’s responsibilities are set out in G-6.02 as follows:

All questions requiring an interpretation by the General Assembly of the *Book of Order* arising from councils of the church shall be communicated in writing to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly no later than 120 days prior to the convening of the next session of the General Assembly. The Stated Clerk shall refer all such questions of interpretation to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, except those pertaining to matters pending before a judicial commission. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution shall communicate its report and recommendations to the next session of the General Assembly, no less than sixty days prior to the General Assembly.

With regard to proposed amendments to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the ACC’s mandated responsibilities are set out in G-6.04b, as follows:

b. The Stated Clerk shall refer all such proposals to amend the *Book of Order* to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (G-6.02), which shall examine the proposed amendment for clarity and consistency of language and for compatibility with other provisions of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). At least sixty days prior to the meeting of the General Assembly, the advisory committee shall report its findings to the General Assembly along with its recommendations, which may include an amended version of any proposed constitutional changes as well as advice to accept or decline the proposals referred to the committee. The General Assembly shall not consider any amendment until it has considered the report and any recommendations from the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

Process and Procedures, Responsibilities and Relationships

The ACC does not interpret the Constitution. The role of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, as its title suggests and as its constitutional mandate clearly establishes, is to advise the General Assembly. The ACC’s advice has no authority until and unless it is approved by the General Assembly. With respect to proposed amendments to the Constitution, the ACC focuses on clarity of proposed language and consistency of the proposed amendment with the Constitution. The ACC occasionally finds that the intent of the proposal is already inherent in other provisions of the Constitution or that it could be achieved by slight changes in language, by placing the amendment in a different section, or by different language entirely. The ACC has sometimes suggested such changes in order to avoid inconsistencies within the *Book of Order*, and also to make as few changes as possible in existing paragraphs and in section numbering. The ACC seeks to provide advice that is based on constitutional study, not on agreement or disagreement with the substance of the issues at hand.

The ACC is required to report its findings to the assembly at least sixty days prior to each General Assembly. These findings may include advice for amended versions of any proposed changes as well as advice to accept or decline the proposals referred to the ACC.

All overtures and reports containing proposed amendments and all requests for interpretation of the *Book of Order* by the General Assembly must be communicated in writing to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly no later than 120 days prior to the convening of the next session of the General Assembly (*Book of Order*, G- 6.02, G-6.04a). This 120-day time period allows the ACC time to consider and research carefully each proposed amendment and request. No requests for interpretation of the Constitution were referred to the ACC since the 223rd General Assembly (2018). Likewise, no editorial corrections in the *Book of Order* were submitted for approval.

The ACC completed its work for the 224th General Assembly (2020) during two, face-to-face meetings and two teleconference meetings. The initial meeting and orientation to ACC work was held on October 17–18, 2018, in Baltimore, Maryland. At a five-day meeting in Louisville, Kentucky, March 9–13, 2020, the ACC prepared its responses to constitutional issues to be considered by the 224th General Assembly (2020). The ACC finalized its advice in teleconference meetings held on March 24 and April 7, 2020.

After it has received and considered the advice of the ACC, the General Assembly is free to take whatever action it discerns reflects the will of Christ on proposed amendments, requests for interpretations, and referrals.

The primary focus of the ACC is to fulfill its constitutional function to provide advice to the General Assembly concerning overtures that seek to amend the Constitution, and concerning requests for interpretation of the Constitution.

Consultations

The ACC was invited to consult with the Rules of Discipline Task Force, which was appointed after the 222nd General Assembly (2016). A member of the ACC was appointed as a liaison to that task force.

ACC Membership and OGA Staff Support

The members of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution are: Class of 2020—Teaching Elder Christian Boyd (Synod of Lakes and Prairies) and Ruling Elders Alyson Janke (Synod of Lakes and Prairies) and Michael Williams (Synod of Southern California & Hawaii); Class of 2022—Teaching Elders Forrest Claassen (Synod of Southern California & Hawaii) and Catherine Ulrich (Synod of Covenant), and Ruling Elder Judy Woods (Synod of Lincoln Trails); Class of 2024—Teaching Elders Carla Campbell (Synod of Trinity), Greg Goodwiller (Synod Of Living Waters), and Daniel Saperstein (Synod of Covenant). Each brings important expertise and experience to the work of the committee.

On behalf of the 224th General Assembly (2020), the Advisory Committee on the Constitution expresses its thanks and appreciation to those whose terms are ending, Teaching Elder Christian Boyd and Ruling Elders Alyson Janke and Michael Williams for their dedicated service to the church through their work on the ACC. Each has brought unique gifts to the committee process.

The ACC is appreciative of the staff assistance of Ruling Elder Laurie Griffith, director for constitutional interpretation; Flor Velez-Diaz, manager of judicial process and social witness; and Diane Minter, mid council ministries manager for administration.

Finally, the ACC is grateful for the vision and witness of Stated Clerk J Herbert Nelson, II, who serves as an ex officio member of the ACC. We are thankful for the opportunity to serve with him.

Item 00-Info-30

Concurrence of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly with the Co-Moderators of the 223rd General Assembly in Designating Persons to Represent Board of PC(USA), A Corporation, as Corresponding Members of 224th General Assembly (2020).

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly concurs with the Co-Moderators of the 223rd General Assembly in designating the following persons representing the Board of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, a permanent committee of the General Assembly, as corresponding members of the 224th General Assembly, in accordance with Standing Rule B.3.a.:

Chair or Co-chairs, A Corporation Board

President, A Corporation

General Counsel

Associate General Counsel

Controller

Human Resources Director

CFO/COO/Treasurer

Item 00-Info-31

The Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.): Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Assessment Results.

For the report, see https://pcbiz.s3.amazonaws.com/Uploads/55724fc3-a47a-491b-b738-6e3d87d875d7/BOP_Referral_Item_04-03_4a_Reed-Report.pdf.

Item 00-Info-32

Co-Moderators' Report to the 224th General Assembly (2020)

Ordination Question in W-4.0404(h)

Will you pray for and seek to serve the people with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love?

It is now May 2020. This report was technically due in February. Yet every time we sat down to write it, something changed, and the report we had intended to present to the 224th General Assembly (2020) gradually shifted to the one we are presenting today.

After the 223rd General Assembly (2018) adjourned, we set out to continue serving the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and live into our calling to be ambassadors to the church, representing that “bond of union, community, and mission among all congregations and councils,” serving as “witnesses of the stories of the church.” We were blessed to walk alongside you being active participants preaching and teaching, witnessing baptisms, ordinations, commissioning, and everything in-between. We saw the church *being* the church, from new worshiping communities in San Joaquín, to young adult volunteers sites in Boston and Tucson; from faith leaders participating in the Poor People’s Campaign in Washington, D.C., to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance volunteer villages in San Juan and Añasco; from our partnership with the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Cuba, to our mission co-workers and faith partners in Israel/Palestine. We danced salsa with the General Assembly commissioners, got lost in airports, zip-lined with youth in Kentucky, even toured a presbytery region on a tiny plane. Yes, for two years we witnessed to the stories of the church, to the work of the Holy Spirit throughout the PC(USA).

It is now May 2020 and we live in different times. Times of pandemic. We never imagined giving our final report physically apart, via the internet in a digital medium.

It is now May 2020, and the General Assembly is being organized to meet digitally and requested to consider core and critical business, postponing a majority of other church business, including committee and commission reports, to the 225th General Assembly (2022).

It is now May 2020, and millions of people have become sick with COVID-19, hundreds of thousands of people across the world have died, and areas around the world and the country are still seeing a spike in new confirmed infections.

It is now May 2020, and everything has changed.

Or, maybe not everything. We are still called to be the body of Christ, Jesus is still risen from the tomb, the Holy Spirit is still anointing people with gifts for ministry, and the Creator of heaven and earth is still pouring abundant, steadfast love down upon us. Even while things have certainly changed, the sure and certain promises found in Scripture hold firm.

In these days, we have found ourselves marveling at the ways the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has changed, responding to the call to be incarnational bearers of God’s love and grace, embracing new ways of worshiping, of connecting, of meeting, of working. Out of necessity, at times out of desperation, we have discovered digital communion and a visual laying on of hands, baptism while socially distant and live-streamed funerals. We have truly been **re**-formed in these days in ways we never might have chosen, but in ways which will indelibly **re**-form who we are as followers of Jesus.

Because of that, and because of the amazing ministry and service of Presbyterians across this country and throughout the world, we have found ourselves drawn again and again to this ordination, installation, and commissioning question:

Will you pray for and seek to serve the people with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love?

Our report to the 224th General Assembly (2020) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), meeting during the novel coronavirus pandemic, will reflect on these areas: prayer, service, energy, intelligence, imagination, and love.

*Will you **pray** for and seek to serve the people with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love?*

Prayer

The prayers of the church through this time of service have been tangible and without ceasing. We have known that you have been praying for us; we have literally felt the spirit of prayer lift us up when we were too tired to stand, give us words when our hearts and minds were numb, and shelter us when we were ill or in need of rest. Sometimes it seems that praying for one another is a small thing to do in the face of so much pain, need, and devastation, and yet prayer is powerful in ways that can hardly be explained. We have felt your prayers for us. Thank you.

We have prayed for you: For the mid councils and churches, for the teaching and ruling elders in leadership, for the members of the body of Christ, for the organizations and gatherings across this denomination. We have prayed for you as we prepared to visit, as we were present with you, and as we told the stories you first told to us. We have prayed for you. The bonds of love that connect us are interwoven with prayer.

We have prayed in so many places, en Español and in English, with tears and laughter, with hope and sorrow, with love and mercy. We have prayed before meetings, during meetings, after meetings, as good Presbyterians do, and in many other settings and circumstances: At a graveyard for those who died in the desert on their way to the border, seeking hope and new life, during an event highlighting the challenges of veteran suicide and seeking to expand the community of support. With youth and young adults at the Presbyterian Youth Triennium. At the anniversaries of our sister denominations in Africa. On Ash Wednesday in a solidarity visit with siblings in Bethlehem, Palestine. Each prayer is part of a larger story of faithful service, of being present in the midst of ongoing ministry, of relationships and connections strengthened. The prayers of these two years form a fabric, a weaving, crisscrossing time and space with Spirit-driven breath and life.

*Will you pray for and seek to **serve** the people with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love?*

Service

There are so many different aspects that come together to create the shape of the service in the office of Moderator, and each team of Moderators, either as Moderator/Vice Moderator or Co-Moderators, bring their own sense of call and particular focus to the work. For us, it was important to be accessible and approachable, to be present as much as possible with the larger church, and to continue the work of calling the body of Christ to be as diverse as the world around us, and as welcoming as God is, who created that world. This is part of the reason our first official visit together was to the island of Puerto Rico to stand in solidarity and witness to the work of local congregations and the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance in the wake of Hurricane María.

One particular area of service that is an honor and responsibility of the Moderators is appointing people to serve in the special entities created by the General Assembly. In our case, the 223rd General Assembly (2018) voted to create nineteen different task forces, working groups, committees, and commissions, and we had the primary responsibility to appoint fourteen of those.

That might not sound so hard, but we were committed to appointing appropriately diverse and representative groups to do the work of the church, and to finding people whose gifts and talents matched the work at hand. It was not enough to simply open the nominations portal and then pick the names that were put forward. No, we worked hard on recruiting people, digging deep into the amazing wealth of resources that our members across this denomination have within their very selves. That took time, prayerful discernment, lots of phone calls and emails, and casting the net wider again, and again, and again. Each special committee deserved its own attention and its own prayerful consideration. Times fourteen.

Because of this, at the one-year mark, we still had not appointed all of the groups assigned to us, and as the General Assembly prepares to meet, there are still five that are outstanding. We'd like to offer some insights of what we've learned to this and future assemblies for reflection and consideration:

1. *Not everything needs its own special entity.* They draw on the time, gifts, and talents not only on members across the denomination but also on staff. Each entity appointed has its own budget that is predominantly supported through per capita increases, which has greater budget implications, and which therefore also draws on the monetary resources of every member across the denomination. Several of the entities we were asked to appoint were for very focused tasks that could have been accomplished by the amazing staff that make up the whole of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), with fewer draws on both people and monetary resources.

2. *Appointing so many entities creates an immense burden on every level of the church.* The staff people required to support each group become stretched thin, the pool of called and available members across the church is depleted, and the financial impact touches each of us. Yes, there are important issues of justice and ministry that require a representational group to come together to seek a way forward, but there are also ways to engage that work that might not require another group to be formed.

3. *The special entities remaining each had a particular challenge that led to them not being appointed during our term.*

a. *The Task Force on the Study of the Place and Purpose of the Humanities in the Teachings of the PCUSA-Affiliated Liberal Arts Colleges and Universities, Item 10-02.* The process specified for naming this task force was overly burdensome and complicated:

Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to appoint a cross-disciplinary team drawn from (1) existing staff within the Theology, Formation, and Evangelism unit and (2) the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy to consult with the Moderators of the 222nd and 223rd General Assemblies (2016) and (2018) on the appointment of a seven-to-ten-person task force to be drawn from faculty, administrators, and chaplains at related Presbyterian-affiliated colleges and universities.

Direct said task force to work with the cross-disciplinary team on the design and execution of a study in conjunction with

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- a. the Association of Presbyterian Colleges and Universities (APCU),
- b. the Social Ethics Network of Presbyterian ethics and religion professors,
- c. specialized scholars and scholarly organizations dealing with undergraduate education in the humanities, religion, and ethics, and
- d. ecumenical, public/research university, and foundation partners as appropriate.

It took us almost fifteen months to simply clarify what the first part of the process meant and to identify the members of the cross-disciplinary team that would then appoint the task force. By the time the cross-disciplinary team met, it was the end of 2019. This task force was not appointed.

b. *The Representative Vision Team Tasked with Ongoing Vision Discernment Work, Item 04-04 (8.b.)*. Here is the language of this action:

Establish a representative Vision Team as part of the denominational structure that is tasked with shepherding ongoing vision discernment work, including engaging in discernment practices in collaboration with the six agencies and the mid councils, bringing recommendations about that discernment to the agencies and/or General Assembly; and communicating the unifying dynamic vision to the broader church.

That sounds like a fantastic idea, but the parameters are missing. Who should be on this representative Vision Team? Should they be drawn from current staff so that the collaboration among the six agencies can be emphasized and it would then be “part of the denominational structure?” Should they be a mix of both members across the church and staff? The Rationale accompanying the motion gave some guidance, but the action of the General Assembly didn’t provide sufficient guidance. This team was not appointed.

c. *The Cross-Sectional Task Force for the Decade of Intercultural Transformation, Item 11-11*. The focus of this action was to “Declare the period from 2020 to 2030 as the ‘Decade of Intercultural Transformation’ by focusing on transformative priorities and initiatives across the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).” Our task was to appoint a cross-sectional task force to:

develop and publish priorities and guidelines for congregations, mid councils, and General Assembly entities for the “Decade of Intercultural Transformation” and recommend appropriate resources to deepen understanding and skills for resisting discrimination based on race, class, gender, sex, or sexuality. Promote awareness of resources currently available that deepen understanding of intersectionality and skills for resistance including those less frequently discussed, such as interfaith competencies so essential in these times.

Much of this work is already being done in both the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly. And this is work directly connected with the Matthew 25 vision, which is the primary focus of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. This task force was not appointed.

d. *Statement to Accompany the Confession of Belhar Team, Item 14.01*. This was another action that set such tight parameters around both who should be on the team and how the team should be appointed that we were never able to move forward beyond initial conversations. This is how this appointing process was described:

Request the Moderators of the 222nd and 223rd General Assemblies (2016 and 2018), in consultation with the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly and their advisory and advocacy committees, jointly to name a team of seven PC(USA) members from the fields of theology, social ethics, ethnic and racial history, law and/or philosophy, capable of contributing to a concise but comprehensive statement to be presented for approval to the 224th General Assembly (2020).

Part of the complication was this second piece to appointing the team:

Request the Stated Clerk to invite as many as four other Reformed and/or Full Communion churches to nominate (single) representatives to serve on the task force, sharing in their costs, both to contribute to the drafting work and to help develop shared strategic conversations about our witness in a diverse culture.

Because of the untimely death of the Reverend Robina Winbush, the Director of Ecumenical Relations in the Office of the General Assembly, the work of ecclesiastical and interfaith relations was disrupted for a time, setting the timeline for beginning the work on this team back. In the end, the complicated requirements for creating this team did not allow us to move forward. This team was not appointed.

e. *The Committee to Study Amending the Book of Confessions to Include the “Letter From the Birmingham City Jail,” Item 14-05*. This committee was stopped for a reason completely outside of our control: the body that holds the copyright for the “Letter From the Birmingham City Jail” declined to grant us the ability to reprint the letter in our own documents, including the *Book of Confessions*. If we would be unable to include the letter in our publication, then it didn’t make sense to establish a committee to consider adding it to that publication. This committee was not appointed.

We are not happy with making this particular part of our report because we took this work seriously, scheduling hours worth of meetings and Zoom calls to try to finish appointing all of the special entities established by the 223rd General Assembly (2018). In the end, we simply were unable to complete the task because of realities outside of our control—burdensome

processes, strict membership guidelines, inability to receive copyright permission—or because of a lack of clarity about the work of the committee or a lack of a pool of diverse people from which to make the appointments.

We are grateful to Presbyterians across the nation who responded to call to serve in these special committees, many of which will continue their work until the next General Assembly. We appreciate you and we thank God for the gift you are to the PC(USA).

*Will you pray for and seek to serve the people with **energy**, intelligence, imagination, and love?*

Energy

From the moment that we were elected on June 16, 2018, it was clear that energy would be in high demand during this time of service. The week of General Assembly was filled with meals where we ate a few bites at a time, walking and standing and walking and standing, smiling and hugging and stopping for pictures, and, of course, the main purpose, moderating.

Part of the visible work in the Office of the Moderators is strengthening the connection of the body of Christ across the church, and the primary way of doing that has been to travel to visit with the councils of the PC(USA). That, of course, requires energy. As well as learning the best ways to pack!

We have given energy to the meetings of the church, of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, to the work of nominating people for both special entities and for ongoing committees with vacancies. We have given energy to preparing sermons and presentations, participating in Q&A sessions and small group gatherings. We have given energy to sharing the stories of our service through posts on social media, through articles written for various publications, including Presbyterian Women's *Horizons*. We have given energy in planning for the two Moderators' Conference and the 224th General Assembly (2020), as well as our participation in other conferences and events in the life of the church.

Where we have given energy, others have met us with their own energy. Presbyteries planning for our visits, thinking about how to make the best use of our time with them while also trying to provide breathing room. Worship planners taking our texts and weaving beautiful services of praise and prayer. Welcoming words, gestures, and sometimes even gifts met us along the way, bolstering our energy and strengthening the bonds of care and compassion.

Energy in coronavirus times has been different, but no less necessary and no less intense. Now instead of the stamina required to travel and be physically present with our PC(USA) family, a new stamina is required: Dropping in on Zoom presbytery meetings to preach and teach, hosting online initiatives such as *as #stayathomehymnsing*, *#CoModPopUp* conversations, and *Flyaway Books' story time*, all through Facebook Live, learning how to moderate using Zoom and PC-Biz ... all these and more have demanded a great deal of energy, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. One bright side to this is that we've been able to connect with so many more Presbyteries during this period of staying safer-at-home! The list of digital connections is extensive, and we feel so blessed to have joined so many of you in the commissioning of your General Assembly commissioners and advisory delegates. A different energy, to be sure, but energy joyfully and gratefully spent.

*Will you pray for and seek to serve the people with energy, **intelligence**, imagination, and love?*

Intelligence

As a denomination, we value intelligence and learning, deep thinking and robust debating. These qualities have been on display everywhere we have gone, from conferences that invite attendees to go more deeply into their faith and understanding, to presbyteries where important issues are discussed with both passion and acuity.

At our best, we put our intelligence to work in building coalitions, in tackling difficult situations to find a way forward, in assessing ministry opportunities that bring us into partnership with our neighbors. At our worst, our intelligence can lead to the polity games that privilege those who know all of the rules, especially the most obscure ones, and leave behind those whose commitment to the work of the church has not centered around the finer points of *Robert's Rules of Order*.

Our hope is that we will find ways to temper the more divisive ways we use and value intelligence so that all kinds of intelligence are honored, more ways of reaching consensus are considered, and bridges are built so no one leaves a meeting wondering what was being discussed and what happened. We can slow things down, give space to breathe and pray, and open room for the Spirit to move in new ways. This is part of serving with intelligence: intentionally making space for all of God's people to participate in the work of the church.

*Will you pray for and seek to serve the people with energy, intelligence, **imagination**, and love?*

Imagination

We had decided in the fall of 2019 to preach on Ephesians 3:14–21 in part because of this sentence, “Now to the one who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine ... (NRSV).” We have seen throughout our time of service how the imagination of the body of Christ does indeed result in blessings that are far more abundant than what we ask or imagine. We have witnessed time and time again how imagination for what could be and hope for something different has created space for new possibilities to emerge and new ministries to come to life.

Including “imagination” in our ordination vows is such a gift to us in the PC(USA). We are reminded in this vow that we are created in the image of a God who is first known to us as the Creator, the Maker of heaven and earth. Talk about imagination! We are challenged in this vow to dream and to seek visions that may seem beyond what is possible or even practical, but the Spirit can make even dry bones live. We are encouraged in this vow to follow in Jesus’ footsteps, who taught by telling stories, who fed thousands with a handful, and who walked on water.

We were blessed to see imagination unfolding in the denomination in the form of creativity with new ministries and worshiping communities, innovative events, forums, new conferences, congregations big and small opening their doors to serve as hosts for workshops, small congregations and presbyteries doing amazing work in their communities and in partnership around the world. Imagination also struck as the denomination engaged in creative events and activities around the One Church, One Book initiative reading *Neighborhood Church: Transforming Your Congregation into a Powerhouse for Mission* by Krin Van Tatenhove and Rob Mueller.

Where our congregations have embraced the call to be places where imagination is cherished, life springs forth, healing waters flow, and justice is established.

Will you pray for and seek to serve the people with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love?

Love

The PC(USA) has loved us into our ministry as CoMods. We have been embraced, respected, cared for, loved. And we have loved you right back, church, with every ounce of our being. We have walked and accompanied you these two years, and even as COVID-19 hit, we have looked for ways to keep showing that love, encouraging us all as the PC(USA) to love God and neighbor in concrete, tangible ways.

And now, as we put the finishing touches on this report, it is June 2020. Protests have erupted worldwide, calling for justice, calling for an end to state-sanctioned police brutality, calling for a reckoning, calling us as Christians to confess that the words of love we speak do not always govern our lives.

For love is only complete when it is accompanied by confession, by recognizing hurt and trauma that have been caused, and by continuing to be committed to engage in the daily task of being changed, transformed, re-formed, so that love can flow more freely and deeply. Therefore ...

Out of our deep love for the church, we call on the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to confess our continued complicity in the structures that perpetuate racial injustice, an economic system that requires a large percentage of the population to live in poverty so that a few may prosper, and the timidity of faith that prefers to measure by numbers of members instead of depth of impact.

Out of our deep love for the people we have met along the way, and for the people we didn’t have the opportunity to meet but we are bound to in this body of Christ, we call on the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to confess that we have not had the stamina to back up all our words, reports, surveys, and studies with the action that all those words were meant to lead us to.

Out of our deep love for Jesus, who showed us the true meaning of love in word and deed, we call the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to cast a wider net, to listen to the “voices of peoples long silenced” in the context of our denomination and the world, and to make space at the communion table for those who are still watching from afar the deliberations of a denomination that is supposed to be their own.

Out of our deep love for this world and all who live in it, we call on the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to work for the transformation of this country as a part of this world, so that the kin-dom of God may be fully established here on earth.

Will you pray for and seek to serve the people with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love?

Yes, we will, with God’s help.

It has been a blessing and an honor to serve God and this denomination as the Co-Moderators of the 223rd General Assembly (2018). The memories of the past two years will be in our hearts, and the witness of the saints that met in St. Louis two years ago will live in us as we continue to share the deeds of the Holy Spirit that began with a march to end cash bail in the streets of Missouri. We see you, PC(USA), we love you, and we will continue to pray for you, giving glory “to the one who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.): Dream on. Hope on. Rise Up.

Until we meet again, along the road, paz.

Vilmarie & Cindy

Mid Council Visits:

San Francisco
San Juan
Noroeste
Suroeste
Flint River
Northeast Georgia
Cherokee
Tropical Florida
Mission
Florida
Heartland
Newark
New Harmony
Peace River
Ohio Valley
Synod of the Pacific
Redwoods
Sacramento
Cimarron
Eastern Oklahoma
Indian Nations
Wyoming
Yellowstone
Kendall
South Louisiana
Pines
Homestead
Missouri River Valley
Eastminster
Western Colorado
Muskingum Valley
Cincinnati
Chicago
San Joaquin
Redstone
Washington
Northern Waters
Synod of the South Atlantic
Synod of the Northeast
Mid-Kentucky
Transylvania
Western Kentucky
New Castle
Upper Ohio Valley
Lake Michigan
Northern New England
Boston
Charlotte
Philadelphia
De Cristo
Grand Canyon

Hudson River
Genesee Valley
Miami Valley
Minnesota Valley
Tampa Bay
Grace
New York City
Newton
Abingdon
Multiple congregations across the country

Mid Council Visits Canceled Due to Coronavirus:

West Jersey
Northumberland
Western Reserve

Mid Council Visits Postponed:

Los Ranchos
Central Nebraska

Conferences Canceled Due to the Coronavirus:

Ecumenical Advocacy Days
Presbyterian Older Adult Ministries Network

International Travel:

Kenya x2
Liberia
Cuba x2
Israel/Palestine
South Africa
Greece

International Visits Canceled Due to the Coronavirus:

Women’s Desk, National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon

Other Gatherings:

Presbyterian Women Gathering
Military Chaplains Retreat
Mid Council Leaders Gathering x2
Presbyterian Peace Fellowship
Mid Council Financial Network x2
Moderators’ Conference x2
Caribbean and North American Council for Mission (CANACOM) Assembly
Wall of Welcome and Caravan of Hope (U.S.-Mexico Border)
Wendy’s and Publix Boycott Picketing Coalition of Immokalee Workers
Association of Presbyterian Church Educators x2
NEXT Church Conference
Mission Consultation—Zephyr Point

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National Caucus of Korean Presbyterian Churches Assembly
Jarvie Reconciliation Team
Presbyterian Youth Triennium
Massanetta Springs Conference
“Seeing Red: Movements to Wholeness” Communities of Color Convocation
Big Tent, Baltimore
Presbyterians for Earth Care
Kentucky Tri-Presbyteries Youth Retreat
Poor People’s Campaign

Other Entities:

Columbia Theological Seminary x2
San Francisco Theological Seminary
McCormick Theological Seminary
Union Presbyterian Seminary
Presbyterian Historical Society x2

Postponed:

Empowering Commissioned Pastors
Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary Commencement (2021)
Mosaic of Peace Conference (2021)
Celebrating the Call of Ruling Elders Webinar

Digital Visits:

Northern Kansas
New Hope

Winnebago
Ohio Valley
John Knox
Missouri Union
Utica
Albany
San Gabriel
Great Rivers
Blackhawk
Lehigh
Northumberland
Lackawanna
East Iowa
Central Florida
Prospect Hill
St. Augustine
Hudson River
Cayuga-Syracuse
Northwest Coast
Heartland
Peaks
Multiple congregations
Digital greetings shared widely

Other Digital Appearances:

“Just Talk Live”(Unbound interactive journal and Young Adult Volunteer Program ministries—on Facebook live)
Young Adult Advisory Delegates (GA 224) Orientation
Theological Conversation with Rev. Lee Hinson-Hasty—Office of the Theological Education Fund-Presbyterian Foundation—(Facebook Live)
Presbyterian Peacemaking Virtual Choir Project

Item 00-Info-33

MEMORANDUM

To: The Reverend J. Herbert Nelson, II, Stated Clerk, and the Reverend Barbara Gaddis, Chairperson of Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, and to the various agencies and entities of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

From: The Reverend Larryetta Ellis, Elder Marco Grimaldo, and The Moving Forward Implementation Commission (MFIC)

Re: Moving Forward Implementation Commission Administrative Supplement

Date: June 18, 2020

On behalf of the Moving Forward Implementation Commission (MFIC), we want to express our appreciation to the leadership of the various entities of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), their executives, staff, and boards/committees for their hard work toward a stronger and more faithful church to the glory of God. When we began our service to fulfill our mandate as assigned by the 223rd General Assembly (2018), we sought to support the work of the agencies and take action as needed to ensure that the restructured A Corp board and the newly established Administrative Services Group (ASG) would have the authority and support they need to succeed.

MFIC seeks to encourage the agencies in this time of fiscal challenges to be bold and broadly collaborative. We challenge especially the Office of the General Assembly (OGA), the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA), and the Administrative Services Group (ASG) to live into the values of openness, collaboration, and transparency. Our hope is:

- That PMA and OGA continue to explore the possibility of merger and other actions, like the possibility of moving Mission Engagement Services to ASG, as they seek answers to the likely budget shortfalls and other challenges ahead.
- That together with the Special Committee on Financial Sustainability and Per Capita we will present options to the 225th General Assembly (2022) for more effective means of both budgeting and funds development.
- That PMA, OGA, and ASG will work together on issues related to agency culture, recognizing the ways in which their respective responsibilities fit together and resolving concerns in mutually supportive ways that allow each to excel to the glory of God.

The Moving Forward Implementation Commission takes the following actions:

1. The Moving Forward Implementation Commission directs the Stated Clerk, the President/Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and the President of A Corporation to create a coordination table comprised of the entities under the A Corporation

a. Specific ongoing topics for discernment, collaboration, and coordination shall include but not be limited to:

- (1) Responses to General Assembly mandates/actions;
- (2) Ongoing and/or emerging vision, mission, and related ministries; and
- (3) The development of a unified budget process that results in a single budget for the three entities.

This table should foster unity and purpose, provide direction and focus, establish a basis for trust, undergird strategic decision-making processes, offer a path for alignment of staffing and programmatic choices, and inspire people to get involved in the work of the church.

Permanent Membership shall include executive leadership, senior staff, and committee/board leadership. Other staff, board/committee members, and outside consultants may be added on a permanent basis or for a particular term, project, initiative, or assignment as agreed-upon by the table and must be relevant to a particular initiative of the table.

b. The first task of this group will be to create a memorandum or memorandums of understanding between, or among, the Office of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, to clarify/map specific roles and responsibilities of each entity. This document should provide a baseline for the ongoing relationship between the entities and will be a supplemental document to the *Organization for Mission* and board manuals, bylaws, and other governing documents.

If the 224th General Assembly continues the work of the Moving Forward Implementation Commission as a commission or special committee, the commission/committee shall be responsible for coordinating the creation and implementation of this table.

2. The Moving Forward Implementation Commission suspends “Appendix A” of the *Organization for Mission* beginning at the conclusion of the 224th General Assembly (2020) through the 225th General Assembly (2022).

The Moving Forward Implementation Commission, in partnership with the Special Committee on Per Capita and Financial Sustainability, took action to move the entities under the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A), A Corporation (The Office of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Mission Agency) toward a unified budget process. The vision and goal of the Unified Budget Process is to create a process where all revenue and expenses are considered together to ensure that all critical functions, initiatives, and activities receive sufficient funding.

As a first step in this process, the MFIC convened a Budget Summit in late 2019 to bring together executive and board/committee leadership of all entities. At this summit all entities agreed to a new way of budgeting that looks holistically at the budgets of all three entities. Unfortunately, existing governing language found in Appendix A limited the entities’ ability to fully live into this vision. While a unified presentation will be made to the 224th General Assembly (2020), the budget still requires seven votes to approve.

Without the existing Appendix A, the entities (in coordination with the Moving Forward Implementation Commission/Special Committee, if continued) shall work together to create a new process of creating a single budget that incorporates all revenue sources (mission/per capita budgets) and both ecclesial (OGA) and missional (PMA) expenses into a single process and approval vote by all entities.

The unified budget shall provide a mutuality of focus, efficiencies in processes, and movement towards a shared vision as well as a sharing of all resources to meet the financial needs of all A Corporation entities. It will be presented and approved as a single budget with multiple revenue streams.

The new process shall be written as a new Appendix A and approved in concept by the entities' boards/committees prior to implementation. The revised Appendix A shall be presented to the 225th General Assembly (2022) with the recommendation that it be added to the *Organization for Mission*. Primary responsibility for this process shall be retained by the Coordination Table through the 225th General Assembly (2022).

3. The Moving Forward Implementation Commission directs the agencies and entities of the PC(USA) to continue the work of the Diverse Voices Table through the 225th General Assembly (2022), with coordination, oversight, and reporting through the Moving Forward Implementation Commission/Special Committee. Their work shall include, but not be limited to the following:

a. Serving as the organizing body and connection point for consultants doing any equity and inclusion assessments going forward.

b. Assessing and addressing ongoing agency and entity needs, including changing the frequency of outside consultant evaluation to at least every six years so that meaningful efforts and organizational changes can happen between assessments.

c. Providing input to agency and entity reviews to ensure that the equity and inclusion lens is included and monitoring and assessing implementation plans and progress on the goals that result from any review processes.

d. Continuing to keep its work centered on the goal of coordination and collaboration until such time as it is determined that a unified effort to assess and maintain racial equity has permeated the entire denominational structure.

e. Collaborating with chairs and executives to select the external auditor for the Equity and Inclusion audit due in 2026.

f. Communicating regularly with the boards and executives of its constituent entities.

g. Reporting its activities to the 225th General Assembly through the Moving Forward Implementation Commission/Special Committee and to subsequent assemblies through the appropriate body. The MFIC will work with the Diverse Voices Table and the executives of each of the partner agencies and entities to identify the appropriate means for reporting in the future.

4. The Moving Forward Implementation Commission directs the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB) to revise the board manuals, bylaws, *Organization for Mission*, and all other governing documents and/or policies to reflect the previous action of this commission (MFIC). Specifically, the following edits must be made to the PMA Manual of Operations (Section G6b)

“b. Property/Legal Committee

“The Property/Legal Committee focuses on the proper management of the legal and property matters of the agency and ensures appropriate consideration on matters of risk by the agency and its employees. ~~including:~~

~~• Assertion of attorney-client privilege, work-product privilege, self-critical analysis privilege, ecclesiastical privileges, and any other applicable privileges;~~

~~“Management, control, and decision making with respect to pending or threatened litigation or other legal claims or proceedings;~~

~~“Management, control, and direction of former, current, or future outside counsel;~~

“(1) Oversight

“It is responsible for the Board’s oversight in these areas including:

“(a) Review with legal staff and the President/Executive Director all legal and property matters to ensure their proper management, and work to educate the Board on these matters.

~~“(b) Review with staff the appropriate enterprise risk management policies and concerns necessary for ensuring that the ministry and the mission of the agency are performed without undue hindrance or delay.~~

~~“(c) Hiring outside legal counsel, when required by the board~~

“(2) Functions

“Functions within the Agency reporting through this committee include:

“(a) Legal

“(b) Enterprise risk management

“(c) Property

“(3) Broader Relationships

“Its broader relationships will include:

“(a) Committee on the Office of General Assembly (COGA)

“(b) Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation

~~“(4) Designations~~

~~“(a) The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and the Property/Legal Committee expressly elect to be governed exclusively by the law of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, and expressly reject to be governed by the law of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, with respect to the matters addressed in this Manual.~~

~~“(b) If for any reason, it is determined by any court of competent jurisdiction that Legal/Property Committee, or the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board is unable to assert any privilege, Stoll Keenon Ogden PLLC (“SKO”) is authorized and directed to do so under Kentucky Rule of Evidence 503 and Federal Rules of Evidence 501, 502”~~

On June 24, 2019, the Moving Forward Implementation Commission voted to suspend the Manual of Operations of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board II.G.(6)(b) where it contradicts the Articles of Incorporation, bylaws, General Assembly actions and other documents empowering the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation Board, and the transfer of responsibilities and duties, and/or to take other such actions necessary in its power to prevent immediate and future obstruction in the work and responsibilities of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation Board.

5. The Moving Forward Implementation Commission recommends that the Stated Clerk, the Office of the General Assembly, and the General Assembly Nominating Committee, suspend the process of agency reviews until the 225th Assembly (2022) in order to create a sustainable model for review processes for the six agencies of the PC(USA) and A Corporation.

The Moving Forward Implementation Commission wholeheartedly affirms that an independent review process should be conducted for each of the six agencies and A Corporation by teams elected by the General Assembly. However, the current context brought about by the coronavirus crisis has shifted operational and missional dynamics significantly. Given that organizational goals and ministry foci have shifted to meet the current crisis, and considering the logistical difficulty in assembling review teams to meet and do the assessment work, it is impractical to attempt any reviews at this time. In addition, the current structure can be additionally streamlined, which would provide some relief to an already overburdened General Assembly Nominating Committee.

Item 00-Info-34

Vote of Presbyteries on Proposed Amendments.

For report, see <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000742>.

**Proposed Amendments to the
Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Approved by the 223rd General Assembly (2018)**

		Affirmative	Negative	Have Voted	To Vote	Needed to Pass
18-A	Election of Ruling Elders and Deacons: On Amending G-2.0401 (Item 06-11)	164	3	167	3	Approved
18-B	Renunciation of Jurisdiction					
18-B.1.	On Amending G-2.0509 (Item 06-09)	128	38	166	4	Approved
18-B.2.	On Amending D-10.0401d (Item 06-09)	143	23	166	4	Approved
18-C	Officers: On Amending G-3.0104 (Item 06-16)	45	122	167	3	Disapproved
18-D	Membership of Presbytery: On Amending G-3.0306 (Item 06-05)	165	2	167	3	Approved
18-E	Pastor, Counselor, and Advisor to Its Pastors and Congregations: On Amending G-3.307 (Item 06-02)	166	1	167	3	Approved
18-F	Welcoming to the Table: On Amending W-4.0202 (Item 14-03)	166	1	167	3	Approved
18-G	Disciplinary Offense: On Amending D-2.0203b (Item 06-04)	141	26	167	3	Approved
18-H	Time Limit: On Amending D-10.0401 (Item 06-24)					
18-H.1.	On Amending D-10.0401b	158	9	167	3	Approved
18-H.2.	On Amending D-10.0401c(1)	165	2	167	3	Approved

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Item 01-01

Assembly Committee on Business Referrals May 5 Agenda.

Not for assembly action.

Item 01-02

Regarding On-Line Assembly and Approval of Special Rules of Order and Suspension of Any Standing Rules That Interfere with Them—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) do the following:

[Approved. See pp. 2, 10.]

1. Approve that the meetings of the 224th General Assembly (2020) and of the Assembly Committee on Business Referral (01) be conducted by gathering electronically through an online platform and conducting business through PC-Biz.

[Approved. See pp. 3, 10.]

2. That for the purpose of these electronic meetings, the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve these special rules of order and suspend any standing rules that interfere with them:

- a. All information about meetings of the assembly, and access for voting participants, will be through PC-Biz.
- b. Online meeting service availability shall begin at least fifteen minutes before the start of each meeting.
- c. The presence of a quorum shall be established by sign-in to PC-Biz at the beginning of the meeting. Thereafter, the continued presence of a quorum shall be determined by the online list of participating members.
- d. While every effort will be made to provide stable access to the platforms, each member is responsible for his or her audio and internet connections; no action shall be invalidated on the grounds that the loss of, or poor quality of, a member's individual connection prevented participation in the meeting.
- e. In order to be enrolled as participants with voice and/or vote, commissioners, advisory delegates, and corresponding members must participate in one of the live technology orientation opportunities prior to the convening of the assembly.
- f. The only committee will be 01 Assembly Committee on Business Referral, which shall recommend referral of all items of business either to the 224th General Assembly (2020) meeting in plenary, or to the 225th General Assembly (2022). The committee may choose to propose items to be considered in an assembly plenary consent agenda, to be taken up as the first order of business on the second day of the 224th General Assembly (2020). The committee may choose to form subcommittees to review synod and entity minutes and recommend needed action to the assembly.
- g. The Assembly Committee on Business Referral shall assume the usual functions of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures to recommend any needed changes in order of business, limits on debate, or changes in the docket, and to review minutes of the assembly and consider protests.
- h. Commissioners' resolutions shall not be received or referred. There shall be no new business.

Item 01-03

Proposed Docket.

[Approved. See pp. 3, 10.]

Item 01-04

[Approved with amendment. For amendments, see pp. 4, 10–11.]

The Assembly Committee on Business Referral recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020)

1. Receive the following items as information not requiring action:

- a. 00-INFO-01 General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission Self Study Report
- b. 00-INFO-02 General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission Report to the 224th General Assembly (2020)
- c. 00-INFO-03 Report of Changes to the Appendices of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Manual of Operations
- d. 00-INFO-04 *The Book of Confessions* and the Doctrine of Discovery
- e. 00-INFO-05 Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc. Report to the 224th General Assembly (2020)
- f. 00-INFO-06 Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation Report
- g. 00-INFO-07 Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC) Agency Summary
- h. 00-INFO-08 Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC) Agency Summary
- i. 00-INFO-09 Presbyterian Publishing Corporation Agency Summary
- j. 00-INFO-10 General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations Report
- k. 00-INFO-11 General Assembly Nominating Committee Agency Report
- l. 00-INFO-12 A Report on the Six Agencies' Employment—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation
- m. 00-INFO-13 A Report on the Six Agencies' Supplier Diversity—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation
- n. 00-INFO-14 2018 Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action Workforce Analysis—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency
- o. 00-INFO-15 Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) Agency Summary
- p. 00-INFO-16 Report of the Presbyterian Mission Agency on Current Task Forces, Work Groups, and Ad Hoc Committees—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency
- q. 00-INFO-17 General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) Agency Summary
- r. 00-INFO-18 Report of Benefits Plan Amendments—From the Board of Pensions
- s. 00-INFO-19 Self-Study Report—From the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns
- t. 00-INFO-20 General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission Compliance Report to the 224th General Assembly (2020)
- u. 00-INFO-21 New Covenant Trust Company, N.A., a Subsidiary of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation
- v. 00-INFO-22 Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation Agency Summary

- w. **00-INFO-23 Committee on Theological Education (COTE) Agency Summary**
 - x. **00-INFO-24 Christian Churches Together (CCT) 2019 Yearly Ministry Report**
 - y. **00-INFO-25 Brief Report from the World Council of Churches (WCC) to the 224th General Assembly (2020) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)**
 - z. **00-INFO-26 Report of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) 2018–2019**
 - aa. **00-INFO-27 Equity and Inclusion Audit Report for OGA, PMA, ASG/ACorp, PILP, Presbyterian Foundation, PPC, and Presbyterian Women**
 - ab. **00-INFO-28 PC(USA) A Corporation Audit**
 - ac. **00-INFO-29 Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC) 2020 Agency Summary**
 - ad. **00-INFO-30 On the Designation of Persons to Represent the Board of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, as Corresponding Members of 224th General Assembly (2020)—From COGA and the Co-Moderators**
 - ae. **00-INFO-31 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Assessment Results— From the Board of Pensions. (Clerical re-numbering, originally included in 02-001)**
- 2. Consider the following items in a plenary meeting of the 224th General Assembly (2020):**
- a. **00-01 Confirmation of David Dobson, President of Presbyterian Publishing Corporation**
 - b. **00-02 Approval of the List of Related Schools, Colleges, and Universities—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board**
 - c. **00-03 Recommendation to Approve National Certifying Bodies to the 224th General Assembly (2020)—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly**
 - d. **00-04 Approval of Jihyun Oh as Associate Stated Clerk—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly**
 - e. **00-05 On Amending the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and Its Procedures—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly**
 - f. **00-06 On Amending Standing Rule B.3.a. Regarding Corresponding Members—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly**
 - g. **00-07 Revision of the Bylaws of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation—From the Administrative Services Group**
 - h. **00-08 Report and Recommendation from the Administrative Commission Formed by the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to Address Disorder in the Synod of the Covenant**
 - i. **00-09 Approve New Trustees Elected by Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Theological Institutions—From the Committee on Theological Education**
 - j. **00-10 Grant Permission to Theological Institutions to Celebrate the Lord’s Supper—From the Committee on Theological Education**
 - k. **00-11 Request to Docket an Item of Business for Consideration by the 224th General Assembly (2020) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.): Confirmation of Election of President of McCormick Theological Seminary—From the Committee on Theological Education**
 - l. **00-12 Confirm the Reelection of James G. Rissler to Office of President and Chief Executive Officer of the PC(USA) Investment and Loan Program, Inc.—From the Board of Directors of the PC(USA) Investment and Loan Program, Inc.**

- m. **00-13 Confirm the Election of Katherine M. Lueckert as President of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation—From the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation**
- n. **00-14 Confirm the Election of Jihyun Oh as Stated Clerk Designee Director of New Covenant Trust Co., N.A.—From the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation**
- o. **00-15 Churches to Invite to Send Ecumenical Advisory Delegates to the 225th General Assembly (2022)—From the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations**
- p. **00-16 Report of the Eighth Round of Dialogue between Reformed Churches in the U.S. and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops—From the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations**
- q. **00-17 Amendments to the Board of Pensions Articles of Incorporation**
- r. **00-18 Confirmation of the Persons to Serve on the Presbyterian Historical Society Board—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly**
- s. **00-19 On Establishing a General Assembly Administrative Commission on Mid Councils**
- t. **00-20 On Extending Special Committees, Teams, and Task Forces—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly**
- u. **00-21 General Assembly Nominating Committee 2020 Nominations**
- v. **00-26 Co-Moderator Nominations to the General Assembly Nominating Committee**
- w. **~~ITEM ___ Mission Budget and PMA Work Plan~~ (Replaced by ad. 00-24 Unified Budget Proposal)**
- x. **~~ITEM ___ Administrative Services Group Budget~~ (Replaced by ad. 00-24 Unified Budget Proposal)**
- y. **00-22 Joint Recommendation Regarding the Apportionment Rate for 2022—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board**
- z. **00-23 Nomination of the Reverend Dr. J. Herbert Nelson to Serve a Four-Year Term as Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the PC(USA)—From the Stated Clerk Nomination Committee**
- aa. **ITEM___Election of the Moderator**
- ab. **01-02 Regarding Online Assembly and Approval of Special Rules of Order and Suspension of Any Standing Rules That Interfere with Them—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly**
- ac. **01-06 Synod Minutes**
- ad. **00-24 Joint Report from the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation Board, and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board to the 224th General Assembly (2020)**
- ae. **00-25 Confirm Class of 2024 of PILP Board of Directors—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board**
- af. **02-095 Native American Coordinating Council Report—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board**
- ag. **02-096 Native American Church Property Report—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board**
- 3. **Refer the following items for action by the 225th General Assembly (2022):**
 - a. **02-001 Referrals and Referrals in Progress**
 - b. **02-110 On Replacing the Current Rules of Discipline Section with a New Church Discipline Section**
 - c. **02-109 On Amending D-7.0201 and D-7.1501 of the Revision to the Rules of Discipline to Remove Time Limits for Filing Allegations in All Disciplinary Cases**

- d. 02-108 On Instructing the Office of the General Assembly to Create an Appendix to Church Discipline That Details the Process of Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Misconduct**
- e. 02-102 Survivors of Sexual Misconduct Task Force**
- f. 02-092 On Amending G-2.0804 and Recommendations Regarding a Family Leave Policy—From the Family Leave Policy Task Force**
- g. 02-088 Regarding the Creation of an Advocacy Committee for LGBTQIA+ Equity—From the LGBTQIA+ Advocacy Task Force**
- h. 02-081 Jarvie Commonweal Endowment Reconciliation Team Recommendation and Report**
- i. 02-080 Report and Recommendations of the Special Committee on Per Capita and Financial Sustainability**
- j. 02-044 Safe and Sacred Space Task Force Report to the 224th General Assembly (2020)**
- k. 02-033 Approval of Guiding Statement—From the 2020 Vision Team**
- l. 02-032 Moving Forward Implementation Commission Recommendations and Report**
- m. 02-091 Recommendations Regarding the Reformed Perspective of Christian Education in the 21st Century—From the Special Committee to Study the Reformed Perspective of Christian Education in the 21st Century**
- n. 02-020 Disparities Experienced by Black Women and Girls Task Force Report**
- o. 02-105 On Benefit Equity Among Mid Council Executive Staff**
- p. 02-128 Regarding a Korea Peace Treaty**
- q. 02-123 Regarding the Status of the University of Tulsa as a Presbyterian-Related University**
- r. 02-126 On Fossil Fuel Divestment**
- s. 02-127 On Amending G-2.0503 to Change the Designation Honorably Retired to Retired**
- t. 02-132 On Streamlining the Sale of Property Given to a Congregation as a Gift to Fund Ministry and Mission**
- u. 02-136 On Establishing the Authority of Presbyteries to Define Severance Plans for Installed Ministers**
- v. 02-131 Regarding the Treatment of Refugees**
- w. 02-125 On Responding to the Human Needs of Those Affected by the Crisis in Syria**
- x. 02-122 On Amending G-2.0804 Regarding PC(USA) Paid Family Leave**
- y. 02-130 On Advocating for Reduction of Firearm Violence**
- z. 02-121 On Amending D-10.0303 and D-10.0302 Regarding Accused’s Rights to Be Notified**
- aa. 02-137 On Amending G-3.0106 to Add an Antiracism Policy with Suggested Training for All Members of Each Council**
- ab. 02-129 On Designating May 15 as the Palestinian Nakba Remembrance Day**
- ac. 02-119 On Affirming the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (Paris Agreement)**
- ad. 02-133 On Amending G-2.0301 to Allow Congregations to Elect Members as Ruling Elders for Service to the Larger Church**

ae. 02-134 On Forming a Commission to Write a New PC(USA) Confession to Be Considered for Inclusion in the Book of Confessions

af. 02-124 On Amending G-3.0303 by Adding a New Paragraph g. Regarding Authority to Convene Meetings

ag. 02-120 On Amending W-4.0403 Regarding Laying on of Hands at an Installation

ah. 02-118 On Amending G-2.1002 Regarding Ordaining a Commissioned Ruling Elder as Minister of the Word and Sacrament

ai. 02-117 On Amending G-3.0401 to Facilitate Full Participation and Representation in Synods

aj. 02-116 A Call for Ending the Siege of Gaza and Collective Punishment of Innocent Palestinian and Israeli Citizens

ak. 02-115 On Changing the Boundary Between the Presbytery of Glacier and the Presbytery of Yellowstone

al. 02-114 Regarding Depleted Uranium in Iraq

am. 02-113 On Amending G-3.0104 to Allow Appointment of Ruling Elder Moderator or Moderation of Session Electronically from a Remote Location in Extraordinary Circumstance

an. 02-112 On the Inclusion of Inclusive Gender Options When Gender Information Is Collected by Any Entity in the PC(USA)

ao. 02-111 On Declaring the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to Be a Sanctuary and Accompaniment Church

ap. 02-135 On Amending G-6.04e Regarding Two-Thirds Affirmative Vote to Amend the Book of Order

aq. 02-106 On Responding to the Human Needs of Those Affected by the Violence in Cameroon

ar. 02-103 On Creating the Presbyterian Tree Fund

as. 02-095 Native American Coordinating Council Report [Moved to 00-plenary as 00-95.]

at. 02-093 Regarding Worship Resources for Ministering to Veterans

au. ~~REC-002 Proposed Revisions to the General Assembly Organization for Mission—From the Committee on Theological Education.~~ (Duplicate text to COM-081)

av. 02-099 Sam and Helen R. Walton Awards for 2018 and 2019—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board

aw. 02-098 Amendments to Portions of the Directory for Worship—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board

ax. 02-107 Developing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana and the PC(USA)

ay. 02-097 Mission Responsibility Through Investment: Response to the 223rd General Assembly (2018) Directive on Applying Environmental Policy and Recommending Selective Divestment—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board

az. 02-094 On Furthering Mental Health Ministry in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)— From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board

ba. 02-101 On Encouraging Our Churches to Counter Polarization in Our Society

bb. 02-089 On Promoting Human Rights in the Philippines

bc. 02-090 On Commending and Furthering Mental Health Ministry in the PC(USA)

- bd. 02-087 A Resolution for a Mission Co-Worker on the Southern Texas Border—From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee**
- be. 02-086 A Resolution on Collaborating with the Hope Border Institute—From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee**
- bf. 02-085 A Resolution to Establish a Network of Immigration Lawyers—From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee**
- bg. 02-083 A Resolution on Receiving Immigrant Pastors as Members of the Presbytery—From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee**
- bh. 02-082 A Resolution to Make 100 Witherspoon Street a Sanctuary Space—From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee**
- bi. 02-079 A Resolution on Chartering Immigrant Fellowships—From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee**
- bj. 02-077 A Resolution on Preventing, Reporting, and Responding to Bullying, Harassment, and Assault—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns**
- bk. 02-076 A Resolution on Celebrating the Gifts of Women and Their Contributions to the Life of the Church—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns**
- bl. 02-074 On Renaming the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns**
- bm. 02-069 Report from Special Offerings Review Task Force (SORTF)—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board**
- bn. 02-075 A Resolution on Reproductive Justice—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns**
- bo. 02-072 A Resolution on Reproductive Justice: Black Maternal and Infant Mortality—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns and the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee**
- bp. 02-071 A Resolution on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two Spirit People (MMIWG2S)—From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee and the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns**
- bq. 02-067 On Amending Section IV.B.2.c. of the Organization for Mission—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly**
- br. 02-066 On Amending Section IV.C.1.c. of the Organization for Mission—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly**
- bs. 02-064 On Amending Standing Rule A.3.c. Regarding Writing Overtures—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly**
- bt. 02-063 On Amending Standing Rule A.3.d. and e. Regarding Submitting Overtures— From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly**
- bu. 02-061 On Amending Standing Rule E.7. Regarding Authority to Set a Budget—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly**
- bv. 02-060 On Amending Standing Rule F.3.b. Regarding Coordination of Presentations at General Assembly—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly**
- bw. 02-056 On Amending Standing Rule F.5.a. by Adding a New Section (2) Regarding Motions for Previous Question—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly**
- bx. 02-054 On Amending Standing Rule G.a. Consulting GACOR in Planning Daily Worship at General Assembly—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly**

- by. 02-053 On Amending the Title to Standing Rule H.—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly**
- bz. 02-052 On Amending Standing Rule H.2.b.(3)(a) Regarding the Stated Clerk Nomination Committee Consultation of GACOR—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly**
- ca. 02-058 On Amending Standing Rule F.4.b. Regarding Approval of Per Capita Budget—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly**
- cb. 02-034 Special Committee on Racism, Truth, and Reconciliation Progress Report with Recommendation**
- cc. COM-083 Minutes, Committee on Theological Education**
- cd. 02-027 On Recognizing Non-Chartered Fellowships as Churches to Promote Representation and Participation on National and Regional Committees and Councils**
- ce. 02-026 On Creating a Task Force Regarding the Creation of a Korean-Language Nongeographic Presbytery (NGP) on the West Coast**
- cf. 02-025 Regarding Our Commitment to Gun Violence Prevention**
- cg. 02-024 On Support of the Democratic Republic of the Congo**
- ch. 02-038 On Approving “Reimagining the World House” and Recommendations for an Ecumenical Study**
- ci. 02-100 Approval of Part 1 of the 2021–2022 Mission Work Plan for the Presbyterian Mission Agency—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board**
- cj. 02-035 Investing in a Green Future: A Vision for a Renewed Creation—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy**
- ck. 02-051 On Deleting Standing Rule I.4.—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly**
- cl. 02-050 On Amending Standing Rule K.1.a. Regarding Utilization of Standing Committees, Commissions, and Entities—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly**
- cm. 02-048 On Amending Standing Rule L.2. Clarity on When Changes to Standing Rules Take Effect—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly**
- cn. 02-047 On Amending Standing Rule I.1.a. Regarding the Recommendation of the Date and Place of Future Assemblies—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly**
- co. 02-046 On Amending Standing Rule I.1.b. Regarding the Host Presbyteries for General Assembly—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly**
- cp. 02-045 On Amending Standing Rule I.1.d. Determination of Host Site for General Assembly—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly**
- cq. 02-043 Changing Families and the Church—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy**
- cr. 02-042 Epistles from Baltimore: Insights for Urban Ministry and Mission—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy**
- cs. 02-041 Lazarus Is Walking in Baltimore—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy**
- ct. 02-040 Peacebuilding: The Nations’ Calling—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy**
- cu. 02-028 On Amending Standing Rule B.2.b. Regarding Ratio of Advisory Delegates to Commissioners—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly**

cv. 02-031 Recognize Persons for Outstanding Lifetime Contributions to Theological Education—From the Committee on Theological Education

cw. 02-029 Jerusalem 3, 2, 1: Three Faiths, Two Peoples, and One Human Family—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy

cx. 02-037 Recommendation That the Administrative Services Group (ASG) and PC(USA) A Corporation (A Corp) Be Subject to the Same Reviews as All Employing Entities of the General Assembly—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation

cy. 02-036 Recommendation to Direct GACEIR, in Partnership with the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency, to Explore a Global Covenant Agreement (GCA) to Use as a Formula for Establishing Unique Relationships with Other Denominations

cz. 02-049 On Amending Standing Rule K.1.b. Alternative to Appointing Special Committees or Commissions—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly

da. 02-030 Proposed Revisions to the General Assembly Organization for Mission—From the Committee on Theological Education

db. 02-096 Native American Church Property Report [Moved to 00 Plenary as 00-96.]

dc. 02-023 On Updating the Video Resource, Who Are We Presbyterians, with Accompanying Study Guide—From the Presbytery of New Hope

dd. 02-084 A Resolution Addressing the Lack of Installed Pastoral Leadership in People of Color Congregations in the PC(USA)—From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee

de. 02-078 A Resolution to Advocate for the Reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act—From the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns

df. REC-030 PMAB Minutes 2018-2020 (Sorting out file upload with Vicente)

dg. 02-104 On Reducing the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Carbon Imprint—From the Presbytery of Des Moines

dh. 02-022 On Recognition That Israel's Laws, Policies, and Practices Constitute Apartheid Against the Palestinian People

di. 02-070 Women of Faith Award Nominees to the 224th General Assembly (2020)—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board

dj. 02-017 On Learning About and Starting the Process of Divestment from Fossil Fuels

dk. 02-073 A Resolution for Transwomen of Color—From the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns and the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee

dl. 02-068 Approval of Amendments to the Organization for Mission—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, the Board of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board

~~dm. COM-088 On the Designation of Persons to Represent the Board of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, as Corresponding Members of 224th General Assembly (2020) From COGA and the Co-Moderators. (Informational Item- updated into recommendation 1 as 01-INFO-30)~~

dn. 02-065 Amendments to Session Annual Statistical Report—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly

do. 02-062 On Amending Standing Rule D by Adding a New Section 4. Regarding Acknowledgement of Indigenous Peoples—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly

dp. 02-059 On Amending Standing Rule F.4.a. Regarding Consideration and Action on Budget—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly

dq. 02-057 On Amending Standing Rule F.5.a. Limits on Debate—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly

dr. 02-055 On Amending Standing Rule F.5.b.(1) Regarding Voting on Actions Requesting Constitutional Change—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly

ds. 02-039 Obstinate Hope—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy

~~dt. REC 023 Confirm Class of 2024 of PILP Board of Directors—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.~~ (Clerical error- listed in recommendation 2)

du. 02-021 Recommendations from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation

dv. 02-019 Approval of the Theological Rationale for Interreligious/Interfaith Relationships as an Official Statement of the PC(USA)—From the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations

dw. 02-016 Participation in the Thursdays in Black Campaign—From the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations

dx. 02-013 Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations 2018 and 2019 Minutes

dy. 02-014 Appointing a Committee to Write a New Confession—From the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations (GACEIR)

dz. 02-003 On the Merger of the Congregations and Minister Members of the Presbytery of Sacramento and the Presbytery of Stockton to Form a New Presbytery to Be Known as the Presbytery of North Central California

ea. 02-011 Minutes of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, September 2, 2018–April 9, 2020

eb. 02-015 Overture on Affirming the Effectiveness of Nonmilitary, Collaborative International Approaches to Resolving Conflict

ec. 02-012 Approval and Distribution of Statement Denouncing Antisemitism—From the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations

ed. 02-010 Approval and Distribution of Statement Denouncing Islamophobia—From the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations

ee. 02-009 On Recognition of the National Caucus of Korean Presbyterian Churches as One of the Racial Ethnic Caucuses

ef. 02-008 On Recognition of the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico, San Juan, Puerto Rico, as a Racial Ethnic Institution; and to Include the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico on the List of Racial Ethnic Institutions Supported by the Christmas Joy Offering

eg. 02-007 On Transferring Korean United Presbyterian Church (Pin #10887) from the Presbytery of New York City to the Presbytery of Long Island

eh. 02-006 On Celebrating the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations

~~ei. OVT 058 On Reaffirming Our Commitment to Gun Violence Prevention~~ (Concurrence with Item 02-25)

ej. 02-004 Promoting Peace with Justice with the Presbyterian Church of Colombia

Item 01-05

On Responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic

Moved to 00 Plenary, as Item 00-30. [See pp. 11, 102–104.]

Item 01-06

Synod Minutes Review Report.

[Approved with exceptions and with comments. See p. 11.]

The Assembly Committee on Business Referrals commends the synods for their good work and recommends the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve the synod minutes as follows:

Synod of Alaska-Northwest

2018

Exceptions: The complete report of the full financial review and, therefore, a delinquency and exception to these minutes. No financial review was conducted by the synod. As a result, a full financial review could not be reported in the minutes.

No Comments.

2019

Exceptions: The complete report of the full financial review and therefore a delinquency and exception to these minutes. No financial review was conducted by the synod. As a result, a full financial review could not be reported in the minutes.

No Comments.

Synod of Boriquen (Puerto Rico)

2016

The synod did not meet in 2016.

2017

Exceptions:

1. No sexual misconduct policy was provided, nor was there a reference in the minutes about the existence of such a policy.
2. No child and youth protection policy was provided, nor was there a reference in the minutes about the existence of such a policy.

Comments: 2017 minutes were not approved by the General Assembly. They are provided for approval at the 224th General Assembly (2020).

2018

The synod did not meet in 2018.

2019

Exceptions:

1. No sexual misconduct policy was provided, nor was there a reference in the minutes about the existence of such a policy.
2. No child and youth protection policy was provided, nor was there a reference in the minutes about the existence of such a policy.

No Comments

Synod of the Covenant

2018

No Exceptions.

Comments:

1. Attachments were identical to what was found in the minutes.
2. Consider finding another way to indicate attendance in the minutes. Using an X on the page is difficult to interpret.
3. Very little time is scheduled for worship during stated meetings.
4. Often there was no Old Business, which meant there was no continuity of follow up with previous items of business.

5. The names of leadership seemed to appear year after year while many positions remained vacant.

2019

No Exceptions.

Comments:

1. Attachments were identical to what was found in the minutes.
2. Consider finding another way to indicate attendance in the minutes. Using an X on the page is difficult to interpret.
3. Very little time is scheduled for worship during stated meetings.
4. Often there was no Old Business, which meant there was no continuity of follow up with previous items of business.
5. The names of leadership seemed to appear year after year while many positions remained vacant.

Synod of Lakes and Prairies

2018

No Exceptions.

No Comments.

2019

No Exceptions.

No Comments.

Synod of the Lincoln Trails

2018

No Exceptions.

No Comments.

2019

No Exceptions.

No Comments.

Synod of the Living Waters

2018

Exceptions: There is no evidence of bylaws. It is not clear when bylaws, standing rules, sexual misconduct, and child and youth protection policies were last approved or revised. The year “2018” was on the policies but there was no evidence that they were approved by the synod in that year.

Comments

1. Consider having a legend for attendees for the (A) and (P).
2. Consider spelling out acronyms—“PAC.”
3. Please use full names when referring to an individual.
4. It is very impressive that all the presbytery minutes had no exceptions. It would be helpful to share information with other synods as to how the presbyteries achieved this or what work the synod did with the presbyteries to achieve this.

2019

No Exceptions.

Comments:

1. Consider having a legend for attendees for the (A) and (P).
2. Consider spelling out acronyms—“PAC.”
3. Please use full names when referring to an individual.
4. It is very impressive that all the presbytery minutes had no exceptions. It would be helpful to share information with other synods as to how the presbyteries achieved this or what work the synod did with the presbyteries to achieve this.

Synod of the Mid-Atlantic

2018

No Exceptions.

Comments:

1. The PJC former members need to be listed in alphabetical order by year.
2. The review of presbytery records could be clearer about no exceptions and exceptions.

2019

No Exceptions.

Comments:

1. The PJC former members need to be listed in alphabetical order by year.
2. The review of presbytery records could be clearer about no exceptions and exceptions.

Synod of the Northeast

2018

No Exceptions.

No Comments.

2019

The Synod of the Northeast formally meets only once every two years.

Synod of Mid-America

2018

No Exceptions.

Comment: Minutes do not contain a thorough child and youth protection policy.

2019

No Exceptions.

Comment: Minutes do not contain a thorough child and youth protection policy.

Synod of the Pacific

2016

No Exceptions.

No Comment:

1. No evidence of nominations from the floor.
2. Evidence of nominations missing from index.

2017

No Exceptions.

Comments:

1. No evidence of nominations from the floor.
2. Evidence of nominations missing from index.

Synod of the Rocky Mountains

2016

No Exceptions.

No Comments.

2017

No Exceptions.

No Comments.

Synod of the South Atlantic

2018

No Exceptions.

Comments:

1. The Executive Administrative Commission report does not list the commission members composition. The report does not have a point of contact or preparer information.
2. Past permanent judicial commission members are listed by class under which they served and not alphabetically.

2019

No Exceptions.

Comments: Past permanent judicial commission members are listed by class under which they served and not alphabetically.

Synod of Southern California and Hawaii

2018

No Exceptions.

No Comments.

2019

No Exceptions.

No Comments.

Synod of the Southwest

2018

No Exceptions.

No Comments.

2019

No Exceptions.

No Comments.

Synod of the Sun

2018

No Exceptions.

No Comments.

2019

No Exceptions.

No Comments.

Synod of the Trinity

2018

No Exceptions.

No Comments.

2019

No Exceptions.

No Comments.

Rationale

The synod stated clerks continued the practice of submitting their minutes electronically to two synod clerks for peer review with the intent to come together in person in March to finalize the review. The Covid-19 Pandemic caused this in-person meeting to be cancelled, but the review took place by zoom. Each synod clerk submitted their minutes with peer reviews to the Office of the General Assembly. Once plans for a virtual General Assembly were announced, members of the Assembly Committee on Business Referrals were sent electronic copies of the completed peer review checklists and minutes to review. This report reflects the work of the synod peer review teams, with the final review conducted by the commissioners to the 224th General Assembly (2020) serving as the Assembly Committee on Business Referrals. The Office of the Stated Clerk thanks all involved for their work.

Item 01-07

[Approved. See pp. 3, 11.]

Approval of Additional Special Rules of Order and Suspend Any Standing Rules That Interfere with Them—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) do the following:

That for the purpose of these electronic meetings, the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve these additional special rules of order and suspend any standing rules that interfere with them:

- a. Uncontested nominations shall be elected by unanimous consent when the second report of the General Assembly Nominating Committee is given.**
- b. Timing of specific required reports shall be recommended by the Assembly Committee on Business Referrals.**
- c. Greetings, reports, ceremonies, worship services, and other elements mentioned in the Manual of the General Assembly that are unrelated to items of business may be included, altered, or omitted at the discretion of the Stated Clerk.**
- d. Every synod is entitled to a corresponding member, ordinarily the executive or the stated clerk.**

Rationale

- a. According to the Standing Rules, nominations that are not challenged are acted upon in the Wednesday consent agenda. Due to the effect of the outcome of another item of business on the GANC report, that report will not be able to be included when a consent agenda is presented as the first order of business on the second day of this assembly.
- b. Because the assembly convenes on a Friday and then does not come back together for a week, some of the rules stipulating particular time periods are not helpful. (See, for example, Standing Rule H.2.b.4.a.)
- c. Some valued elements that are standard in a traditional General Assembly meeting will be difficult or impossible to conduct in the same way during this online General Assembly. As final decisions are made about how best to learn and celebrate together, flexibility is needed.
- d. For purposes of equity, this rule allows each synod to be represented by a corresponding member.

Item 01-08

[Not for assembly action. See p. 11.]

- 1. The Assembly Committee on Business Referrals authorizes subcommittees to make decisions regarding**
 - a. approval of General Assembly Minutes;**
 - b. receipt and action on protests and dissents;**
 - c. recommendations about changes and approval of the docket to facilitate the handling of business.**
- 2. The Assembly Committee on Business Referrals authorizes the moderator and vice-moderator of the Assembly Committee on Business Referrals to recommend to the assembly**
 - a. adjustments to the docket**
 - b. time limits on debate.**

Rationale

For the 224th General Assembly (2020), the Assembly Committee on Business Referrals is assuming the usual role of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures. (Standing Rule F.1.)

These are the traditional methods by which the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures fulfills its duties during the Assembly:

Change of Docket/Limit on Debates

Task: Meets between plenary 1 and plenary 2 to place items on the assembly docket and recommends time limits on debates (*Standing Rule F.1.b.*).

Committee: Moderator and Vice Moderator

General Assembly Minutes

Task: Reads and approves the minutes of the General Assembly after each assembly session (*Standing Rule* F.1.c.). June 19 plenary minutes must be ready for review and approval by June 26. June 26 and 27 plenary minutes must be ready for review and approval by ten days after adjournment on June 27.

Committee: Three members; works with Nancy J. Taylor, Executive Director of the Presbyterian Historical Society.

Protests and Dissents

Task: Reviews protests and dissents for purposes of order and recommends whether such will be included in the permanent minutes of the assembly (*Standing Rule* F.1.e.). *Convenes with committee assistant after adjournment.*

Committee: moderator or vice moderator, three to four members; works with James Tse, committee assistant

Item 01-09

[Approved. See pp. 3–4, 11.]

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) suspend the Standing Rules in order to accept the following items as late business to the 224th General Assembly:

- a. Item 00-27 On the John C. Lord and Edmund P. Dwight Funds— From the Presbyterian Mission Agency
- b. Item 00-28 Nominations to the 11th Assembly of the World Council of Churches—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly
- c. Item 00-29 On the Church in This Moment in History—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly

Item 01-10

Assembly Committee on Business Referrals June 18 Agenda.

Not for assembly action. [See p. 11.]

Item 01-11

[Approved with amendment. For amendments, see pp. 10, 11–12.]

[Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and a strike-through.]

The Assembly Committee on Business Referrals recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) consider the following items of business on a consent agenda, approving all recommendations as presented:

1. 00-01 Confirmation of David Dobson, President of Presbyterian Publishing Corporation

~~[2. 00-02 Approval of the List of Related Schools, Colleges, and Universities—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board~~

3. 00-03 Recommendation to Approve National Certifying Bodies to the 224th General Assembly (2020)—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly

~~[4. 00-04 Approval of Jihyun Oh as Associate Stated Clerk—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly~~

~~[5.00-06 On Amending Standing Rule B.3.a. Regarding Corresponding Members—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly]~~

~~[6.00-08 Report and Recommendation from the Administrative Commission Formed by the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to Address Disorder in the Synod of the Covenant]~~

7. 00-12 Confirm the Reelection of James G. Rissler to Office of President and Chief Executive Officer of the PC(USA) Investment and Loan Program, Inc.—From the Board of Directors of the PC(USA) Investment and Loan Program, Inc.

8. 00-13 Confirm the Election of Katherine M. Lueckert as President of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation—From the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation

9. 00-14 Confirm the Election of Jihyun Oh as Stated Clerk Designee Director of New Covenant Trust Co., N.A.—From the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation

~~[10.00-15 Churches to Invite to Send Ecumenical Advisory Delegates to the 225th General Assembly (2022)—From the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations]~~

11. 00-16 Report of the Eighth Round of Dialogue between Reformed Churches in the U.S. and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops—From the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations

12. 00-17 Amendments to the Board of Pensions Articles of Incorporation

13. 00-18 Confirmation of the Persons to Serve on the Presbyterian Historical Society Board—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly

~~[14.00-22 Joint Recommendation Regarding the Apportionment Rate for 2022—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board]~~

~~[15.00-24 Joint Report from the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation Board, and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board to the 224th General Assembly (2020)]~~

16. 0-26 Co-Moderator Nominations to the General Assembly Nominating Committee

17. 01-06 Synod Minutes

Rationale

Consent agenda items are approved without amendment or debate in an omnibus motion in order to save time for items that require more attention.

When the consent agenda is presented at the beginning of Plenary 2 on Friday, June 26, all commissioners will have the opportunity to remove from this list any item of business about which further consideration is desired. Commissioners should be prepared to indicate any items they wish to remove by typing the number and title of the item in the Process text box of the Seek Recognition tool along with the word REMOVE. All removed items will be reported to the assembly, and the other items will be approved by unanimous consent without a vote.

Item 01-12

[Approved. See pp. 9, 12.]

Friday, June 26, 2020—Order of Business

All items considered during the 224th General Assembly will be listed in “00 Plenary” on PC-Biz.

Plenary 2—1:00 p.m. (EDT)

I. Opening Devotion

II. Convening Announcements

III. Orientation and Establishing a Quorum

IV. Approving Order of Business

V. Motion for Reconsideration

VI. Consent Agenda

VII. Budget Orientation

VIII. Critical Business

a. Item 00-25. Confirm Class of 2024 of PILP Board of Directors—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

b. Item 00-04. Approval of Jihyun Oh as Associate Stated Clerk—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

c. Item 00-28. Nominations to the 11th Assembly of the World Council of Churches—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

d. Item 00-15. Churches to Invite to Send Ecumenical Advisory Delegates to the 225th General Assembly (2022)—From the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations.

e. Item 00-19. On Establishing a General Assembly Administrative Commission on Mid Councils.

IX. Closing Prayer

Plenary 3—4:00 p.m. (EDT)

I. Opening Devotion

II. Memorial Videos

III. Convening Announcements

IV. Voting Questions

V. Critical Business

a. Item 00-29. On the Church in This Moment in History—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

b. Item 00-30. On Responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic—From the Assembly Committee on Business Referral.

c. Item 00-95. Native American Coordinating Council Report—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

d. Item 00-96. Native American Church Property Report—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

VI. Closing Prayer

Saturday, June 27, 2020—Order of Business

Plenary 4—11:00 a.m. (EDT)

I. Order of the Day: Stated Clerk Election

a. Item 00-23. Nomination of the Reverend Dr. J. Herbert Nelson, II, to Serve a Four-Year Term as Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the PC(USA)—From the Stated Clerk Nomination Committee.

II. Critical Business

- a. Item 00-07. Revision of the Bylaws of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation—From the Administrative Services Group.*
- b. Item 00-21. General Assembly Nominating Committee 2020 Nominations.*

Plenary 5—2:00 p.m. (EDT)

I. Opening Devotion

II. Critical Business

- a. Item 00-11. Request to Docket an Item of Business for Consideration by the 224th General Assembly (2020) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.): Confirmation of Election of President of McCormick Theological Seminary—From the Committee on Theological Education.*
- b. Item 00-09. Approve New Trustees Elected by Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Theological Institutions—From the Committee on Theological Education.*
- c. Item 00-10. Grant Permission to Theological Institutions to Celebrate the Lord’s Supper—From the Committee on Theological Education.*
- d. Item 00-02. Approval of the List of Related Schools, Colleges, and Universities—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.*
- e. Item. 00-05. On Amending the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and Its Procedures—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.*
- f. Item 00-06. On Amending Standing Rule B.3.a. Regarding Corresponding Members—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.*
- g. Item 00-08. Report and Recommendation from the Administrative Commission Formed by the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to Address Disorder in the Synod of the Covenant.*
- h. Item 00-20. On Extending Special Committees, Teams, and Task Forces—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.*

III. New Business Items

IV. Closing Prayer

Plenary 6—4:30 p.m. (EDT)

I. Opening Prayer

II. Budget Presentation

III. Critical Business

- a. Item 00-27 On the John C. Lord and Edmund P. Dwight Funds—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency.*
- b. Item 00-24. Joint Report from the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation Board, and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board to the 224th General Assembly (2020).*
- c. Item 00-22. Joint Recommendation Regarding the Apportionment Rate for 2021–2022—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.*

Item 02-001

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 302.]

I. Referrals in Progress

A. Committee on the Office of the General Assembly

1. *Item 05-09. Commissioners' Resolution: On the Challenge of Being Black in the PC(USA). Recommendation 1. Reaffirm the Committee on Representation Requirements for Inclusiveness as Stated in the Constitution (G-3.0103), Paying Careful Attention to Issues of Inclusiveness and Fair Practices by the Pastor Nominating Committees and Committees on Preparation for Ministry. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 24, 224).*

Final response will be presented to the 225th General Assembly (2022).

2. *2018 Referral: Item 05-09. Commissioners' Resolution: On the Challenge of Being Black in the PC(USA). Recommendation 3. Direct the Office of the Stated Clerk to Respond to the Presbyteries That the National Black Presbyterian Caucus Has Identified as Not Abiding by Committee on Representation Guidelines. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 24, 224).*

Final response will be presented to the 225th General Assembly (2022).

B. General Assembly Nominating Committee

2018 Referral. Item 03-06: 4. Direct the General Assembly Nominating Committee to Share Representation Data on All Applicants for Service on Bodies for Whom They Nominate on Regular and Timely Basis. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 65–66, 164–65)

Progress Report: The General Assembly nominations database is currently in the process of being enhanced and developed by a contracted software company. One of the reporting functionality enhancements will provide General Assembly Committee on Representation staff with the ability to pull down representation data on all applicants and currently serving members in real time. This enhancement is scheduled for future production. Because these enhancements are still in the planning and development stages, sharing reports on statistical data is delayed and must be done manually. As of the publication of this response, the portal for new applicants is still open; once the portal is closed, a manual report will be provided to the GACOR. Reporting functionality through the database is expected to be available in Fall, 2020. A final response to this referral will be reported to the 225th General Assembly (2022).

C. Presbyterian Mission Agency

1. *2016 Referral: Item 10-11. A Resolution to Contribute to a Proactive, Health-Giving Ministry to and Relationship with Our Clergywomen. Recommendation 6. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) to Write Theologically Undergirded Curriculum Specifically Addressing Issues Facing Women in Ministry, Sexism, and Gender Equity for the Purpose of Training Mid Councils and Local Congregations—From the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (Minutes, 2016, Part I, pp. 41, 44, 261 of the print copy, pp. 614–15 of the electronic copy).*

Final response will be presented to the 225th General Assembly (2022).

2. *2016 Referral: Item 11-16. On Equipping and Mobilizing Member Congregations to Better Serve Those Living with HIV/AIDS. Recommendation 1. Equip and Mobilize Member Congregations to Better Serve Those Living Among Us with HIV/AIDS by the Development of the Initiatives Listed in a. and b.—From the Presbytery of National Capital (Minutes, 2016, Part I, pp. 53, 56, 276 of the print copy, pp. 729–32 of the electronic copy).*

Response: Final Response will be presented to the 225th General Assembly (2022).

3. *2018 Referral: Item 07-07. Commissioners' Resolution. On Covenant Agreement Between the Gereja Masehi Injili di Minahasa (GMIM) and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). That the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations, in Partnership with the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency, Explore the Possibility of Developing a Covenant Relationship with GMIM—From the 223rd General Assembly (2018) (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 15, 16, 250 of the print copy, pp. 668 of the electronic copy).*

Response: Final Response will be presented to the 225th General Assembly (2022)

II. Final Responses to Referrals

A. Administrative Services Group

1. *2018 Referral: Item 04-02. A Resolution on Prioritizing Translation and Accessibility in the PC(USA). Recommendation 1. Direct All Six of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Agencies to Be Intentional and Proactive in Prioritizing the Hiring and Retaining of People from Presbyterian Communities in the Global South and Other Historic Presbyterian "Communities of Color," Preferably with Theological Training and Fluency in Languages Other Than English, in Each of Their Program Areas or Departments so That Resources, as Well as Theological, Ecclesiological, and Other Pertinent Documents, if Applicable, Will Be Written from the Cultural, Methodological, and Linguistic Worldviews of Those Communities. The Agencies Will Report Back on Their Progress to the 224th General Assembly (2020). (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 45–46, 358)*

Response: Human Resources added one staff member to the team to develop and implement sourcing strategies designed to diversify candidate pools for current and planned open positions. Statements are added to job descriptions and job postings that proficiency with the English language and one more language was very helpful, and that candidates from Presbyterian communities in the global south and other historic Presbyterian communities of color, preferably with theological training and fluency in languages other than English, were encouraged to apply. Job postings are distributed to 100 industry specific and niche job boards, various internal PC(USA) constituencies (e.g. advocacy committees, mid councils, leaders of color network, mission networks), seminaries, a range of communities of color liaisons, professional associations, and networking groups. PMA Communications posts opportunities on key social media platforms. Human Resources (HR) meets with hiring managers to identify candidates by specific keywords, phrases, and locations. A targeted recruitment fair was held to source candidates through workforce resources for difficult-to-fill staff positions. HR participated in various PC(USA) sponsored events to make attendees aware of career opportunities and conduct onsite interviews.

Work will continue to incorporate ways to make recruiting more granular and specific such as:

- Leveraging video and other media to make an emotional connection with candidates in order to make jobs real to them.
- Prominently displaying open invitations on the PC(USA) website and social media pages to encourage candidates to submit their resumes for future consideration before a certain type of position may be posted.
- Expanding profiles on job boards to increase engagement and drive traffic to PC(USA)'s career site.
- Utilizing social media sites search tools and Boolean logic to find resumes and cover letters stored within personal websites, job boards, and social media platforms and gain access to job board resume databases to search for job seekers using keywords and other criteria.
- Cultivating relationships with professional groups and associations particularly those focused on nurturing candidates through the hiring process.
- Identifying creative ways to increase employee referrals.
- Partnering with reputable providers and organizations hosting targeted career events (e.g. career fairs, speed interviewing, and more).

Office of the General Assembly remains intentional and proactive in its efforts to hire and retain staff from communities of color and the global south. To that end, of fourteen staff hired since the 223rd General Assembly (2018), 50 percent are from communities of color or the global south, including one teaching elder and three ruling elders. Three staff members are fluent in Spanish. OGA derives numerous cost-effective, time-saving efficiencies from its consultative relationship with Human Resources staff in the Administrative Services Group by engaging their expertise and knowledge of best practices that ensures open positions are filled in an expeditious manner.

Each ministry area within the Presbyterian Mission Agency has at least one staff member from global south and/or other historic Presbyterian communities of color. Four (4) individuals from the global south were hired in the PMA during 2019. Two (2) of these staff members are teaching elders and one (1) is working on a divinity degree. Overall, out of forty new hires in 2019, twenty-two are persons of color.

The Administrative Services Group hired eight new staff members in 2019 of which three (3) are persons of color. One of these individuals is from the global south.

02 RECOMMENDED REFERRALS TO THE 225TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2022)

2. 2018 Referral: Item 06-20. A Resolution to Require and Expand Family Leave Policies. Recommendation 4. To Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Forward the Details of Its Family Leave Policies and Other Pertinent Information to the Synods, Presbyteries, and Congregations in Order to Facilitate and Expedite the Creation of Fair and Equitable Family Leave Policies. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 73, 623)

Response: Details of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation’s benefits and leave policies have been posted on <https://www.pcusa.org/acorp/human-resources-links>. (Policies apply to the Office of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and the Administrative Services Group.) Notice of the availability of this information has been sent to mid councils through the monthly mid council e-newsletter sent by the Office of the General Assembly. Copies of information on leave policies, as well as other employee handbook information, are provided to mid councils or congregations as requested.

3. 2018 Referral: Item 11-09. A Resolution on Sexual Misconduct in the PC(USA). Recommendation 4. Direct the Office of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Board of Pensions, the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, and the Presbyterian Foundation to Provide Mandatory, Annual Sexual Misconduct Training for Their Employees That Include Pastoral and Trauma-Informed Clinical Care Resources Along with Legal Resources, and That Emphasize Representing the Denomination as a Place of Truth-Telling, Justice, Accountability, and Pastoral and Theologically-Grounded Healing. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 58–59, 1024–25)

Response: Mandatory sexual misconduct training is provided annually to all employees of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, which includes the Office of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and the Administrative Services Group. Engagement with a consultant on the development and implementation of Trauma-Informed Care training is in progress, with the first training program for employees to be held by the end of the second quarter, 2020.

4. 2018 Referral: Item 04-03. Recommendation 4.c. On creating a systematic approach to language accessibility, requiring staffing for translation in Shared Services, and use of prioritization and exception group made up of Diverse Voices Table, Racial Equity & Women’s Intercultural Ministries (RE&WIM), racial ethnic caucuses (now called the National Caucuses and Councils Serving Communities of Color), and the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 47–48, 363)

Response: The Global Language Resources (GLR) office is located in the Administrative Services Group (ASG) of A Corporation. GLR has implemented a systematic approach to language accessibility, using computer assisted translation software. GLR has added two additional translators (Spanish and Korean) to its staff. GLR is in regular communication with the Diverse Voices Table, RE&WIM, National Caucuses and Councils, and the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC). As GLR prepared translations for the 224th General Assembly (2020), it consulted with REAC and the caucuses/councils regarding prioritization of assembly business translations.

5. 2018 Referral: Item 04-03. Recommendation 5.a. Itemized List of All Services Shared Through the Administrative Services Group (ASG) and Services That Might Be Contracted with Other PC(USA) Agencies to Provide. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 48, 363)

Response: The following chart indicates the shared services provided by ASG or others, and how other PC(USA) agencies are using these services. The chart also includes services provided by others.

Shared Services provided by ASG	OGA	PMA	Foundation	PILP	PPC	BOP	PW	Hubbard Press
Finance/Accounting	X	X		X			X	X
Purchasing	X	X						X
Accounts Payable	X	X		X				X
Legal Services	X	X		X	X		X	X
Human Resources-General	*	X	*	*			*	X
HR Recruitment	*	X	*	*			*	X
Benefits Admin	X	X		X				
Payroll	X	X		X			X	
Building Services	X	X		X	X		X	X
Risk/Insurance	X	X	X	X		X		X
Internal Audit	X	X						
Global Language Resources	X	X						
Research Services	X	X	*	*	*	*	*	
IT Development		X						
IT Support	X	X		X	X		X	X
Distribution Services	X	X			X		X	X

02 RECOMMENDED REFERRALS TO THE 225TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2022)

Shared Services provided by ASG	OGA	PMA	Foundation	PILP	PPC	BOP	PW	Hubbard Press
Mail/Print Services	X	X		X	X		X	
Shared Services provided by others								
Communications		X						
Church Store	X	X			X		X	
MES/Funds Development		X	X					

*Services provided on request, such as job postings, research on a specific topic, etc.

There are no obvious choices for contracting for current ASG services with other agencies. However, there is frequent cooperation among agencies on specific topics. For example, ASG learned about board agenda material presentations from the Board of Pensions, received advice on annual report development from the Presbyterian Foundation, and utilizes the meeting planning services of the Office of the General Assembly. There is great willingness among the agencies and entities to share information and processes.

6. *2018 Referral: Item 04-03. Recommendation 5.b.—Assessment of Transparency by Which Rent and All Other Fees Are Calculated and Charged. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 48, 363)*

Response: During 2019 a new agreement on cost allocation was developed among ASG, PMA, and OGA. This agreement identifies the percentage of the ASG budget that is funded by OGA and by PMA, net of income received by ASG for service agreements and facility rent. The percentage is based on size of budget. For the 2021–2022 budget cycle, the percentage is 20 percent of ASG costs are paid by OGA, and 80 percent of ASG costs are paid by PMA. The cost allocation agreement is straightforward and eliminates the complicated cost spreadsheet of previous years. Detailed ASG budget information is shared with OGA and PMA so that each agency understands what ASG services cost.

ASG has multiyear service agreements in place with the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, Presbyterian Women, and several smaller offices. These agreements are negotiated and include a breakdown of ASG costs and rental charges.

7. *2018 Referral: Item 04-03. Recommendation 5.d.—A Corp Board Composition. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 48, 363)*

Response: The A Corporation is governed by a board of directors who are elected by the General Assembly. There are designated board directors from Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (“COGA”), Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc. (“ILP”) Board, Presbyterian Mission Agency (“PMAB”) Board, Presbyterian Publishing Corporation (“PPC”) Board, Presbyterian Foundation Board, Presbyterian Women in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc. (“Presbyterian Women”), the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee, and the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns. There are three at large directors.

The racial and gender composition of the board is:

- 5 white (4 women, 1 man)
- 4 African American (1 woman, 3 men)
- 1 Asian (1 man)
- 1 Hispanic (1 woman)

8. *2018 Referral: Item 04-03. Recommendation 5.e.—Recommendations, in Consultation with the A Corp Board of Additional Services That Could Be Shared. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 48, 363)*

Response: The best and most likely opportunity for additional shared services is in Global Language Resources. Conversations are planned for 2020 with the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., Presbyterian Women, Foundation, and Board of Pensions. The translation and interpretation services would be provided on a fee for service basis and would be prioritized along with the needs of the primary client partners (OGA and PMA).

9. *2018 Referral: Item 04-03. Recommendation 5.f.—Regarding Potential for Mid Councils, Congregations, Other PC(USA) Organizations to Contract with ASG. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 48, 363)*

Response: ASG continues to explore opportunities to partner with mid councils, congregations, and other PC(USA) organizations. The most likely opportunity is providing on-line resources (legal, human resources, and finance) guidelines and

best practices. ASG already provides consultation on legal and human resource issues when contacted. Global Language Resources may be able to help mid councils identify interpreters. However, due to the financial challenges at every level of the denomination, there is little interest in contracting for ASG services. The desire is for service at no charge.

10. *2018 Referral: 04-04. Recommendation 1. On Evaluating Work Plans and Budgets with Guiding Questions Based on F-1.0404 in the Book of Order. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 49, 413–14)*

Response: For the first time the 2021–2022 budget will be presented as a unified budget: one budget for the denomination, with three components: per capita, mission, and the administrative services that are funded by the per capita and mission budgets. This will enable the 224th General Assembly (2020) to have a more complete picture of the entire national level budget. Encouraged by the Moving Forward Implementation Commission, the unified budget reallocates funds to recognize financial challenges among agencies. The unified budget demonstrates “a new openness to see both the possibilities and perils of its institutional forms in order to ensure the faithfulness and usefulness of these forms to God’s activity in the world.”

11. *2018 Referral: 10-13 Recommendation 7 (Direct Agencies Beginning Each Meeting with an Acknowledgement of Whose Land They Are on and Bring Greetings). (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 33, 842)*

Response: The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation Board, while not an agency, has included such an acknowledgement at the beginning of each of its meetings.

B. Board of Pensions

1. *2018 Referral: Item 04-03. Way Forward Commission Report. Recommendation 1e. 1. Composition of the Board of The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation (“A Corp.”) The Way Forward Commission and the All Agency Review Committee jointly recommend that the 223rd General Assembly (2018):e. Direct the governing board of directors, trustees, or committee of the Office of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Foundation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Corporation, Inc., and the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation to make all such changes as may be necessary and permitted in their governing documents and policies to recognize the changes in the structure and composition of the Board of The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 44, 46, 170-174).*

Response: The Board of Pensions has complied with this request of the General Assembly. At the Board of Pensions 2019 Spring Stated Meeting (concluding March 15, 2019), the Board of Pensions amended the bylaws to state the following individuals shall serve as a corresponding member of the Board of Directors, with voice and without the right to vote:

- (a) the chairperson of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board;
- (b) the president of The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation; and,
- (c) the Stated Clerk.

The individual serving in these capacities are part of the invitation list to meetings of the Board of Directors. With written notice to the Corporate Secretary, a corresponding member may designate a representative to attend a Board of Directors meeting *pro tem* (see also *Response to 2018 Referral: Item 04-03 Recommendation 2.b., below*).

2. *2018 Referral: Item 04-03. Way Forward Commission Report. Recommendation 2b. Role of the Stated Clerk b. Amend the Organization for Mission, Chapter IV.B.2.n., as follows: “n. The Stated Clerk Shall Promote the Harmony and Efficiency of the General Assembly and Its Agencies in Cooperation with the Presbyterian Mission Agency and Its Executive Director, with Special Attention to Relationships Between General Assembly Entities, and with Synods, Presbyteries, and Sessions. The Stated Clerk Shall Have Membership on or Relationship to Appropriate Committees, and Commissions, and Agencies of the General Assembly as It Shall Determine from Time to Time. The Stated Clerk Shall Serve Ex-Officio on the Board of Directors for the Presbyterian Mission Agency and Other Agencies (Identified in Chapter VIII of the Organization for Mission) Including Voice but Not Vote at All Meetings While in Either Open or Closed Session. Furthermore, the Stated Clerk Shall Be Consulted About any Candidate Before the Candidate’s Name Is Brought to a Board for Election as the Agency Executive (Chief Officer) or Interim Agency Executive (Other Than for a Replacement for the Stated Clerk Position)” (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 44, 46, 170-174).*

Response: The Board of Pensions has complied with this request of the General Assembly. At the Board of Pensions 2019 Spring Stated Meeting (concluding March 15, 2019), the Board of Pensions amended the bylaws to state the following individuals shall serve as a corresponding member of the Board of Directors, with voice and without the right to vote:

- (a) the chairperson of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board;

- (b) the president of The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation; and,
- (c) the Stated Clerk.

The individual serving in these capacities are part of the invitation list to meetings of the Board of Directors. With written notice to the Corporate Secretary, a corresponding member may designate a representative to attend a Board of Directors meeting *pro tem* (see also *Response to 2018 Referral: Item 04-03 Recommendation .I.e., above*).

Also, the bylaws include that the Stated Clerk shall be consulted about any candidate for president before that candidate's name is brought forth for election by the Board of Directors of the Board of Pensions.

3. *2018 Referral: Item 04-03. Way Forward Commission Report. Recommendation 4c. Understanding That We [the Way Forward Commission] Desire to Create a Systematic Approach to Language Accessibility for the Entire Church, Require That Translation Services Be Staffed Appropriately in Order to Provide Translation Services to All Six Agencies and Be Centralized in Shared Services. We Recommend That Our Existing Translation Staff Spread Across Several Agencies Be Coordinated Within Global Communications. Global Communications Would Translate All Materials Going Forward and Historical/Existing Records Upon Request. Prioritization and Exceptions of Translation Services Is to Be Discerned and Directed by an Inclusive Group, Such as the Diverse Voices Table, in Consultation with Associates in Racial Ethnic and Women's Intercultural Ministries, as Well as the Racial Ethnic Caucuses and the REAC. Translation Services Shall Include Websites and the Translation into English of Materials Originally Written in Other Languages. Translation Services Will Be One More Service Residing Within Shared Services in 'A Corp.' The Total Cost of These Services Shall Be Allocated and Paid for by Each Agency as a Percentage of Work Completed. Specific Funding Sources and Budgets Used by Each Agency Shall Be Determined by Their Respective Board(s)/Committee(s) and/or Executive Leadership.*" (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 44, 46, 170–74).

Response: The Board of Pensions has complied with this request of the General Assembly. The Board of Pensions currently conducts business in three languages: English, Spanish, and Korean. To this end, the Board hires native speakers into operational roles, who translate and interpret certain member-facing materials for groups and individuals. Any effective translation requires both language facility and expertise in plan and program technical accuracy.

The Board of Pensions is an active participant in the group of PC(USA) agency communications and marketing professionals. The recently hired Manager of Global Languages (A Corp./Administrative Services Group) has been invited to attend these meetings/calls.

Recognizing that the translation work of the Board of Pensions requires technical expertise and vocabulary around benefits plans, going forward the Board will look to partner with Global Languages as appropriate.

4. *2018 Referral: Item 04-05. Report of the All-Agency Review Committee to the 223rd General Assembly (2018). Recommendation 5. Instruct the Six Agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to Engage in a Collaborative Self-Study of the Per Capita Model and Its' Ability to Adequately Fund the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency in the Immediate and Longer-Term Future and to Explore Alternative and Creative Funding Resources for Both.* (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 44, 49, 176–78).

Response: The Board of Pensions appreciates the opportunities to collaborate on the work of the church. The Stated Clerk combined this recommendation with others to create the Special Committee on Per-Capita Based Funding and National Church Financial Sustainability. The Board was asked to provide multiple years of financial data. Our president met with the committee at its initial face-to-face meeting in Fort Worth, Texas, and provided a presentation on the financial structure of the Board, answering questions derived from the written report and the oral presentation. Subsequently, the committee sought additional insight by conducting a detailed survey of each agency executive. The Board provided full and forward-looking answers about current realities and potential alternatives. That survey was followed by another two-day meeting in Dallas, Texas, where those survey results and ideas were discussed. The Board has completely fulfilled this recommendation.

5. *2018 Referral: Item 04-INFO. Way Forward Commission Administrative Action on Trust and Transparency. The Commission Directs Staff and Governing Entities of All Six Denominational Agencies to Review Their Policies and Procedures, Both Formal and Informal, to Comply with the Spirit of This Administrative Action, Subject to Any Existing Agreements Between General Assembly and the Agencies; and Directs That, in All Interpretation of the Requirements of This Administrative Action, the Minimal Restriction on Disclosure and/or Speech Required Be Put into Effect.* (Minutes, 2018, Part I, p. 219).

Response: The Board of Pensions has complied with this request of the General Assembly. The Board of Directors, informed by guidance from the Board Development and Governance Committee, has reviewed the Board's practices, policies, and procedures, including the use of executive session, and recognizes the work of the church is best done with a spirit of transparency and openness.

6. *2018 Referral: Item 05-09. Commissioners' Resolution: On the Challenge of Being Black in the PC (USA). Recommendation 5. Advise the Board of Pensions to Analyze and Report on the Viability of African American Presbyterian Churches and the Challenges of Supporting Installed Pastoral Leadership (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 24, 224).*

Response: The Board of Pensions has embraced this request of the General Assembly, and is grateful for the collaboration with the National Black Presbyterian Caucus. The Board has gathered data about pastoral leadership, and continues to refine the data to inform the denomination. The Board concludes smaller churches with smaller budgets have a greater challenge meeting the need for installed pastoral leadership regardless of ethnic make-up and large churches are able to fill pulpits equally regardless of the congregation's racial and ethnic make-up. However, within the church size of 101–300, there is a clear disparity between the ability to call ministerial leadership within African American Presbyterian churches compared to all other congregations. To address this identified need, the Board has expanded the funding and eligibility requirements for Pathways to Renewal within self-identified African American Presbyterian Churches up to 300 members, effective February 7, 2020. Pathways to Renewal provides an incentive to employers to bring young ministers into the Benefits Plan with the full benefits of Pastor's Participation at substantially reduced dues. Nationally, this program has resulted in more than fifty new calls for ministers and we believe the same is likely to be true for African American Presbyterian churches.

Data on African American Presbyterian Churches—The Board and the Church

In 2017, the Board began a calculated effort to better collect and analyze data across the church, regarding clergy and terms of call. This began with an analysis of all individuals ordained from 2007 to 2016, compared to those who were ordained and received benefits from the Board of Pensions. This also included an analysis of the congregations served by size, and also documented the discrepancy in pay between genders. This information has been updated annually by the Board and published in *Living by the Gospel*, as authorized by the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

In 2018, several entities of the church began collaborating around data on a monthly call. These entities include the Office of the General Assembly's Denominational Rolls and Statistics, and Preparation for Ministry & Examinations; the Presbyterian Foundation's Fund for Theological Education, Research Services, and the Board.

To respond to Recommendation 5, the Board needed to draw upon the membership data of persons of color reported in the Session Annual Statistical Report for a better understanding of congregations more broadly. To focus on self-identifying African American Presbyterian churches, the 2018–2019 African American Presbyterian Congregations directory was also consulted.

It is not appropriate to allow racial and ethnic status to influence the pricing for medical coverage. Therefore, the Board has not collected racial and ethnic data on members in the Benefits Plan. There are other areas of the church that do appropriately collect racial and ethnic data. These include, and are not limited to, the Office of the General Assembly's Session Annual Statistical Report, committees on representation for all mid councils above session, Intercultural Ministries and Support for Congregations of Color (including African American, African, Asian, Hispanic/Latino-a, Korean, Middle Eastern, and Native American; and their independent caucuses), and the Racial Ethnic Advocacy Committee.

Refining the Data

The 2018 Comparative Summary of Statistics, published by the Office of General Assembly, notes in responses to the Session Annual Statistical Report that 82 percent of churches submitted statistical data, representing 87 percent of PC(USA) membership. Further, the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approved a new set of statistical questions (Item 03-09) that concluded the Racial Composition of Congregations for "Black/African American/Africa" was representative of 80 percent of membership, and was 47,329 members (or 4.39 percent of church membership).¹ It is estimated there are 80,000 African American Presbyterians.² The rolls are incomplete, and the exact number is not known. It is also known that New Worshipping Communities and New Immigrant Fellowships are not reflected in the Comparative Summary of Statistics. Therefore, one can conclude that self-identifying African American congregations represent a large and important part of the African American story in the PC(USA) but it is certainly not the only way African American members experience church.

The National Black Presbyterian Caucus has been very helpful in this process, and the 2018–2019 African American Presbyterian Congregations directory has been indispensable. The directory lists all churches by synod and presbytery, church leadership (pastor, commissioned lay pastor, moderator, or vacant), and church membership. For purposes of this study, congregations listing only a moderator were considered vacant.

The focus of this referral was on "African American Presbyterian Churches." This is separate from African American Presbyterians. First, there are individual African Americans who worship in African American Presbyterian congregations, and these individuals have officially joined the church to be counted as members. Second, there are African American Presbyterians who worship in diverse contexts and congregations, and therefore would not be included in a congregation that does not self-identify as an "African American Presbyterian Church." Third, there are African American Presbyterian Congregations who

have more than 80 percent of their membership from the self-reported “Black/African American/Africa” category, who are not represented in the African American Presbyterian Congregations directory. While these realities preclude a complete picture, the data we examined does indeed present a meaningful, representative picture.

Analyzing Church Size

Analyzing the 9,161 congregations and the church’s 1,352,444 congregational members,³ the “average” church would have 148 members. 74 percent of congregations have fewer than 150 members, representing 29 percent of membership. However, 26 percent of congregations have more than 150 members, and represent 71 percent of membership! The distribution of congregational membership is not even.

There is heavy concentration of smaller churches with fewer members.

Membership Size	0-25	26-50	51-100	101-150	151-300	301-800	801-1,600	1,600+	TOTAL
# of All Congregations	1,504	1,870	2,194	1,207	1,339	838	161	48	9,161
# of All Members	22,371	67,666	155,524	147,080	279,648	386,165	173,136	120,854	1,352,444
Cumulative % of All Congregations	16.4%	36.8%	60.8%	74.0%	88.6%	97.7%	99.5%	100.0%	
Cumulative % of All Membership	1.7%	6.7%	18.2%	29.0%	49.7%	78.3%	91.1%	100.0%	

Now, let us look at these self-identifying African American Presbyterian congregations and members. Again, this is done by membership size.

Membership Size	0-25	26-50	51-100	101-150	151-300	301-800	801-1,600	1,600+	TOTAL
# of African American Congregations	76	113	119	59	37	13	2	0	419
# of African American Members	1,190	4,155	8,215	7,017	7,508	5,924	1,795	0	35,804
Cumulative % of African American Congregations	18.1%	45.1%	73.5%	87.6%	96.4%	99.5%	100.0%	100.0%	
Cumulative % of African American Members	3.3%	14.9%	37.9%	57.5%	78.4%	95.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

The comparison is easier to see if one looks at the percentage of each size as a percent of the total:

Membership Size	0-25	26-50	51-100	101-150	151-300	301-800	801-1,600	1,600+
% of All Congregations	16.4%	20.4%	23.9%	13.2%	14.6%	9.1%	1.8%	0.5%
% of all Members	1.7%	5.0%	11.5%	10.9%	20.7%	28.6%	12.8%	8.9%
% of African American Congregations	18.1%	27.0%	28.4%	14.1%	8.8%	3.1%	0.5%	0.0%
% of African American Members	3.3%	11.6%	22.9%	19.6%	21.0%	16.5%	5.0%	0.0%

02 RECOMMENDED REFERRALS TO THE 225TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2022)

As demonstrated above, in each category of size, there are more smaller African American Presbyterian congregations compared to all Presbyterian congregations, and fewer larger African American Presbyterian congregations.

Revisiting the lens of 150 members. 74 percent of all congregations have fewer than 150 members and represent 29 percent of all membership. 88 percent of all African American Presbyterian congregations have fewer than 150 members, representing 58 percent of all membership. African American Presbyterian congregations tend to be smaller than all Presbyterian congregations.

Until this point, the comparison has been between the 419 self-identifying African American Presbyterian congregations with all 9,161 Presbyterian congregations. It is helpful to compare the 419 African American Presbyterian congregations to the 8,742 “all other” congregations

And how are self-identified African American Presbyterian congregations served by installed pastoral leadership? One helpful way to explore this is to recognize that called and installed pastors are members of the Benefits Plan. One can compare number of leaders to the number of congregations, specifically African American Presbyterian congregations to “all other” Presbyterian congregations by size. African American Presbyterian congregations, by congregation size, are less likely to be served by installed pastoral leadership. (The figures in the categories 801-1,600 and 1,600+ stop at 100 percent because of multi-staff congregations; that is, there are multiple ministers serving a single congregation.)

Congregational Leaders in the Benefits Plan

Membership Size	0-25	26-50	51-100	101-150	151-300	301-800	801-1,600	1,600+	AVG
African American Congregations Served by Ministers in the Benefits Plan	2.6%	7.1%	32.8%	62.7%	62.2%	76.9%	100.0%	-	28.9%
Other Congregations Served by Ministers in the Benefits Plan	6.8%	20.9%	49.5%	73.3%	86.2%	99.5%	100.0%	100.0%	51.9%

It is possible to look beyond installed pastoral leadership and to compare “any” leadership. The Office of the General Assembly maintains rolls on the service of all ordained ministers of the Word and Sacrament by an occupation code, which is affiliated with a church personal identification number. It is possible for an individual to be “honorably retired” as their primary occupation code and to serve simultaneously as a “temporary supply” as their secondary occupation code. Further, commissioned lay pastors (commissioned ruling elders) are also assigned an occupation code and linked to the church being served. And if a single minister or commissioned lay pastor is serving multiple churches, each church served is assigned an occupation code.

Therefore, by comparing all occupation codes to all churches, it is possible to see the extent to which all churches are served by anyone a leader with an occupation code. (To have an occupation code assigned to a church, a presbytery would need to approve that relationship, typically through the commission on ministry, as reported by the presbytery’s stated clerk.) There are also a limited number of churches who report through their presbyteries they are “regularly supplied” with leadership. This is reflected in the African American Congregational Directory by churches listed with a “pastor” though there is no occupation code associated with that congregation.

Congregations without Any Leadership

Membership Size	0-25	26-50	51-100	101-150	151-300	301-800	801-1,600	1,600+	TOTAL
African American Congregations without Leadership	26.8% (41)	34.0% (52)	27.5% (42)	8.5% (13)	3.3% (5)	0.0% (0)	-	-	100% (153)
Other Congregations without Leadership	35.8% (854)	34.8% (831)	24.9% (595)	4.4% (106)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	100% (2,386)

There is similarity among smaller churches struggling to find congregational leadership. There is a disparity with African American Presbyterian congregations with 101–300 members less likely to be served by leadership. To address this identified need, the Board has expanded the eligibility requirements for Pathways to Renewal, an incentive to employers to bring young

ministers into the Benefits Plan with the full benefits of Pastor's Participation at substantially reduced dues. Effective February 7, 2020, African American Presbyterian congregations up to 300 members are eligible for Pathways to Renewal.

Endnotes

1. https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/statistics/2018_comparative_summaries_of_statistics_v4_6-19-19.pdf
2. <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/racial-equity-womens-intercultural-ministries/african-american-intercultural-congregational-support/>
3. Since 234 members are carried on the roles of presbyteries, the Comparative Statistics reports the denomination has 1,352,768 members.

7. *2018 Referral: Item 06-20. A Resolution to Require and Expand Family Leave Policies. Recommendation 3. Direct the Other Five Agencies of the General Assembly (Board of Pensions, Foundation, Office of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., and the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation) to Improve Their Family Leave Policies by the 224th General Assembly (2020) to Reflect That Which Is Equal to or Better Than the Current Family Leave Policy of the Presbyterian Mission Agency (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 70, 73, 237).*

Response: The Board of Pensions has embraced this request of the General Assembly, and the current policies of the Board are already aligned with the expectations of the General Assembly. As an employer of approximately 185 employees, the Board of Pensions has determined that its Family Leave Policies are equal to, and in some instances, better than the current Family Leave Policy of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. Therefore, no changes have been made to the Board of Pensions' policies.

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) used the personnel policies of the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) as the benchmark for comparison. Both the PMA and the Board of Pensions (BOP) employ more than fifty employees respectively and are considered covered employers according to the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

PMA provides up to twelve weeks of paid and unpaid time off, in a rolling twelve-month period, consistent with the types of leave included in the FMLA. PMA provides parental leave not to exceed twelve weeks (approx. three months) paid and unpaid leave. Regarding pay, PMA provides 100 percent of regular pay for four weeks (approx. one month) of parental leave for childbirth, followed by 60 percent of regular pay (after PTO leave is exhausted) for balance of eight weeks. The resulting benefit is approximately 8.8 weeks of pay. For fathers/adoptions, PMA offers twelve weeks unpaid leave. Finally, PMA offers parental leave to run concurrent with FLMA leave and works in conjunction with Short-Term Disability.

The Board provides up to twelve weeks of paid and unpaid time off, consistent with the types of leave included in the FMLA, meeting the benchmark. The Board provides parental leave not to exceed 6 months paid and unpaid leave, exceeding the benchmark. Regarding pay, the Board provides a choice of either 1) 75 percent of regular pay for first two months, followed by up to four months unpaid leave; and, may supplement reduced pay with accrued, available benefit time; or, 2) the employee chooses 60 percent of regular pay for first three months, followed by up to three months unpaid leave; and may supplement reduced pay with accrued, available benefit time. With either choice, the first three months of unpaid leave includes a short-term disability benefit at 60 percent of regular pay. The resulting benefit exceeds the benchmark, and is approximately 13.2 weeks of pay. The Board offers for non-child-bearing parent/adoptions the same paid parental leave as the biological mother; fathers are entitled to twelve weeks unpaid leave, exceeding the benchmark. Finally, the Board exceeds the benchmark by offering parental leave concurrent with FMLA leave and follows the period of Short-Term Disability (ninety days) for childbirth.

The Board appreciates the emphasis the General Assembly continues to place upon leave. The Board has exceeded the benchmarks set by the 222nd General Assembly (2016), Item 05-10 "A Resolution to Require and Expand Family Leave Policies"; and, the 221st General Assembly (2014), Item 09-22 "On Encouraging Parental Leave Policy."

8. *2018 Referral: Item 06-NB. To Create a Task Force on Family Leave. Recommendation: The Church Polity and Ordered Ministry Committee Recommends That the 223rd General Assembly Appoint a Six Person Task Force to Study, Work, Pray and Discern on the Issue of Paid Family Leave for PC(USA) Employees, Including But Not Limited to Ministers to Implement a Faithful Resolution with All the Challenges Associated with This. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 69, 74, 241).*

Response: The Board of Pensions has actively participated in the work of the task force and appreciates the express invitation of the General Assembly to collaborate on this important issue (see also *Response to 2018 Referral: Item 06-20 Recommendation 3. above.*). The Board of Pensions contributed staff support, which included advice and education on the technical aspects of a Paid Family Leave Policy. The Board was a participant in the in-person and telephonic meetings of the task force.

At its 2020 Spring Board Meeting, the Board of Directors of the Board of Pensions will be considering the provision of temporary disability coverage, which may help to address income replacement needs during a time of personal illness, including that which is related to pregnancy and childbirth. However, while this coverage would be an automatic part of the benefits

provided to minister members enrolled in either Pastor's Participation or Minister's Choice, it would be available to other Plan Members only at the election of their employers.

9. *2018 Referral: Item 08-03. On Engagement with the Issue of Climate Change. Recommendation 6. Affirm That It Is Both Possible and Practical to Effect Meaningful Change; Urge Individuals, Congregations, Councils of the Church, and Institutions (Including The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation, Board of Pensions, Presbyterian Mission Agency, Office of the General Assembly, Camps, Conference Centers, Colleges, and Theological Seminaries) to Initiate, Continue, and Build Upon Steps to Reduce Our Carbon Footprint and to Continue Adoption of Lower-Carbon and Zero-Carbon Technologies and Lifestyles. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 53, 54, 254–55).*

Response: The Board of Pensions has complied with this request of the General Assembly, recognizing this work is never truly finished. As an agency of the church, the Board has leveraged technology to replace paper processes. Facsimile transmissions have been eliminated, with 85 percent of transactions moving from a paper to digital format. The Board has also provided digital materials and physically prints only upon demand, instead of maintaining a large paper inventory.

As an employer, the Board offers employees a commuter benefit program to incentivize public transportation. Along with the renewal of the lease of the Board's primary business location, the building has several initiatives for lower-carbon technologies and lifestyles. Finally, the Board has shifted the staff pantry areas from foam to paper, and plastic to biodegradable wood (see also *Response to 2018 Referral: Item 08-11, below*).

10. *2018 Referral: Item 08-11. Regarding the Use of Products Made of Polystyrene. Recommendation 1. Direct the Office of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Board of Pensions, the Presbyterian Foundation, the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, and Other Related Agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to Reduce, to the Maximum Extent Feasible, Use of Products Made of Polystyrene Foam. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 12, 55, 263).*

Response: The Board of Pensions has complied with this request of the General Assembly. Upon conclusion of the 223rd General Assembly (2018), the Board removed all polystyrene cups from our coffee pantries and kitchen areas. When ordering catering or working with other food vendors, the Board requested paper goods be used instead of foam (see also *Response to 2018 Referral: Item 08-03* above).

11. *2018 Referral: Item 11-05. Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns Name Change. Recommendation 1. Direct All Six Agencies of the PC(USA) "to Move Toward Changing Racial Ethnic People" to "People Of Color" in All Documents, Parlance, And Programs from This Point Forward (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 13, 57–58, 314–15).*

Response: The Board of Pensions has complied with this request of the General Assembly.

12. *2018 Referral: Item 11-11. "Declare an Imperative for the Reformation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in being a Transformative Church in This Intercultural Era." Recommendation 4. Immediately After the 223rd General Assembly (2018), Direct The Moderator to Appoint a Cross-Sectional Task Force to Develop and Publish Priorities and Guidelines for Congregations, Mid Councils, and General Assembly Entities for the "Decade of Intercultural Transformation" and Recommend Appropriate Resources to Deepen Understanding and Skills for Resisting Discrimination Based on Race, Class, Gender, Sex, or Sexuality. Promote Awareness of Resources Currently Available That Deepen Understanding of Intersectionality and Skills for Resistance Including Those Less Frequently Discussed, Such as Interfaith Competencies so Essential in These Times. Recommendation 5. Direct the Office of the General Assembly (OGA), the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA), the Presbyterian Foundation (FDN), the Board of Pensions (BOP), the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation (PPC), and the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc. (PILP) to Develop Relevant Intercultural Programs, Resources, Events, and Antiracism Training to Assist Persons in Recognizing Intersectionality or How Differences Treated Oppressively Are Experienced Simultaneously in Ways That Amplify and Complicate the Consequences of Each Aspect of Oppression. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 55, 59, 323–25).*

Response: The Board of Pensions has complied with this request of the General Assembly, recognizing this work is never truly finished. All Board employees are required to complete the annual compliance training, including "Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace."

Additionally, the Board purchased for each employee a LinkedIn Learning subscription (LinkedIn Learning is a website offering video courses taught by industry experts in software, creative, and business skills.) and offers a curated collection of online learning courses about Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging. The following course titles are available for all employees within LinkedIn Learning:

- Unconscious Bias

- Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging
- Communicating about Culturally Sensitive Issues
- Communicating across Cultures
- Becoming a Male Ally at Work
- Inclusive Leadership
- Confronting Bias: Thriving across Our Differences
- Skills for Inclusive Conversations

The Board's internal learning portal features an Ethically Speaking series and a program entitled "Respect Diversity." The Board has conducted a proactive campaign directing employees to these courses and communicated about them through various internal promotional channels.

13. *2018 Referral: Item 13-10. Living by the Gospel: A Guide to Structuring Ministers' Terms of Call. Recommendation: The 223rd General Assembly (2018) Accepts the Document, Living by the Gospel: A Guide to Structuring Ministers' Terms of Call, and Requests the Board of Pensions to Annually Update and Distribute, at the Board of Pensions' Expense, the Document to All Mid Councils, Committees on Ministry, Committees on Preparation for Ministry, and Pastor Nominating Committees in an Effort to Promote Awareness of Gender Disparity in Clergy Benefit and Salary Packages, the 223rd General Assembly (2018) Urges COMs, Within Twelve Months of the Close of the Assembly, to: Study and Adopt the Theology of Benefits in the Document Living by the Gospel ... (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 14, 22, 351–52).*

Response: The Board of Pensions has complied with this request of the General Assembly. The Board has updated Living by the Gospel annually, and plans to continue so to do. To minimize our carbon footprint, the document is formatted to be viewed digitally, and is printed on demand (see also *Response to 2018 Referral: Item 08-03*, p. 329). Living by the Gospel is a resource for the Board's education programs, both online and in-person, and has been featured consistently in the Board's communications to plan members, and affiliated employees.

14. *2018 Referral: Item 04-03. Way Forward Commission Report. Recommendation 4b. 4. Inclusion and Equity. The Way Forward Commission Recommends That the 223rd General Assembly (2018): Require That the Previous Mandate Originating from the 222nd General Assembly (2016) for Personnel Audits from Each Agency Must Be Completed by January 1, 2019. Further, Direct That All Agencies Incorporate 'Race Audits' Occurring at Least Every Four Years, Utilizing an External Professional Auditor, Who Can Objectively Report Systemic Bias and Prejudice, as Well as Suggesting Actions to Becoming More Racially Just and Equitable Employers. The Same External Auditor Shall Be Utilized by All Agencies in Order That the Same Standards Are Applied. The Results of These Audits Will Be Reported to Respective Agency Boards and Committees and to the Next General Assembly. We Further Recommend That the Members of the Diverse Voices Table and the 'Chairs & Chiefs' Group of Agency Executives and Board Chairs Collaborate to Select the External Auditor. (See Minutes, 2016, Part I, p. 788, GA 222 Item 11-24 (Recommendation 1.b., 'Churchwide Conversation on Race, Ethnicity, Racism and Ethnocentricity Report').] (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 47, 172).*

Response: The Board of Pensions is deeply committed to maintaining a racially diverse and inclusive workforce. For over a decade, the Board has tracked gender and racial diversity in hiring, dismissal, promotions, and leadership, and reported that information to the General Assembly. The Board is proud to say that our results have far exceeded the goals established by the General Assembly in every year. The current General Assembly goals are 40 percent for female employment and 20 percent for people of color. For the year 2019, those measures stood at 61 percent female and 30 percent people of color. In 2018 and again in 2019, The Board of Pensions has been honored as "Philadelphia's Best Places to Work." The Board conducted employee engagement surveys in 2016 and 2019; with nearly 100 percent participation, results, respectively, were 83 percent and 86 percent highly engaged.

The Board of Pensions contracted with the Reed Development Group (RDG) to conduct a diversity, equality, and inclusion assessment. The assessment used a data-driven approach to understand the current state of diversity, equality, and inclusion at the Board. Based on the results, the Board launched a Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion Leadership Council, consisting of broad representation of employees. Board of Pensions President Frank Spencer serves as adviser to the council and Chief Operating Officer Susan Reimann sits on the council. Senior Vice President Kelly Riley, the Board of Pensions representative to the Diverse Voices Table, also sits on the council, to ensure alignment and share best practices across agencies. Kimberly Reed of RDG serves as facilitator to the council. The RDG assessment and the Board of Pensions initiatives were shared with

the agency's Board of Directors on March 7, 2020, as part of the President's Report. The assessment and the letter from President Spencer to all Board of Pensions employees can be found [here](#).

15. *2018 Referral: Item 04-03. Way Forward Commission Report. Recommendation 4a. 4. Inclusion and Equity. The Way Forward Commission Recommends That the 223rd General Assembly (2018): a. [Diversity and Reconciliation.] Require That All Six Agencies Participate and Invite Presbyterian Women to Participate in the Diverse Voices Table Being Established (Described Under Ongoing Commission Administrative Actions Below); and Similar to What Has Been Undertaken by the PMA's Office On Diversity and Reconciliation, Create a Process to Examine Issues of Equity and Inclusion Particular to Their Own Agencies. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 47, 172).*

Response: The Board of Pensions has participated in the Diverse Voices Table. Kelly Riley, senior vice president, plan operations, and Edward Thompson, senior church consultant and director, interagency relations, represented the Board of Pensions at the Diverse Voices Table. As a Louisville resident, Mr. Thompson was able to participate in all eleven face-to-face meetings, and Ms. Riley attended seven in person and four by video conference. Mr. Thompson participated in the subcommittee addressing education issues relating to Inclusion and Equity. Ms. Riley actively contributed to the leadership briefing of the chairs and chiefs of the national agencies, drawing upon her more than thirty-five years of experience in call center and benefit plan administration, twenty of those at the Board of Pensions.

C. Committee on the Office of the General Assembly

1. *2016 Referral: Item 11-24. Churchwide Conversation on Race, Ethnicity, Racism, and Ethnocentricity Report—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency. Recommendation 1.e. Direct the Office of General Assembly to Study Different Models and Best Practices for Church Governance, Including Resources on Various Decision-Making Processes That Provide Space for Participation by People of Differing Backgrounds. (Minutes, 2016, Part I, pp. 57, 788)*

Response: Complete. See https://mcusercontent.com/1721a6b9451a1567ee53b00fc/files/71c6cdb8-2b2a-4ebf-9819-a3005f6ba2b2/Response_to_Referral_222nd_GA_2016_11_24.1e.pdf.

2. *2018 Referral: Item 06-02 On Amending G-3.0307 to Clarify the Responsibility of the Presbytery. Approved by the 223rd General Assembly (2018), Presbyteries Approved 166 Affirmative, 1 Negative. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 70, 565–66)*

Response: Printed in *Book of Order* 2019–21, The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Part II.

3. *2018 Referral: Item 06-04 On Amending D-2.0203b Regarding the Definition of Offense. Approved as Amended by the 223rd General Assembly (2018), Presbyteries Approved 141 Affirmative, 26 Negative. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 71, 570)*

Response. Printed in *Book of Order* 2019–21, The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Part II.

4. *2018 Referral: Item 06-05 On Amending G-3.0306 to Clarify the Membership of the Presbytery. Approved as Amended by the 223rd General Assembly (2018), Presbyteries Approved 165 Affirmative, 2 Negative. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 71, 571)*

Response. Printed in *Book of Order* 2019–21, The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Part II.

5. *2018 Referral: Item 06-09 On Amending G-2.0509 Regarding Renunciation of Jurisdiction. Approved as Amended by the 223rd General Assembly (2018), Presbyteries Approved 128 Affirmative, 38 Negative. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 71–72, 588)*

Response. Printed in *Book of Order* 2019–21, The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Part II.

6. *2018 Referral: Item 06-09 On Amending D-10.0401d Regarding Time Limit for Minister Who Renounced Jurisdiction. Approved as Amended by the 223rd General Assembly (2018), Presbyteries Approved 143 Affirmative, 23 Negative. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 71–72, 588)*

Response. Printed in *Book of Order* 2019–21, The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Part II.

7. *2018 Referral: Item 06-09. Refer the Question of Permitting Trials in Absentia for Those Who Have Renounced Jurisdiction in the Midst of a Disciplinary Proceeding to the Office of the General Assembly and Rules of Discipline Task Force to Bring a Recommendation to the 224th General Assembly (2020). (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 71–72, 588)*

Response: Complete. The Office of the General Assembly concurs with the Rules of Discipline Task Force and offers the following response:

That the referral of the question of permitting trials in absentia for those who have renounced jurisdiction in the midst of a disciplinary process be answered by the addition of language within the Church Discipline regarding process to be followed when someone in ordered ministry renounces the jurisdiction of the church during disciplinary process. The language below is taken from the text of Recommendation 1 and is repeated here for clarity.

D-7.0301

Jurisdiction in a disciplinary process ends when a church member or a minister of the Word and Sacrament against whom an allegation has been filed renounces the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in accordance with G-2.0407 or G-2.0509. In this case, the clerk of session or stated clerk of the presbytery shall report to the council both the renunciation and the status of the matter at that time, including the name of the accused, the date and fact of renunciation during an investigation or trial, and the charges, if filed.

A person alleged to have been harmed may make the request for a pastoral inquiry at any time to the clerk of session or stated clerk, and it shall be brought to the council for consideration. In the interest of continuity, the council by its rules may appoint members of a former investigating committee to the membership of any subsequent committee or commission appointed to make inquiry into the matter.

For instances of alleged sexual abuse of another person, if an accused has died or is no longer under the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the investigating or prosecuting committee shall ask the accuser, and if reasonably possible, those alleged to have been harmed, if they request the council to continue a pastoral inquiry under the provision in G-3.0109b(6). If they choose to make that request, the investigating or prosecuting committee shall communicate it to the clerk of session or stated clerk, who shall bring the matter before the council for consideration.

Church discipline has to do with the internal discipline of members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The rules allow for trials in absentia in cases when members of the church fail to respond to a citation to appear for a trial (D-11.0202b in the current Rules of Discipline and D-5.0305 and D-8.0305 in the proposed revision, Church Discipline).

Those who have renounced jurisdiction in the midst of a disciplinary proceeding have removed themselves as members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and therefore, from the jurisdiction of the church and its authority in disciplinary matters. A trial in absentia in such cases is not possible.

8. *2018 Referral: Item 06-11 On Amending G-2.0401 Regarding the Composition of a Congregational Nominating Committee. Approved as Amended by the 223rd General Assembly (2018), Presbyteries Approved 164 Affirmative, 3 Negative. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 72, 592).*

Response: This item was approved by the presbyteries. Printed in *Book of Order 2019–21, The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Part II.*

9. *2018 Referral: Item 06-16 On Amending G-3.0104 to Prohibit Public Endorsement of Individuals Running for Office. Approved by the 223rd General Assembly (2018), Presbyteries Disapproved 45 Affirmative, 122 Negative. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 70, 611).*

Response: This item was disapproved by the presbyteries.

10. *2018 Referral: Item 06-24 On Amending D-10.0401b Regarding Time Limit for Charges. Approved Alternate Resolution by the 223rd General Assembly (2018), Presbyteries Approved 158 Affirmative, 9 Negative. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 73–74, 632).*

Response: This item was approved by the presbyteries. Printed in *Book of Order 2019–21, The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Part II.*

11. *2018 Referral: Item 06-24 On Amending D-10.0401c(1) Regarding Definition of Sexual Abuse. Approved Alternate Resolution by the 223rd General Assembly (2018), Presbyteries Approved 165 Affirmative, 2 Negative. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 73–74, 631).*

Response: This item was approved by the presbyteries. Printed in *Book of Order 2019–21, The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Part II.*

12. *2018 Referral: Item 09-14. Commissioners' Resolution: Stop the Separation of Families. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 40–41, 800–801).*

Response: Complete. Letter from Stated Clerk to U.S. officials sent in February 2020 (including 1–5) and letter (deaths on the border—metering and MPP) sent to U.S. officials in June 2019; Ecumenical letter regarding family separation and zero tolerance in June 2018; Divestment from Detention letter (PCUSA) via Interfaith Immigration Coalition in May 2019; Faith leader letter opposing increases in FY2019 budget spending on immigration enforcement in November 2018 as PC(USA).

Office of Immigration Issues congressional asks—http://oga.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/immigrationadvocacyasksoct2019_amandaedits.pdf.

Video/study guide series *Troubling the Waters* from the Office of Equity and Representation is in production.

Office of Immigration Issues does these things in every presentation, phone calls, and email when communicating with mid councils, practitioners, and concerned members. Also included in raid response guide from the Mississippi experience—https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/mississippi_raidresponse_update_082119.pdf.

Lenten Devotion 2019 in collaboration with the Interfaith Immigration Coalition—<http://www.interfaithimmigration.org/2019/02/21/resource-funding-for-border-fences-and-walls-falls-far-short-of-faith-values/>.

13. *2018 Referral: Item 09-04. Recommendation 1.b. Endorsing Affirmation Regarding the Welfare of Our Neighbors in Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador. Direct the Office of Public Witness, the Office of Immigration, the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the Peacemaking Program, and the Presbyterian Office at the United Nations to Incorporate the Voices of Meso-American Leaders in PC(USA)'s Immigration and Refugee Advocacy Efforts; Create Mechanisms for the U.S. Government to Hear the Voices of Church Leaders from Meso-America When Policy Decisions Are Made That Affect Their Context. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 37, 764).*

Response: Compete. July 2019—Participated in an immigration forum in El Salvador, which was hosted by the Calvinist Reformed Church of El Salvador (IRCES), attended by faith leaders, government officials, and international NGOs focused on the work of addressing causes of migration, responding to immigrants in El Salvador, and responding to returnees from the United States.

Advent Devotion 2018, coordinated by the Interfaith Immigration Coalition—<http://www.interfaithimmigration.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/IIC-Advent-Devotional-Version-2.pdf>.

Participated in an amicus brief before the U.S. Supreme Court in defense of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) wherein the stories of Meso-American DACA recipients who serve at faith-based organizations were lifted up in the body of the brief.

https://oga.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/mid_council_ministries/departement_of_homeland_security_et_al_v_regents_of_the_university_of_california_et_al_october_5_2019_in_the_supreme_court_of_the_united_states.pdf

14. *2018 Referral: Item 11-04. 3. Direct the Stated Clerk and the Office of Public Witness to Oppose Legislative, Judicial, and Administrative Efforts at the State and Federal Levels to Limit the Protection of Persons Based Upon Race, Ethnicity, Sex, Gender, Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Religion, or Gender Expression in the Guise of Religious Freedom. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 57, 997).*

Response: Complete. The Stated Clerk considered an amicus regarding religious freedom that had the effect of limiting protection of persons based upon race, ethnicity, sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, or gender expression in the guise of religious freedom. The Stated Clerk, upon recommendation by the Advisory Committee on Litigation, declined to sign the amicus.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency took lead on this referral; see II. Final Responses to Referrals, D. Presbyterian Mission Agency, Referral 55, pp. 356-57.

15. *2018 Referral: Item 11-09. Recommendation 1. A Resolution on Sexual Misconduct in the PC(USA)—From the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns. Direct the Stated Clerk to Declare That the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Confesses Its Failure to Listen to the Long-Silenced Voices of Survivors of Clergy Sexual Misconduct, Repents Its Institutional Sins of Ineffective Sexual Misconduct Policy, and Commits to the Deep Systemic Changes Needed to Create Just Systems. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 58–59, 1024).*

Response: Complete. The Stated Clerk issued a letter, found at https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/sexual_misconduct_letter.pdf.

16. *2018 Referral: Item 11-09. Recommendation 2. A Resolution on Sexual Misconduct in the PC(USA)—From the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns. Direct the Stated Clerk, in Conjunction with the Declaration Named in Recommendation 1, to Commit the PC(USA) to Complete Transparency on the Number of Charges of Sexual Misconduct at All Levels of Congregational and Denominational Life and to encourage Mid Councils, While Respecting Confidentiality, to Voluntarily*

Submit the Number of Sexual Misconduct Allegations and Charges Within Their Bounds to the Stated Clerk to Be Reported to Each General Assembly. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 58–59, 1024).

Response: Complete. Questions about the number of sexual misconduct allegations and charges have been added to the report required of presbytery stated clerks, and the letter referenced in the response to Recommendation 1 includes encouragement to respond so that accurate numbers can be reported to each General Assembly in the future.

17. *2018 Referral: Item 11-09. Recommendation 3. A Resolution on Sexual Misconduct in the PC(USA)—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns. Direct the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Provide and, Where Necessary, Develop Pastoral, Trauma-Informed Clinical Care (TIC)-Based and Theologically Grounded Resources for Healing Victims and Their Families, Congregations, and Presbyteries from Sexual Misconduct Within the Church. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 58–59, 1024–25).*

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency has taken lead on this referral; see II. Final Responses to Referrals, D. Presbyterian Mission Agency, Referral 58, p. 357.

18. *2018 Referral: Item 11-09. Recommendation 4. A Resolution on Sexual Misconduct in the PC(USA)—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns. Direct the Office of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Board of Pensions, the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, and the Presbyterian Foundation to Provide Mandatory, Annual Sexual Misconduct Training for Their Employees That Include Pastoral and Trauma-Informed Clinical Care Resources Along with Legal Resources, and That Emphasize Representing the Denomination as a Place of Truth-Telling, Justice, Accountability, and Pastoral and Theologically-Grounded Healing. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 58–59, 1025).*

Response: The Administrative Services Group has taken lead on this referral; see II. Final Responses to Referrals, A. Administrative Services Group, Referral 3, p. 321.

19. *2018 Referral: Item 11-09. Recommendation 5. A Resolution on Sexual Misconduct in the PC(USA)—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns. Direct the General Assembly Nominating Committee (GANC), in Consultation with the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP), to Form a Five-Member Task Force Composed of Victims and Advocates for Victims of Sexual Misconduct. The Task Force Will Oversee the Implementation of Recommendations 1.Thru 4. While Undertaking a Comprehensive Examination of Presbyterian Policy, Judicial Process, and Rules of Discipline. It Will Evaluate the Need for a Sexual Assault Response Coordinator within Each Presbytery and the Collection of the Number of Sexual Misconduct Allegations and Charges Occurring within the Bounds of the Denomination. The Task Force Will Be Staffed by both OGA and PMA, and Will Report Back to the 224th General Assembly (2020) with Recommendations on How the PC(USA) Can Be More Effective in Ensuring Justice, Accountability, and Pastoral Support for Individuals, Families, and Congregations When Charges of Sexual Misconduct Have Been Made. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 58–59, 1025).*

Response: Complete. The task force was formed and is bringing a report to the 224th General Assembly (2020). The committee was staffed by both the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly.

20. *2018 Referral: Item 14-03 On Amending W-4.0202 to Clarify Who Is Welcomed to the Table. Approved by the 223rd General Assembly (2018), Presbyteries Approved 166 Affirmative, 1 Negative. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 17, 1205).*

Response: Approved by the presbyteries. Printed in *Book of Order* 2019-21, The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Part II.

21. *2018 Referral: Item 14-05. On Adopting the “Letter from Birmingham City Jail,” written by the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., as a Contemporary Statement of Faith. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 18, 1208).*

Response: Final. The owners of the copyrighted “Letter from Birmingham City Jail” would not grant us the ability to reproduce and distribute the material in an on-line format, making consideration of the item virtually impossible, and making distribution of an amended *Book of Confessions* quite difficult as well.

D. Office of the General Assembly

1. *2018 Referral: Item 03-03. From Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. On Amending Section IV.C. of the Organization for Mission by Adding a New “d.” and Renumbering Current IV.C.d.–h. as IV.C.e–i. to State That Persons*

Serving as Staff of the Six Agencies Cannot Be on Elected Committees, Commissions, or Special Committees and Commissions Unless Noted Otherwise by the General Assembly. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 66, 163).

Response: Completed.

2. *2018 Referral: Item 03-09. From Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. On Updating the Session's Annual Statistical Report to Include Collection of Data Concerning Gender, Disability, and Christian Education. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 67, 167–69).*

Response: The Session Annual Statistical Report was updated to include total number of women, disability, and Christian education.

3. *2018 Referral: Item 03-10. From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. On Amending Standing Rule A.6.h. to Make Clear What Happens if Assembly Overturns Bills and Overtures Decision Not to Refer an Item of Business. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 67, 176).*

Response: Completed.

4. *2018 Referral: Item 03-12. From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. On Amending Standing Rule E.2.f.(3) Regarding Privilege to Speak. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 67, 177)*

Response: Completed.

5. *2018 Referral: Item 03-13. From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. On Amending Standing Rule E.5.a. Reviewing the Rules for Who Can Appropriately Use the Public Hearings to Address the Committee. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 67, 177–78)*

Response: Completed.

6. *2018 Referral: Item 03-14. From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. On Amending Standing Rule F.1.d. Reviewing Response to Requests for Docket Time to Address Assembly. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 67, 178)*

Response: Completed.

7. *2018 Referral: Item 03-15. From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. On Amending Standing Rule F.5.d. review How ACC Is Consulted During Plenary Session. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 67, 178)*

Response: Completed.

8. *2018 Referral: Item 03-16. From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. On Amending Standing Rule K.1.b. Regarding Commissions and Special Commissions. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 67, 179)*

Response: Completed

9. *2018 Referral: Item 03-17. From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. On Amending Standing Rule A.4.b. regarding Making Clear the Role of the Assembly in Reviewing Agency and Entity Minutes. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 67, 179–80)*

Response: Completed.

10. *2018 Referral: Item 03-18. From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. On Amending Standing Rule A.5. to Reflect Book of Order, G-6.04e. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 68, 180)*

Response: Completed.

11. *2018 Referral: Item 03-19. Recommendation I. from the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. On Amending Standing Rule A.3. and Creating a New A.3.b. Define Clearly Meaning of Concurrence and Role of Overture Advocate. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 68, 180)*

Response: Completed.

12. *2018 Referral: Item 03-19. Recommendation 2. From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. On Amending Standing Rule A.3.c.(6) Define Clearly Meaning of Concurrence and Role of Overture Advocate. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 68, 180)*

Response: Completed.

13 *2018 Referral: Item 03-20. From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. On Amending Standing Rule A.2.d. Define Clearly Meaning of Concurrence and Role of Overture Advocate)—One Overture Advocate for the Originating Council and the First Concurring Council. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 68, 181–82)*

Response: Completed.

14. *2018 Referral: Item 03-21. From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. On Amending Standing Rule A.3.d. and Creating a New A.1.c. Regarding the Length of Reports to General Assembly, Limit Reports to 5,000 Words. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 68, 182)*

Response: Completed.

15. *2018 Referral: Item 04-02. Recommendation 1. From the Racial Advocacy Committee. Direct Agencies to Be Proactive in Hiring. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 45–46, 358)*

Response: The Office of the General Assembly remains intentional and proactive in its efforts to hire and retain staff from communities of color and the global south. To that end, of fourteen staff hired since 223rd General Assembly (2018), 50 percent are from communities of color or the global south, including one teaching elder and three ruling elders. Three staff members are fluent in Spanish. OGA derives numerous cost-effective, time-saving efficiencies from its consultative relationship with Human Resources staff in the Administrative Services Group by engaging their expertise and knowledge of best practices that ensures open positions are filled in an expeditious manner.

16. *2018 Referral: Item 04-02. Recommendation 2. From the Advocacy Committee on Racial Ethnic Concerns. Encourage All Councils of the Church to Conduct All Meetings Related to the Ministry of the Church in Their Respective Jurisdiction in Languages Common to Their Constituencies and to Offer Simultaneous Interpretation in Those Languages as Well as American Sign Language (ASL) and Provide Captioning Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community. All Pertinent Documents Should Be Sent Ahead of Time in the Proper Languages in a Format Accessible to the People Who Are Blind and Vision Impaired. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 45–46, 358)*

Response: The Office of the General Assembly appreciates the spirit of this recommendation and affirms the goal of full accessibility. OGA is working closely with the Global Language Resource staff of the Administrative Services Group to improve both the translation and interpretation services for the General Assembly and other meetings.

As many who are hearing impaired do not use American Sign Language, OGA’s practice is to provide captioning during General Assembly plenary meetings and to provide ASL if specifically requested.

17. *2018 Referral: Item 04-04. Recommendation 1. From the All Agency Review Committee. 1. Direct the Six Agencies of the General Assembly, in Implementing the General Assembly’s Mission, to Focus on the Call to a New Openness in Book of Order, F-1.0404, and to Consider a Set of Questions in Establishing Work Plans and Budgets. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 49, 413–14)*

Response: Ongoing. The Stated Clerk, the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, and the leadership team of the Office of the General Assembly have all reviewed F-1.0404 and the set of questions to help shape our common work into the future.

18. *2018 Referral: Item 04-04. Recommendation 4. From the All Agency Review Committee. Amend the Organization for Mission with New Item I.G. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 49, 414)*

Response: Completed.

19. *2018 Referral: Item 04-04. Recommendation 5. Instruct the Six Agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to Engage in a Collaborative Self-Study of the Per Capita Model and Its’ Ability to Adequately Fund the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency in the Immediate and Longer-Term Future and to Explore Alternative and Creative Funding Resources for Both. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 49, 414)*

Response: The Moving Forward Implementation Commission gave responsibility for this item to the Special Committee on Per Capita and Financial Sustainability—see their report (Item 02-080, p. 582).

20. *2018 Referral: Item 04-04. Recommendation 7. From the All Agency Review Committee. Amend Standing Rules with New Items E.2.i. and j., Amend E.5.a. and E.5.c. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 49, 414–15)*

Response: Completed.

21. *2018 Referral: Item 06-20. From Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC) A Resolution to Require and Expand Family Leave Policies. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 73, 623)*

Response: The Administrative Services Group has taken lead on this referral; see II. Final Responses to Referrals, A. Administrative Services Group, Referral 2, p. 321.

22. *2018 Referral: Item 07-01. On America's Interfaith Context and the Church's Challenge. Recommendation 7. Direct the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly to Encourage Congregations to Utilize the Resources of the Office of Interfaith Relations to Promote Education About Other Religions and Interfaith Dialogue." (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 15, 657)*

Response: We have yet to fully create a plan that will accomplish this recommendation. There are several documents (two presented at this General Assembly 2020) that will be important resources for use in congregations to help promote education and dialogue. The Theological Rationale for Interfaith Relations and a paper on Antisemitism and Islamophobia have all been produced to help congregations develop better self-understanding as well as education about other religious traditions. The interim director also participated in an international consultation with the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) on Religious Freedom designed "to bring together a wide range of people whose work has centered around liberation, justice, and peace-making to provoke and stimulate thinking on religions not as 'fortresses to be defended but as wellsprings to foster the fullness of all life.'"

Part of the plan includes creating an inventory of the resources that are available throughout the ecumenical and interfaith community and developing a flexible step-by-step outline that will help congregations create their own action plan.

Presbyteries have also been invited to select a liaison who will help the Ecumenical and Interfaith office facilitate the sharing of information, resources, and ministries between the two bodies.

23. *2018 Referral: Item 08-03. On Engagement with the Issue of Climate Change. 14. Direct the Stated Clerk of the PC (USA) to Inform the Denomination and the Larger Public of the Passage and Implementation of This Overture. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 54, 704)*

Response: Completed. The Presbyterian News Service posted a story about the overture after the assembly.

24. *2018 Referral: Item 08-11. Recommendation 1. Regarding the Use of Products Made of Polystyrene. Direct the Office of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Board of Pensions, the Presbyterian Foundation, the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, and Other Related Agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to Reduce, to the Maximum Extent Feasible, Use of Products Made of Polystyrene Foam. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 55, 753)*

Response: Ongoing. The Office of the General Assembly has committed to use other products for events that OGA hosts, as well as working with suppliers and vendors to ensure reduction of use of polystyrene foam products.

25. *2018 Referral: Item 08-11. Recommendation 2. Regarding the Use of Products Made of Polystyrene. Direct the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency, Through Its Office of Environmental Ministries, to Communicate with the More Than 9,000 Congregations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Urging Them to Reduce to the Maximum Extent Feasible Use of Products Made of Polystyrene Foam. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 55, 753)*

Response: Completed. The Stated Clerk, in cooperation with the ministries of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, continue to communicate the assembly's action and encourage compliance.

26. *2018 Referral: Item 08-12. On Supporting Carbon Pricing. Direct the Stated Clerk of the PC(USA) to Inform the Denomination and the Larger Public of the Passage and Implementation of This Overture. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 55, 754)*

Response: Completed.

27. *2018 Referral: Item 09-02. Recommendation 1. On Support and Prayer for the Church and People of South Sudan. Direct the Stated Clerk to: a. Issue a Formal Statement Condemning the Actions of Those Who Initiated and Perpetuated the Conflict in South Sudan and of Support and Prayer for the Church and People of South Sudan, and Communicate This Statement to the Government of South Sudan and International Bodies Through Appropriate Diplomatic Channels. b. Call upon the President of the United States, the U.S. State Department, and Appropriate Congressional Leaders to Promote a Just and Lasting Peace in South Sudan by ... c. Urging the President of the United States, the U.S. State Department, and Appropriate Congressional Leaders to Enhance Regional and Global Security by Promoting Stable and Effective Governance and Strong and Responsive Democratic Institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 36, 759–80)*

Response: Completed. The Presbyterian News Service posted a story about the overture after the assembly.

28. *2018 Referral: Item 09-03. Recommendation 8. On Support of Peace Churches in the PC(USA). Affirm the PC(USA) Policy on Conscientious Objection, Including Our Long Support for Selective Conscientious Objection, and Encourage Those Who Are Conscientious Objectors to Register Their Decision with the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly as Established by Previous General Assemblies and Described in "Presbyterians and Military Service," <http://oga.pcusa.org/section/stated-clerk/stated-clerk/conscientious-objection/>. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 36, 762)*

Response: Ongoing. The Stated Clerk, through the Office of the General Assembly, continues to promote and maintain the list of conscientious objectors.

29. *2018 Referral: Item 09-04. On Endorsing Affirmations Regarding the Welfare of Our Neighbors in Honduras. The Presbytery of the Pacific overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to Endorse the Following Affirmations and Actions Regarding the Welfare of Our Neighbors in Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador (the Northern Triangle of Central America) and the Welfare of All Migrants and Refugees in the United States. The 223rd General Assembly (2018) Directs the Stated Clerk and Other Representatives of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the PC(USA) Washington Office, the Office of Immigration, Presbyterian World Mission, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations, and the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program to Advocate for Region-wide and Country-Specific Changes in Policy, as Requested by the Reformed Calvinist Church of El Salvador (IRCES). (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 37, 764)*

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency has taken lead on this referral; see II. Final Responses to Referrals, E. Presbyterian Mission Agency, Referral 23, p. 348.

30. *2018 Referral: Item 09-05. From (ACREC) Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns A Resolution to Advocate for the Human Rights of All Citizens of Yemen. Direct the Stated Clerk to Write to the United States President, Secretary of State, and Secretary of Defense, Urging Them to Actively Participate in Seeking a Political Settlement to the War and to Suspend United States Government Military Support to Saudi Arabia in Its Bombing and Blockading of Yemen. United States Military Support to Saudi Arabia Includes: a. the Sale of Weapons; b. Logistic Support Including Intelligence for Selecting Targets; c. Air-To-Air Refueling of Saudi Jets; and d. Multiple Ground Operations and More Than 120 Strikes in 2017. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 37, 768)*

Response: Completed.

31. *2018 Referral: Item 09-07. On Promoting Democracy, Good Governance, Human Rights, and Sustainable Development in Madagascar. Recommendation 1. Direct the Stated Clerk, the Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and the Moderator(s) of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to Call Upon the President of the United States and Relevant Executive and Congressional Leaders to Promote Democracy, Good Governance, Human Rights, and Sustainable Development in Madagascar. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 38, 785–86)*

Response: Completed. The Stated Clerk continues work with other partners on a continuous campaign.

32. *2018 Referral: Item 09-12. Recommendation 2. On North Korean Refugees. Direct the Stated Clerk and the Office of Public Witness to Communicate with Domestic and International Governments and Agencies to Encourage Peaceful Resolution of the Divisions on the Korean Peninsula, Which Will Foster an Environment Where No Party to the Historic Conflict Feels the Need to Sacrifice Civil Liberties in the Name of Security and Where Refugees and Asylum-Seekers Are Treated Humanely. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 39–40, 795)*

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency has taken lead on this referral; see II. Final Responses to Referrals, E. Presbyterian Mission Agency, Referral 29, p. 350.

33. *2018 Referral: Item 09-13. On Prayer for the People of Nicaragua. Recommendation 4. Instructs the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly to Communicate This Action to Congressional Representatives. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 40, 799)*

Response: Completed. The Stated Clerk partnered with the Office of Public Witness of the Presbyterian Mission Agency to accomplish this task.

34. *2018 Referral: Item 09-15. On Denouncing Violence and Injustice in Nicaragua. That the 223rd General Assembly (2018) Direct the Stated Clerk and the Presbyterian Mission Agency (Through Its Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations, Presbyterian Office of Public Witness, and Presbyterian World Mission) to Speak Out on Behalf of the People of Nicaragua in Response to Violent Repression Taking Place at the Hands of Their Own Government, and Other Violent Actors. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 41, 804)*

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency has taken lead on this referral; see II. Final Responses to Referrals, E. Presbyterian Mission Agency, Referral 33, p. 351.

35. *2018 Referral: Item 11-02. Recommendation 4. On Calling for an Immediate Moratorium on All Executions. Recommendation 4. Direct the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly to Communicate the Call for an Immediate Moratorium and Our Continuing Opposition to Capital Punishment to the President of the United States, Our Representatives in Congress, as Well as the Governors and Legislators of the Thirty-Three States with Persons Incarcerated While Awaiting Execution and to Call for the Commutation of All Life Sentences to Sentences of Life Imprisonment. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 55–56, 991)*

Response: Completed. The Stated Clerk continues work with other partners on a continuous campaign.

36. *2018 Referral: Item 11-12. On Affirming and Celebrating the Full Dignity and Humanity of People of All Gender Identities. Accordingly, the General Assembly Empowers, Authorizes, and Directs the Stated Clerk and the Presbyterian Mission Agency, Through Its Office of Public Witness, to Advocate for the Rights of Transgender People and for Legal Protections to Ensure and Protect the Full Humanity and Dignity of People of All Gender Identities. Specifically, the Stated Clerk and the Presbyterian Mission Agency (Office of Public Witness) Are Authorized to Support the Right of Transgender Individuals to Serve in the Military, and Every Type of Government and Public Service; Full Access to Public Accommodations, Including Gender-Inclusive Restrooms; Full Legal Protection Against Discrimination, Particularly with Regard to Employment, Housing, Education, and Health Care; Title IX Protections for Transgender Students Against Violence and Bullying; Other Legal Protections That Guarantee and Safeguard the Full Rights of Transgender Individuals. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 60, 1051)*

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency has taken lead on this referral; see II. Final Responses to Referrals, E. Presbyterian Mission Agency, Referral 64, p. 359.

37. *2018 Referral: Item 11-15. A Resolution on Religious Freedom Without Discrimination. Recommendation 5. Directs the Office of the Stated Clerk to Send This Resolution, with the Rationale, to Every Congregation and Presbytery, Encouraging Presbyterians to Distinguish Between the Historical Understanding of Religious Freedom to Practice One's Faith and Current Efforts to Discriminate Against, Exclude, and Marginalize Vulnerable People in the Name of "Religious Freedom." (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 61–62, 1061)*

Response: Completed. The Stated Clerk informed mid council leaders and asked them to make available to their congregations.

38. *2018 Referral: Item 11-18. Responding to Racist Nationalism. Recommendation 2. Direct the Stated Clerk of the PC(USA) to Send This Resolution to the President of the United States and to Each United States Senator and Representative. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 62–63, 1072)*

Response: Completed. The Stated Clerk partnered with the Office of Public Witness of the Presbyterian Mission Agency to accomplish this task.

39. *2018 Referral: Item 11-24. On the Degradation of Civil Discourse. Recommendation 2. Directs the Stated Clerk to Collaborate with Ecumenical and Interfaith Partners to Communicate Directly and Individually Via the Appropriate Media Our Dismay and Concern to the President and Vice-President of the United States of America, Each Member of the United States Congress Currently in Session, and Each Member to Serve in the Congress That Will Convene in January 2019, Governors of States, Leaders of State Legislative Bodies from at Least Two Political Parties, and Local Government Executives, and Urge Them to Speak Out About Similar Concerns Regarding the Function of Representative Democracies in the United States of America; and Urge Them to Protect the Freedoms Inherent to Representative Democracies. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 64, 1104)*

Response: Completed and ongoing. The Stated Clerk, in partnership with the Office of Public Witness of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, continues to communicate with our country's leaders about this matter.

40. *2018 Referral: Item 11-24. On the Degradation of Civil Discourse. Recommendation 3. Urges Those in Church Leadership Roles Within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to Seek Opportunities for Conversation and Reconciliation with Those Encouraging Discord with Regard to Civil Discourse Using Seeking to Be Faithful Together: Guidelines for Presbyterians in Times of Disagreement, as Approved by the 204th General Assembly, 1992. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 64, 1104)*

Response: The Stated Clerk, in partnership with the Office of Public Witness of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, continues to communicate with our country's leaders about improving civil discourse.

41. *2018 Referral: Item 12-01 On Opposition to Congressional and State Anti-BDS Legislation from Synod of the Covenant. Recommendation 6. Direct the Stated Clerk and Appropriate Presbyterian Mission Agency Program Staff to Develop Resources and Implement Strategies for Member Education, Interreligious Dialogue, and Public Witness Concerning the Importance of the First Amendment Freedoms of Speech, Association, Press, and exercise of Religion for All Americans, Including the Right to Protest Through Boycott and Divestment, and Other Nonviolent Means. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 75, 1117)*

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency has taken lead on this referral; see II. Final Responses to Referrals, E. Presbyterian Mission Agency, Referral 74, see p. 361.

42. *2018 Referral: Item 12-02. On Advocating for the Human Rights of all Citizens of Israel. Recommendation 2. Direct the Office of the General Assembly, Through Its Stated Clerk, to Write to the United States President and Secretary of State Urging Them to Use Diplomatic Tools to Bring Israel into Full Compliance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (of Which Israel Is a Signatory) by Changing Its Laws, Policies, and Practices That Favor Its Jewish Citizens and Discriminate Against Its Christian and Muslim Citizens and Other Ethnic Minorities. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 76, 1120)*

Response: The Stated Clerk, in partnership with the Office of Public Witness of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, continues to communicate with our country's leaders about this matter.

43. *2018 Referral: Item 12-02. On Advocating for the Human Rights of all Citizens of Israel. Recommendation 3. Direct the Stated Clerk to Write to the U.S. President and Secretary of State, Urging Them to Advocate with Their Israeli Counterparts to Cease All Actions That Block Equal Access of All Citizens in Israel's Legal System; Citizenship Privileges; Income and Employment; Distribution of Resources and Social Welfare; Accessibility to Land; Educational Resources; Availability of Health Resources; and Political Participation. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 76, 1120)*

Response: The Stated Clerk, in partnership with the Office of Public Witness of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, continues to communicate with our country's leaders about this matter.

44. *2018 Referral: Item 12-02. On Advocating for the Human Rights of All Citizens of Israel. Recommendation 5. Direct the Office of the General Assembly and Presbyterian Mission Agency, Through Its Program Units, to Study, and Inform All Presbyterians Regarding the Discriminatory Practices in Israel Today and to Advocate for Equal Rights for All Citizens Who Live in Israel, Regardless of Their Religious and Ethnic Identity. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 76, 1120)*

Response: The Stated Clerk, in partnership with the Office of Public Witness of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, continues to communicate with our country's leaders about this matter.

45. *2018 Referral: Item 12-07. On Urging RE/MAX to Stop Facilitating the Sale of Property in Israeli Settlement Colonies. Recommendation 3. Direct the Stated Clerk to Communicate This Action to All Other PC(USA) Councils and Entities and to Communicate This Action to RE/MAX, LLC. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 76, 1141)*

Response: Completed.

46. *2018 Referral: Item 12-09. On Responding to the Current Syrian Crisis. Recommendation 1. Direct the Stated Clerk of the PC(USA) to Send a Message to the President of the United States, Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, and to Each United States Senator and Representative to Use All Diplomatic Means, in Cooperation with the United Nations' Security Council and Other Major Parties in the Syrian Crisis, to Bring About a Durable Ceasefire, in Tandem with a Cessation of Military Support to Any Participant in the Conflict to Bear Witness to the World to the Call for Peace as a Way of Encouraging World-Wide Pressure for Peace in Syria. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 77, 1148)*

Response: The Stated Clerk, in partnership with the Office of Public Witness of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, continues to communicate with our country's leaders about this matter.

47. *2018 Referral: Item 12-09. On Responding to the Current Syrian Crisis. Recommendation 3.a. Direct the Stated Clerk of the PC(USA), Presbyterian World Mission, and Presbyterian Disaster Assistance to Call on Congregations and Presbyteries, Nonprofit Organizations, the United States Government, and Agencies of the United Nations, to Provide Robust Financial*

Support for Organizations Engaged in Alleviating the Suffering of Syrians, Especially Those Displaced Inside Syria and Those Now Living as Refugees in Neighboring Countries. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 77, 1149)

Response: The Stated Clerk, in partnership with the Office of Public Witness of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, continues to communicate with our country's leaders about this matter.

48. *2018 Referral: Item 12-09. On Responding to the Current Syrian Crisis. Recommendation 3.b. Direct the Stated Clerk of the PC(USA) to Call on the United States Government to Reopen Syrian Refugees' Entry into the United States and Substantially Expand the Number of Refugees Admitted. Encourage the United States to Maintain a More Generous Policy Toward Refugees Based on Our Identity as a Pluralistic Nation. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 77, 1149)*

Response: The Stated Clerk, in partnership with the Office of Public Witness of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, continues to communicate with our country's leaders about this matter.

49. *2018 Referral: Item 12-09. On Responding to the Current Syrian Crisis. Recommendation 3.c. Direct the Stated Clerk of the PC(USA) to Call on the United States Department of Treasury, Office of Foreign Assets Control, to Review and Revise the Current Program of Economic Sanctions on Syria so as to Reduce Their Painful Impact on Ordinary Syrian Families and on Civic, Educational, and Medical Bodies Involved in Peaceful Pursuits for Reconstruction and Humanitarian Relief Unassociated with any Form of Terrorism. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 77, 1149)*

Response: Completed.

50. *2016 Referral: Item 11-08. On Offering an Apology to Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians. Recommendation 2. That the Moderator Share This Apology with Native American Congregations, Coordinated with PMA's Native American Congregational Support Office and with Native American Consulting Committee (NACC). Approved with Amendment. Referred to PMA, OGA. (Minutes, 2016, Part I, pp. 54–55, 711–12)*

Response: Final. The Stated Clerk stands ready to share the action of the assembly with Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians. He continues dialog with the NACC and others to ensure that appropriate groundwork has been completed for the apology to be delivered.

51. *2016 Referral: Item 11-08. On Offering an Apology to Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians. Recommendation 3. That OGA Share the Apology with Native American Tribal Authorities in the U.S., Coordinated with PMA's Native American Congregational Support Office and with Native American Consulting Committee (NACC). (Minutes, 2016, Part I, pp. 54–55, 711–12)*

Response: Final. The Stated Clerk stands ready to share the action of the assembly with Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians. He continues dialog with the NACC and others to ensure that appropriate groundwork has been completed for the apology to be delivered.

52. *2016 Referral: Item 11-12. On the PC(USA) Continuing Its Efforts to Dismantle Racism within Our Denomination and the Larger Society. Recommendation 1. Direct OGA & PMA to Present to the 223rd General Assembly a Plan Containing Procedures for the Implementation of "Facing Racism." (Minutes, 2016, Part I, pp. 56, 719)*

Response: Joint response with the Presbyterian Mission Agency. Detailed implementation plans are best developed by the councils or entities themselves. Respecting the roles and honoring the authority of synods, presbyteries, and congregations, the Office of the General Assembly and Presbyterian Mission Agency has not acted on this referral. A "detailed six-year plan containing explicit procedures for renewed implementation of every strategy detailed" in the referred policy statement "specifically directed towards ... synods, presbyteries, and congregations" is best created with the participation of those bodies.

The 224th General Assembly (2020) is considering a business item asking to add a requirement for an antiracism policy for every council above session. That change in the *Book of Order* may facilitate the conversations that this referral seeks but place the location of the decisions in the councils themselves.

53. *2016 Referral: Item 05-10. A Resolution to Require and Expand Family Leave Policies. Urge Synods, Presbyteries, Sessions to Evaluate Their Leave Policies for New Parents for the Birth/Adoption of, or Care to a Child or Other Family Member. (Minutes, 2016, Part I, pp. 34, 292)*

Response: The Administrative Services Group has taken lead on this referral; see II. Final Responses to Referrals, A. Administrative Services Group, Referral 2, p. 321.

54. *2016 Referral: Item 11-24. Churchwide Conversation on Race, Ethnicity, Racism & Ethnocentricity Report. Recommendation 1.b. Direct the Agencies to Complete Organizational Reviews of Practices/Policies as They Impact People of Color and Evaluate Potential Impacts of Future Initiatives.* (Minutes, 2016, Part I, pp. 57, 787–801)

Response: The Office of the General Assembly, along with the other national agencies and entities, participated in the Equity and Inclusion Audit (which will be considered by this assembly). OGA will review the results of the audit and create an action plan to address concerns that are uncovered.

55. *2018 Referral: Item 10-02. On a Collaborative Study of the Place and Purpose of the Humanities in the Teachings of PC(USA) Liberal Arts Colleges and Universities—From the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta, Recommendation 2. Directs the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Appoint a Cross-Disciplinary Team Drawn from (1) Existing Staff Within the Theology, Formation, and Evangelism Unit and (2) The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy to Consult with the Moderators of the 222nd and 223rd General Assemblies (2016) and (2018) on the Appointment of a Seven-to-Ten-Person Task Force to Be Drawn from Faculty, Administrators, and Chaplains at Related Presbyterian-Affiliated Colleges and Universities.* (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp.29, 811–12)

Response: The task force was not appointed, in part due to a lack of a diverse pool of applicants. After the 224th General Assembly (2020), ACSWP and the Co-Moderators will again attempt to consult on the appointment of the task force. Due to planning as a result of the pandemic, the financial implication will be changed to reflect up to one in-person meeting per year in 2021 and 2022, as well as providing funding for up to two members of the task force to be present at the 225th General Assembly (2022).

56. *2018 Referral: Item 11-11, Recommendation 4. From the Presbyterian Mission Agency. Declare an Imperative for the Reformation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in Being a Transformative Church in This Intercultural Era. 4. Direct the Moderator to Appoint a Cross-Sectional Task Force to Develop and Publish Priorities and Guidelines for Congregations, Mid Councils, and General Assembly Entities for the “Decade of Intercultural Transformation.”* (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 59, 1045)

Response: The task force was not appointed, in part due to a lack of a diverse pool of applicants. After the 224th General Assembly (2020), the Co-Moderators of the 224th General Assembly (2020) will attempt to appoint the task force. Due to planning as a result of the pandemic, the financial implication will be changed to reflect up to one in-person meeting per year in 2021 and 2022, on-line training, as well as providing funding for up to two members of the task force to be present at the 225th General Assembly (2022).

57. *2018 Referral: Item 14-01. On Developing a Letter to Accompany the Confession of Belhar—From the Presbytery of New Castle. Calls for the Creation of a Task Force.* (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 17, 1193)

Response: The task force was not appointed, in part due to a lack of a diverse pool of applicants. After the 224th General Assembly (2020), the staff of the Office of Theology and Worship of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, in consultation with the Co-Moderators of 224th General Assembly (2020), will gather a small group of no more than five persons to draft the accompanying letter. They will meet only electronically but funding for up to two members of the task force to be present at the 225th General Assembly (2022) will be included. The group will be expected to consult with ecumenical partners during the process. The letter will be presented to the 225th General Assembly (2022) for approval.

E. Presbyterian Mission Agency

1. *2016 Referral: Item 11-12. On the PC(USA) Continuing Its Efforts to Dismantle Racism within Our Denomination and the Larger Society. Recommendation 1. Direct the Office of the Stated Clerk and the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Present to the 223rd General Assembly (2018) a Detailed Six-Year Plan Containing Explicit Procedures for Renewed Implementation of Every Strategy Detailed in the Churchwide Strategies (As Listed Under the “Points of Engagement” and Specifically Directed Towards the General Assembly, Synods, Presbyteries, and Congregations) in “Facing Racism: A Vision of the Intercultural Community” (Item 11-22), Which Is Up for Approval by the 222nd General Assembly 2016—From the Presbytery of Baltimore* (Minutes, 2016, Part I, pp. 46, 56, 273–74 of the print copy, pp. 719–22 of the electronic copy).

Response: Detailed implementation plans are best developed by the councils or entities themselves. Respecting the roles and honoring the authority of synods, presbyteries, and congregations, the Office of the General Assembly and Presbyterian Mission Agency has not acted on this referral. A “detailed six-year plan containing explicit procedures for renewed implementation of every strategy detailed” in the referred policy statement “specifically directed towards ... synods, presbyteries, and congregations” is best created with the participation of those bodies.

The 224th General Assembly (2020) is considering a business item asking to add a requirement for an antiracism policy for every council above session. That change in the *Book of Order* may facilitate the conversations that this referral seeks but place the location of the decisions in the councils themselves.

2. *2016 Referral: Item 12-07. New Hopes and Realities in Cuban-American Relations: A “Nuevo Momento.” Recommendation 2.c. Support Church, Civil, and Governmental Groups Working Alongside the Cuban Government to Protect Undeveloped Areas and the Cuban Environment from Ill-Considered Mining, Housing, or Industrial Uses, to Plan Responsible Tourism That Enhances Biodiversity, and to Cooperate with International Efforts to Reduce Greenhouse Gases, Preserve Caribbean Ecology, Etc. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Will Seek to Support Environmental and Social Responsibility in the Visits of Its Partner Congregations and in the Recreational Travel of Families and Individuals—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (Minutes, 2016, Part I, pp. 14, 68, 314–17 of the print copy, pp. 905–38 of the electronic copy).*

2016 Referral: Item 12-07. New Hopes and Realities in Cuban-American Relations: A “Nuevo Momento.” Recommendation 2.d. For International Financial Mechanisms and Corresponding National Policies: See Items 1. –3. —From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (Minutes, 2016, Part I, pp. 14, 68, 314–17 of the print copy, pp. 905–38 of the electronic copy).

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency has responded to these referrals through the ministries of Compassion, Peace and Justice. While the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy does not, strictly speaking, do program or advocacy, it does interpret and provide background and guidance to the programs and networks of congregations and individuals in the church. In this case, the multipart recommendation, Item 12-07, has been lifted-up by the Cuba Partners Network as well as the World Mission liaison to that part of the Caribbean and its primary partner church, the Presbyterian Reformed Church in Cuba. The denomination is indebted to the witness of the Cuba Partners and their creative solidarity with both the Cuban church and people. With this voluntary association of Presbyterians, many of whom are in sister congregation relationships, green tourism is a way of encouraging the preservation of natural areas and biodiversity, while obtaining income for water systems and cleaner and more renewable energy. In collaboration with Living Waters for the World, Cuba Partners has installed more than fifty water purification systems in Cuban religious institutions over the past ten years.

The past two years of regressive United States policy toward Cuba and the concurrent imposition of sanctions on Venezuela, a major trading partner of Cuba, have caused severe economic hardship and shortages of many basic goods for the average Cuban. Consequently, this renewed context of United States hostilities has limited many potential improvements in environmental and agricultural sectors and in the possibility of new investments. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Cuba Partners mission network has continued its ongoing advocacy efforts to end the embargo, travel, and investment restrictions imposed by the United States embargo and supporting our partner church’s advocacy efforts within their own country. In general, Cuba has done some admirable work in protecting its coral reefs and in limiting development of fragile areas, especially given its limited financial resources.

With regard to the second part of this recommendation, the policy, “New Hopes and Realities ...” urges not simply the end of the economic boycott but the development of positive new investments. For example, this would include planting more diverse crops, newer irrigation, and use of livestock for products such as cheese for which small scale refrigeration is needed. On the micro level, there is a need for secure investment capital for refurbishing both large farms and smaller enterprises. On the macro level, these decisions affirm an international dimension dedicated to an overall sustainability and the capital to make systemic changes happen—even in the face of the embargo.

The full report is available as a free download, en Espanol: <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/ga-2016-cuba-in-spanish.pdf> and in English: <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/New-Hopes-and-Realities-in-Cuban-American-Relations-2016-ACSWP.pdf>.

3. *2018 Referral: Item 03-06. General Assembly Committee on Representation Recommendations. Recommendation 3. Direct All Six Agencies to Apply Recommendations 2.a. and 2.b. in the Years When Each Agency Is Under Review by the General Assembly—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 65, 66, 156–57 of the print copy, pp. 164–67 of the electronic copy).*

Response: At its March 2019 meeting, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board approved the addition of a new section on “Review of the Presbyterian Mission Agency” in the Manual of Operations that provided for one board member to attend a General Assembly Committee on Representative (GACOR) meeting in each year of the review cycle for the purpose of developing a collaborative working relationship, and for one representative from GACOR to be invited to attend a meeting of the board in each year of the review cycle.

4. *2018 Referral: Item 04-03. Way Forward Commission Report. Recommendation 1.a.(1). That the Board of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, Consistent with Section 6.06 of the Current Amended Bylaws of “A Corp.,” Approve the Amendments of Such Bylaws as Indicated in Appendix 10—From the Way Forward Commission (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 44, 46, 170–74*

of the print copy, pp. 360–413 of the electronic copy).

Response: On July 19, 2018, at a called meeting of the Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Board approved the amended bylaws of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation.

5. *2018 Referral: Item 04-03. Way Forward Commission Report. Recommendation 1.a.(3). That the Current Board of Directors of “A Corp.,” Upon Adoption of Such Amendments, Tender Their Resignations as Directors to Be Effective at the Constituting of the New Board, Adopting Such Amendments—From the Way Forward Commission (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 44, 46, 170–74 of the print copy, pp. 360–413 of the electronic copy).*

Response: Following a called meeting of the Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Mission Agency on July 19, 2018, at which the Board approved the amended bylaws of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, the then “current Board of Directors” of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, individually tendered their resignations as directors of the Board of the A Corporation, effective at the constituting of the new A Corporation Board.

6. *2018 Referral: Item 04-03. Way Forward Commission Report. Recommendation 1.d. Direct the Respective Governing Board of Directors, Trustees, or Committee of the Office of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Foundation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Corporation, Inc., and the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation to Change Their Respective Bylaws or Standing Rules, as Appropriate, to Provide That the President of The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, or Such President’s Designee Pro Tem, Shall Have Voice But No Vote at the Meetings of Such Boards or Committee of Each of Such Agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and Such Additional or Successor Agencies as May Be Created by the General Assembly—From the Way Forward Commission (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 44, 46, 170–74 of the print copy, pp. 360–413 of the electronic copy).*

Response: At its September 2018 meeting, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board received changes to its Manual of Operations which provided that the president of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) A Corporation, or such president’s designee pro-tem shall have voice but no vote at its meetings.

7. *2018 Referral: Item 04-03. Way Forward Commission Report. Recommendation 1.e. Direct the Governing Board of Directors, Trustees, or Committee of the Office of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Foundation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Corporation, Inc., and the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation to Make All Such Changes as May Be Necessary and Permitted in Their Governing Documents and Policies to Recognize the Changes in the Structure and Composition of the Board of The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation—From the Way Forward Commission (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 44, 46, 170–74 of the print copy, pp. 360–413 of the electronic copy).*

Response: At its September 2018 meeting the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board received changes to its Manual of Operations, which recognized changes in the structure and composition of the Board of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation.

8. *2018 Referral: Item 04-03. Way Forward Commission Report. Recommendation 2.d. Instruct the Board of Directors for the Presbyterian Mission Board, Board of Pensions, Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., Presbyterian Foundation, and Presbyterian Publishing Corporation to Amend Their By-Laws and Manuals to Be in Compliance with the Provisions of Paragraphs 3.02 and 3.03. These Agencies May Continue to Speak Within Their Own Realm of Responsibility Pursuant to Already Existing Policies That Will Remain Unchanged—From the Way Forward Commission (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 44, 46, 170–74 of the print copy, pp. 360–413 of the electronic copy).*

Response: At its September 2018 meeting, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board adopted changes to its Manual of Operations consistent with this referral. Changes ensured that the Stated Clerk would have access to any closed meetings held by the Board and that the Stated Clerk would be consulted prior to any candidate for President/Executive Director or interim President/Executive Director being brought to the Board for election. The Stated Clerk was already a corresponding member of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

9. *2018 Referral: Item 04-03. Way Forward Commission Report. Recommendation 4.a. Require That All Six Agencies Participate and Invite Presbyterian Women to Participate in the Diverse Voices Table Being Established (Described Under Ongoing Commission Administrative Actions); and Similar to What Has Been Undertaken by the PMA’s Office on Diversity and Reconciliation, Create a Process to Examine Issues of Equity and Inclusion Particular to Their Own Agencies—From the Way Forward Commission (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 44, 46, 170–74 of the print copy, pp. 360–413 of the electronic copy).*

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency appointed two members to the Diverse Voices Table. Meetings began in January 2019. Presbyterian Women was also invited to participate.

10. *2018 Referral: Item 04-03. Way Forward Commission Report. Recommendation 4.b. Require That the Previous Mandate Originating from the 222nd General Assembly (2016) for Personnel Audits from Each Agency Must Be Completed by January 1, 2019. Further, Direct That All Agencies Incorporate “Race Audits” Occurring at Least Every Four Years, Utilizing an External Professional Auditor, Who Can Objectively Report Systemic Bias and Prejudice, as Well as Suggesting Actions to Becoming More Racially Just and Equitable Employers. The Same External Auditor Shall Be Utilized by All Agencies in Order That the Same Standards Are Applied. The Results of These Audits Will Be Reported to Respective Agency Boards and Committees and to the Next General Assembly—From the Way Forward Commission (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 44, 46, 170–74 of the print copy, pp. 360–413 of the electronic copy).*

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency completed the original race audit mandate prior to the 223rd General Assembly (2018). Two staff members have participated in the Diverse Voices Table and have worked with the senior executives of General Assembly agencies to select and contract with an external professional auditor to launch an additional race audit/climate assessment that will be completed prior to the 224th General Assembly (2020).

11. *2018 Referral: Item 04-04. Report of the All-Agency Review Committee to the 223rd General Assembly 2018). Recommendation 1. Direct the Six Agencies of the General Assembly, in Implementing the General Assembly’s Mission, to Focus on the Call to a New Openness in Book of Order, F-1.0404, and to Consider the Listed Questions in Establishing Work Plans and Budgets—From the All Agency Review Committee (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 44, 49, 174–76 of the print copy, pp. 413–32 of the electronic copy).*

Response: The Leadership Cabinet of the Presbyterian Mission Agency reviewed the Call to a New Openness and the listed questions during several meetings in early 2019 as it began the planning process for the next Mission Work Plan.

12. *2018 Referral: Item 04-04. Report of the All-Agency Review Committee to the 223rd General Assembly 2018). Recommendation 5. Instruct the Six Agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to Engage in a Collaborative Self-Study of the Per Capita Model and Its’ Ability to Adequately Fund the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency in the Immediate and Longer-Term Future and to Explore Alternative and Creative Funding Resources for Both—From the All Agency Review Committee (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 44, 49, 174–76 of the print copy, pp. 413–32 of the electronic copy).*

Response: The Moving Forward Implementation Commission took action incorporating this collaborative self-study into the work of the Committee on Financial Sustainability and Per Capita.

13. *2018 Referral: Item 08-03. On Engagement with the Issue of Climate Change. Recommendation 8. Instruct MRTI to Continue Its Long History of Corporate Engagement on Climate Change Issues, Applying the Long-Standing PC(USA) Principles Related to Corporate Engagement and Consideration of Divestment—From the Presbytery of New Covenant (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 53, 54, 254–55 of the print copy, pp. 704–10 of the electronic copy).*

2018 Referral: Item 08-08. Mission Responsibility Through Investment Report. Recommendation 4. Direct MRTI to Continue Its Engagement Process with Deliberate Haste and Continue to Utilize Its Guideline Metrics with Corporations in the 2019 and 2020 Proxy Seasons and Report Back Three Years of Metrics to the 224th General Assembly (2020) with Divestment Recommendations for the Companies Who Are Not Moving Towards Compliance with the General Assembly’s Criteria Established by the 222nd General Assembly (2016)—From the 223rd General Assembly (2018) (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 52, 53–54, 253 of the print copy, pp. 693–700 of the electronic copy).

Response: These referrals will be answered by the report with recommendations titled “Mission Responsibility Through Investment: Response to the 223rd General Assembly Directive on Applying Environmental Policy and Recommending Selective Divestment” (Item 02-097).

14. *2018 Referral: Item 08-05. On Responding to Environmental Racism and to Promote Environmental Justice. Recommendations 1. –4. —From the Presbytery of Monmouth (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 52, 54, 256 of the print copy, pp. 710–12 of the electronic copy).*

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency has responded to this referral through ministries of Compassion, Peace, and Justice (CPJ) in collaboration with others. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) staff and elected committee members have learned about the realities of environmental racism and injustice in several contexts, meeting with local environmental justice communities in New Orleans, Louisiana (Mission Responsibility Through Investment committee), Chicago, Illinois (Presbyterian Hunger Program staff and Advisory Committee), Flint, Michigan (Presbyterian Hunger Program staff), Detroit, Michigan (Mission Responsibility Through Investment committee) and Louisville, Kentucky (CPJ staff). A blog page on [Native American and Land Rights](#) as well as a web site on [environmental racism and justice](#) are resources for Presbyterians interested in learning more. Blog writings on environmental justice are available from [June 2019](#), [April 2019](#), [March 2019](#), and [July 2018](#). The documentary, “Flint: The Poisoning of an American City,” explores issues of water and environmental justice and will be

available for congregations to use as an educational tool. That documentary and a panel of speakers explored environmental racism and justice at a Presbyterian Hunger Program Leaders training in October of 2018.

15. *2018 Referral: Item 08-07. Precautionary Principle: Managing Technological Risks to Protect Humanity and Our Planet. Recommendation II.A. Policy Directions (1–6) Are to Be Advocated by the Office of Public Witness, the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations, and Other Programs and Agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), with Support Encouraged from Members, Congregations, Councils, and Ecumenical Bodies—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 12, 55, 257–61 of the print copy, pp. 714–34 of the electronic copy).*

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency, through the Presbyterian Hunger Program (PHP) and the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations (PMUN) advocated for international regulatory cooperation through annual participation in the United Nations Climate Change Conference in the work of the United Nations Framework on Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP). The Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations participated in the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on sustainable development in July at the United Nations headquarters in New York City. At the HLPF, one of the sustainable goals reviewed was seeking urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

The Office of Public Witness (OPW) signed onto a letter that supported a reinstatement of the United States into a partnership through the Paris Agreement. The ministries of Compassion, Peace, and Justice (PMUN, PHP, and OPW) led workshops at the Presbyterians for Earth Care annual conference at Stony Point, New York, held in August. Office of Public Witness staff attended the Energy and Environment working group meetings with our ecumenical partners making plans on how to inform Presbyterians on effective environmental policy. The Office of Public Witness hosted a webinar on carbon pricing, which had seventy-five participants consisting of Presbyterians from around the country. The Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations included the United Nations measures in its resource guide, *Sustainable Development Goals Study & Devotional Guide*, for Presbyterians and ecumenical partners.

16. *2018 Referral: Item 08-07. Precautionary Principle: Managing Technological Risks to Protect Humanity and Our Planet. Recommendation II.B. Instruct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, Through the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) and the Office of Faith-Based Investing and Corporate Engagement, to Do 1.–4.—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 12, 55, 257–61 of the print copy, pp. 714–34 of the electronic copy).*

Response: The Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) joined the Initiative for Pesticide Use Reduction and Safer Chemicals Management. This initiative is led by several of MRTI's faith and values-based partners and members of the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR). The purpose of this corporate engagement campaign is to encourage some of the largest grocery retailers to adopt and implement a process of safer chemical management to mitigate the risks and protect human and environmental health from harmful agrochemicals. Based on the Chemical Footprint Project's model, companies are expected to (1) develop a management strategy; (2) conduct a chemical inventory of their products and supply chain; (3) establish baseline data through a chemical footprint process; (4) publicly disclose the results of these processes; and (5) apply this model specifically to pesticides and other agrochemicals in their supply chain.

As of December 2019, MRTI staff have participated in dialogues with Target, Costco, CVS, and Kroger. MRTI has been leading an engagement with Dollar General, trying to set up a dialogue with the company. The company has made some progress on a safer chemicals policy and we will be working to schedule a dialogue.

17. *2018 Referral: Item 08-07. Precautionary Principle: Managing Technological Risks to Protect Humanity and Our Planet. Recommendation II.C. Instruct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, Through Its Hunger Program's Office for Sustainable Living and Earth Care Concerns, and Urge Earth Care Congregations (<http://presbyearthcare.org>) and Others, to Encourage Renewable Energy Use and Such Specific Lifestyle Practices as in 1.-3. —From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 12, 55, 257–61 of the print copy, pp. 714–34 of the electronic copy).*

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency, through the Presbyterian Hunger Program's Sustainable Living and Earth Care Concerns programs, have communicated with Presbyterians about lifestyle practices such as choosing consumer products with an eye towards fairness in supply chain and environmental impacts, as well as reducing plastics and packaging and other waste. Earth Care Congregations are encouraged to do all these things in the ECC application as well as in the Guide to Greening Congregations, both available at www.pcusa.org/earthcarecongregations/. We have provided a "low-carbon" daily action calendar for the season of Lent in 2019, a resource on Considering Our Treasure, a new "Climate Care Challenge" (www.pcusa.org/ccc/), and articles to educate Presbyterians on issues such as composting, electric lawn care, and solar panels (See <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/story/april-22-2019/> (Composting-April 22), <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/eco-journey/2019/03/22/earth-care-congregation-dedicated-to-living-out-their-response-to-gods-call/> (Electric Lawn Care-March 22), <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/story/seven-person-congregation-did-the-math-switched-to-solar-power/> (Solar Panels small church-April 18th).

18. *2018 Referral: Item 08-11. Regarding the Use of Products Made of Polystyrene. Recommendation 1. Direct the Office of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Board of Pensions, the Presbyterian Foundation, the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, and Other Related Agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to Reduce, to the Maximum Extent Feasible, Use of Products Made of Polystyrene Foam—From the Presbytery of New Covenant (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 12, 55, 263 of the print copy, p. 753 of the electronic copy).*

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency does not use polystyrene foam. Paper cups are used for coffee. Conversations with Building Services, Distribution, and the mailroom confirm that polystyrene foam is also not used in those areas.

19. *2018 Referral: Item 08-11. Regarding the Use of Products Made of Polystyrene. Recommendation 2. Direct the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency, Through Its Office of Environmental Ministries, to Communicate with the More Than 9,000 Congregations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Urging Them to Reduce to the Maximum Extent Feasible Use of Products Made of Polystyrene Foam—From the Presbytery of New Covenant (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 12, 55, 263 of the print copy, p. 753 of the electronic copy).*

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency, through the Presbyterian Hunger Program, shared the overture on reducing polystyrene foam in a blog writing and again in a June 2019 email to all Earth Care Congregations, as well as offered support to the Stated Clerk for sharing the passage of the policy with all PC(USA) congregations. The Presbyterian Hunger Program continues to work with individuals and congregations to work to reduce Styrofoam.

20. *2018 Referral: Item 08-12. On Supporting Carbon Pricing. Recommendation 5. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, Through Its Office of Public Witness, and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, in Collaboration with the Presbyterian Mission Agency Programs to Advocate at Local, State, and Federal Levels for Policies to Rationally Price the Production of Carbon and, Therefore, Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions—From the Presbytery of New Covenant (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 53, 55, 263–64 of the print copy, pp. 754–57 of the electronic copy).*

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency has responded to this referral through the ministries of Compassion, Peace, and Justice. The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) has followed the general direction of conventional and alternative energy markets since its predecessor contributed to the National Council of Churches' energy project work in the early 1970s: first through the 1981 Presbyterian joint energy policy (UPC and PCUS), then through the comprehensive 2008 policy (<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/1-energyreport-2008.pdf>), and now to the 224th General Assembly (2020), with an update of the 2008 policy, as requested by the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

The goal of pricing energy or carbon consumption rationally involves the good intention of changing incentives in the marketplace in a consistent way, in tandem with the church's overall policy direction of phasing out the major sources of greenhouse gases as quickly as possible. Thus, the main response of the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy has been included in the energy policy update and includes two elements related to the morality of energy pricing. One is to scale back direct and indirect subsidies to oil and gas producers, and the other effectively to subsidize energy consumers without adequate means, especially if energy costs can begin to reflect more fully the costs of carbon emissions. ACSWP has publicized several articles on carbon reduction and the need for a greener economy in its online journal, *Unbound*, including this one from a partner organization: <https://justiceunbound.org/presbyterians-are-united-on-climate-action-as-a-matter-of-faith/>. Overall, as the original overture's proponents know, not all parts of the transition to cleaner or greener energy increase costs; some reduce costs, especially as windmills and solar panels steadily decrease in cost.

21. *2018 Referral: Item 08-12. On Supporting Carbon Pricing. Recommendation 8. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Support Congregations' Advocacy with Elected Officials on Climate Action Including Just Carbon Pricing Such as Carbon Fee and Dividend—From the Presbytery of New Covenant (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 53, 55, 263–64 of the print copy, pp. 754–57 of the electronic copy).*

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency, through the Presbyterian Hunger Program, created an [online page for the issue of carbon policy](#) and has posted multiple educational pieces encouraging action and advocacy. The Presbyterian Hunger Program also introduced the concept of carbon pricing to Earth Care Congregations through a variety of educational emails, encouraging action. Various Presbyterian Mission Agency staff have communicated with and attended conference call meetings of a group of Presbyterians who self-organized into an advocacy group around the issue of carbon pricing. The Office of Public Witness issued a [statement of support](#) in December 2018, and then reissued it again in January 2019. The Presbyterian Hunger Program sent video greeting to a gathering of faith leaders to share the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s support for carbon pricing at a Citizens Climate Lobby conference in June 2019. In July 2019, the Office of Public Witness put out an [action alert](#) on carbon pricing through its cap-wiz system and hosted a [webinar on carbon pricing](#).

22. *2018 Referral: Item 09-02. On Support and Prayer for the Church and People of South Sudan. Recommendation 2. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, Through the Office of Public Witness and the Presbyterian Ministry at the United*

Nations, to Advocate for Public Policy That Does a.–c.—From the Presbytery of Shenango (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 35, 36, 265–66 of the print copy, pp. 759–61 of the electronic copy).

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency, through the Office of Public Witness (OPW) and in close collaboration with the World Mission Africa Area coordinator and the regional liaison, issued an action alert to Presbyterians calling on them to ask Congress to do the following:

- a. Increase U.S. support for United Nations peacemaking efforts and specifically for the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan;
- b. Promote the establishment of the Hybrid Court and other transitional justice mechanisms in South Sudan to ensure accountability; and
- c. Lift-up the continuing humanitarian crisis in the region and commit emergency funds to alleviate hunger through both U.S. government agencies (such as USAID) and through United Nations and other international organizations.

In addition, the Office of Public Witness joined in a meeting organized by Oxfam and the Enough Project with the State Department to discuss the situation in South Sudan and possible helpful actions while also advocating the concerns of this resolution. The Office of Public Witness will continue to work with and strategize with the NGO working group on Sudan and South Sudan.

The Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations (PMUN), in its capacity as a member of the NGO Working Group on the Security Council, engaged with the members of the Security Council on the situation in South Sudan on a regular basis. The Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations continues to monitor progress under the peacekeeping mission, United Nations Mission in South Sudan, and engages with the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights on its ongoing investigation of violations and abuses of international human rights and humanitarian laws in the country.

23. 2018 Referral: Item 09-04. On Endorsing Affirmations Regarding the Welfare of Our Neighbors in Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador. Directs the Stated Clerk and Other Representatives of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the PC(USA) Washington Office, the Office of Immigration, Presbyterian World Mission, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations, and the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program to Advocate for Region-Wide and Country-Specific Changes in Policy, as Requested by the Reformed Calvinist Church of El Salvador (IRCES), Including a. and b.—From the Presbytery of the Pacific (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 36, 37, 267 of the print copy, pp. 764–68 of the electronic copy).

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency responded to this referral through the ministries of Compassion, Peace, and Justice and World Mission in collaboration with the Office of the General Assembly, Office of Immigration Issues in a number of areas. Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) provided funding and accompaniment to the Reformed Calvinist Church of El Salvador (IRCES) to establish a transitional shelter for Salvadoran citizens returned to El Salvador. Primary focus is on people who have lived in the United States for more than five years, increasing the need for reentry support and personal protection. By early 2020, IRCES will have developed a new peacebuilding curriculum and trained facilitators with funding from World Mission to begin working with community leaders. These forms of direct engagement are creating the necessary networks, personal relationships, and deeper understanding of the migration issues necessary to developing a national and regional advocacy strategy.

The Presbyterian Peacemaking Program is hosting a Travel Seminar “Central American Migrant Trails: Exploring the Journeys to and from the United States and Why We Must Act to El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras in February 2020.

The Office of Public Witness advocated for change in United States policy toward Central America as well as country specific policies, incorporating directly the voices of individuals from Guatemala. The Office of Public Witness signed on to letters and worked in coalition with others in the faith community to advocate for an increase in humanitarian aid and a decrease in military aid to the region.

The Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations (PMUN), with the Office of Immigration Issues, incorporated the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s immigration and refugee advocacy efforts during a visit to the Mexico-U.S. border led by the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) in March 2019. The international Christian delegation called for radical reforms to address the root causes of forced migration from the Northern Triangle region in public statements and advocacy visits in Washington, D.C.

24. 2018 Referral: Item 09-04. On Endorsing Affirmations Regarding the Welfare of Our Neighbors in Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador. Recommendation 2. Direct Presbyterian World Mission to Expand Funding for Regional Leadership Training in Nonviolence in the Northern Triangle of Central America, in Partnership with AIPRAL (Asociación de Iglesias Presbiterianas y Reformadas de America Latina—Association of Presbyterian and Reformed Churches of Latin America),

CEDEPCA (Centro Evangélico de Estudios Pastorales en Centroamérica—The Protestant Center for Pastoral Studies in Central America) and Other Partners—From the Presbytery of the Pacific (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 36, 37, 267 of the print copy, pp. 764–68 of the electronic copy).

Response: World Mission’s Latin America and the Caribbean (LA&C) office has started initially to expand funding for a program with one of our Global partners in the region. The Calvinist Reformed Church of El Salvador is implementing a program on community development, violence prevention, and peace of culture. The program includes initially the creation of a curriculum for training facilitators and subsequently the formation of these facilitators in Peace Culture and Violence Prevention. In the implementation of this phase, the program is targeting youth who can help build an environment of justice serving the community, and projects that are related to arts, culture, and sports. The program has a very strong educational component, necessary for the context where young people are marginalized and exposed to a culture of violence being targeted by the gangs. We are contributing \$15,000 to get this program off the ground. The LA&C office is accompanying the development of this initial phase and along with our Global Partners evaluating the advancement.

25. 2018 Referral: Item 09-05. A Resolution to Advocate for the Human Rights of All Citizens of Yemen. Recommendation 5. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, Through the Office of Public Witness and the Presbyterian Ministry at the UN, to Advocate for a.–c.—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 12, 37, 268 of the print copy, pp. 768–71 of the electronic copy).

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency has responded to this referral through the ministries of Compassion, Peace, and Justice. The Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations (PMUN), a member of the NGO Working Group on the Security Council, engages with members of the Security Council in monitoring the ongoing human rights violations in Yemen.

The Office of Public Witness, through Capitol Hill visits, sign-on letters, and action alerts, worked for the passage of Senate Joint Resolution 54—“A joint resolution to direct the removal of United States Armed Forces from hostilities in the Republic of Yemen that have not been authorized by Congress.”

26. 2018 Referral: Item 09-05. A Resolution to Advocate for the Human Rights of All Citizens of Yemen. Recommendation 6. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to a. Study and Then to Inform All Presbyterians (Through Digital Study Materials) Regarding the War in Yemen, b. Advocate for an Immediate Cessation of Hostilities and Work for a Just Political Settlement of the War, and c. Encourage Churches to Support Relief Efforts in Yemen through PDA—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 12, 37, 268 of the print copy, pp. 768–71 of the electronic copy).

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency has responded to this referral through the ministries of Compassion, Peace, and Justice. The Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations (PMUN) created a digital resource, country fact sheet, highlighting the work of United Nations agencies and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s policy and development efforts in Yemen. The fact sheet is available for download from the PMUN webpage (<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/country-fact-sheet-on-yemen/>).

The Office of Public Witness organized and hosted a webinar on the humanitarian crisis in Yemen and United States involvement through military support to Saudi Arabia. Speakers included Aisha Jumaan, the president of the Yemen Relief and Reconstruction Fund and epidemiologist who has consulted for the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) in Yemen, as well as Kate Kizer from Win Without War. Action alerts were sent asking Presbyterians to advocate for legislation that would help to end the war in Yemen as well as support Temporary Protected Holders (TPS) from Yemen. These alerts contained background and educational information on the crisis in Yemen and United States culpability.

27. 2018 Referral: Item 09-07. On Promoting Democracy, Good Governance, Human Rights, and Sustainable Development in Madagascar. Recommendation 1. Direct the Stated Clerk, Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and the Moderator(s) of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to Call Upon the President of the United States and Relevant Executive and Congressional Leaders to Promote Democracy, Good Governance, Human Rights, and Sustainable Development in Madagascar by Doing a.–j.—From the Presbytery of New York City (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 12, 38, 272–73 of the print copy, pp. 785–88 of the electronic copy).

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency has responded to this referral through the ministries of Compassion, Peace, and Justice. The Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations (PMUN) and the Office of Public Witness (OPW) will advise the Stated Clerk based on the ongoing situation.

28. 2018 Referral: Item 09-07. On Promoting Democracy, Good Governance, Human Rights, and Sustainable Development in Madagascar. Recommendation 2. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to a. Monitor Social and Political Developments in Madagascar and Assist the Stated Clerk and Other Denominational Leaders to Identify Opportune Moments at Which to Express Effectively the Concerns of the General Assembly Set Out in Recommendation 1.; b. Advise Presbyterians on Ways

to Advocate on Behalf of Democracy and on Behalf of Our Sisters and Brothers in Madagascar—From the Presbytery of New York City (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 12, 38, 272–73 of the print copy, pp. 785–88 of the electronic copy).

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency has responded to this referral through the ministries of Compassion, Peace, and Justice. The Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations (PMUN) monitors the situation in Madagascar through the United Nations Department of Political Affairs and the Office of Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. PMUN will advise the Stated Clerk based on the ongoing situation. PMUN created a digital resource, country fact sheet, highlighting the work of United Nations agencies and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s policy and development efforts in Madagascar. The fact sheet is available for download from PMUN’s webpage.

The Office of Public Witness is in regular contact with the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations, the Africa area coordinator and the regional liaison for Madagascar in order to discern best possible steps forward in terms of advocacy. At this time, the Office of Public Witness is still discerning, in coordination with the regional liaison, possible avenues for advocacy.

29. Alternate Resolution to 2018 Commissioners’ Resolution: Item 09-12. On North Korean Refugees. Recommendation 2. Direct the Stated Clerk and the Office of Public Witness to Communicate with Domestic and International Governments and Agencies to Encourage Peaceful Resolution of the Divisions on the Korean Peninsula, Which Will Foster an Environment Where No Party to the Historic Conflict Feels the Need to Sacrifice Civil Liberties in the Name of Security and Where Refugees and Asylum-Seekers Are Treated Humanely—From the 223rd General Assembly (2018) (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 36, 39–40, 275–76 of the print copy, pp. 795–99 of the electronic copy).

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency has responded to this referral through ministries of Compassion, Peace, and Justice in collaboration with others. The Office of Public Witness continued to advocate for a peaceful resolution to the conflict on the Korean peninsula. Through work with the Korea Peace Network, as well as action alerts, sign on letters, and advocacy summits, the Office of Public Witness continued to lift-up solutions to the conflict with congress and the administration. The Office of Public Witness worked with the coordinator for Asia and the Pacific in World Mission as well as the Stated Clerk’s Office to send a letter from the Stated Clerk to the president of the United States and the State Department.

30. Alternate Resolution to 2018 Commissioners’ Resolution: Item 09-12. On North Korean Refugees. Recommendation 3. Authorize the Presbyterian Mission Agency, Through World Mission Ministries and Other Appropriate Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Bodies and Staff, to Support and Monitor Progress Toward Reconciliation and De-Nuclearization in Consultation with Korean and Other Asian Partners, Including the Following Actions in a.–f.—From the 223rd General Assembly (2018) (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 36, 39–40, 275–76 of the print copy, pp. 795–99 of the electronic copy).

Response: World Mission’s Asia and the Pacific office is working with global partners in South Korea, including the National Council of Churches in Korea (NCCCK), as they galvanize efforts with a myriad of denominations in-country to address the issues raised around the topic of reconciliation and de-nuclearization. As these are extremely delicate matters requiring high levels of sensitivity, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is embodying a posture of appropriate humility especially as the foreign policy and practices of the United States factor into the matter. We remain vigilant and prayerful as efforts of our partners move carefully. The PC(USA) is also engaging with the Presbyterian Peace Network of Korea (PPNK) as they spearhead similar energies.

31. 2018 Referral: Item 09-13. Commissioners’ Resolution. On Prayer for the People of Nicaragua. Recommendation 3. Instructs the Presbyterian Mission Agency, Through Its Washington Office, to Oppose Any Proposed Intervention of the United States—Whether Military, Economic, or Diplomatic—into the Current Affairs of the Country of Nicaragua. This Includes a. and b.—From the 223rd General Assembly (2018) (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 12, 40, 276–77 of the print copy, pp. 799–800 of the electronic copy).

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency has responded to this referral through ministries of Compassion, Peace, and Justice in collaboration with others. The Office of Public Witness (OPW) worked closely with the National Council of Churches (NCC) and Church World Service (CWS) to speak out for the people of Nicaragua by signing several letters and a statement calling on the Nicaraguan government to end its repressive tactics. The office also signed onto a statement that opposed any United States intervention into the current affairs of Nicaragua. Working closely with CWS and the NCC the Office of Public Witness communicated with various Nicaraguan government officials to relay the concerns of this resolution. The OPW also participated in several ecumenical gatherings to organize the faith community’s response, including a meeting with the U.S. ambassador to the Organization of American States. The office hosted a webinar for Presbyterians on the crisis in Nicaragua, which included members of the student movement there. A series of meetings were held with student leaders and labor leaders in Washington, D.C., to stay updated on the situation. All of these actions were done in consultation with our partners and our mission co-worker on the ground in Nicaragua.

32. *2018 Referral: Item 09-14. Commissioners' Resolution. On Stopping the Separation of Immigrant Families at the Border and Upholding the Integrity of the U.S. Asylum System. Recommendation 9. Directs the PMA, Through the Office of Public Witness, to Advocate for a Policy That Ensures Family Unity and Safety for Those in the Asylum Process—From the 223rd General Assembly (2018) (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 36, 40–41, 277–78 of the print copy, pp. 800–804 of the electronic copy).*

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency has responded to this referral through ministries of Compassion, Peace, and Justice. Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) provided a number of educational events including a six-part series at the New Wilmington Mission Conference, “Advocating for U.S. Welcome” at the Compassion, Peace, and Justice Advocacy Training Day, a networking & training event at Big Tent, through mid council events in Buffalo and Utica, N.Y. and McAllen, Tex., to promote humane policies and humanitarian response. PDA staff also provided on-site consultations with Los Ranchos, San Diego, Pacific, San Fernando presbyteries; accompanied the Presbytery of Philadelphia to border immersion; and provided educational information through blog posts and the PDA webpage. A number of mid council grants have been provided to support grassroots community-organizing and local congregational accompaniment to those impacted by these policies. With the Office of Public Witness, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance hosted a webinar that included Guatemalan returnees, on May 24, 2019, entitled, “People, Migration & Borders,” to lift-up the broad cycle of issues from root causes that push people to migrate to the impact of deportation on Guatemalan returnees. PDA addressed U.S. policy developments to close access to migrants and asylum seekers, this General Assembly overture, and five broad policy recommendations endorsed by the Inter-faith Immigration Coalition, of which the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is a member. The Office of Public Witness offered a webinar and call to action on a related issue to stop the separation of families due to changes in HUD rules.

33. *2018 Referral: Item 09-15. Commissioners' Resolution. On Denouncing Violence and Injustice in Nicaragua. Recommendation. Direct the Stated Clerk and the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Speak Out on Behalf of the People of Nicaragua in Response to Violent Repression Taking Place at the Hands of Their Own Government, and Other Violent Actors—From the 223rd General Assembly (2018) (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 13, 41, 278 of the print copy, pp. 804–07 of the electronic copy).*

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency, through the Office of Public Witness, worked closely with the National Council of Churches and Church World Service to speak out for the people of Nicaragua. The Office of Public Witness signed on to several letters and a statement calling on the Nicaraguan government to end its repressive tactics. We worked closely with Church World Service and the National Council of Churches to communicate with various Nicaraguan government officials to relay the concerns of this resolution. The Office of Public Witness participated in several ecumenical gatherings to organize the faith community’s response, including a meeting with the U.S. Ambassador to the Organization of American States. A webinar was offered to Presbyterians on the crisis in Nicaragua, which included members of the student movement there. Likewise, the Office of Public Witness staff were involved in a series of meetings with student leaders and labor leaders in Washington, D.C., to stay apprised of the situation, while also assisting in the student leader’s meetings with congressional leaders. All of these actions took place in consultation with our partners and mission co-worker in Nicaragua. The Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations (PMUN) monitored the human rights crisis in Nicaragua and voiced Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s concerns with United Nation agencies. In March 2019, the United Nations Human Rights Council passed a resolution to place monitoring and reporting of ongoing human rights violations in Nicaragua.

34. *2018 Referral: Item 10-01. On an Initiative to Repair Critical Infrastructure Needs of the PC(USA). Recommendation 1. Inventory—Intentionally Working Together, Evaluation Teams Would Use Survey Forms That Allow for Both Checkoffs and Narratives of the Situation of Each Church. Teams Shall Be Led By Individuals with the Appropriate Professional Certification, Licensures, or Degrees Appropriate to the Work and May Also Include Synod and Presbytery Staffs, Native American Ministries Committees, Native American Consulting Committee, Native American Congregations, and Special Task Forces—From the Presbytery of Grand Canyon (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 28, 29, 279 of the print copy, pp. 809–11 of the electronic copy).*

Response: The coordinator for Native American church property began his work in Racial Equity & Women’s Intercultural Ministries in January 2019. The coordinator for Native American church property has a background in construction and management, including serving as owner of a construction company specializing in residential and commercial property construction, repair, renovation, and rehabilitation. The first property inventory trip was in February 2019 in the Presbytery of Grand Canyon. A meeting was held at Central Presbyterian Church in Phoenix, Arizona, with Native American church pastors and leaders in the presbytery, and additionally, a meeting was held with the presbytery executive. The coordinator consulted with a volunteer in the Presbytery of Grand Canyon who had done assessments and completed inventory forms prior to his arrival. The coordinator then performed inventories of Native American churches and chapels in that region and throughout the denomination, documenting the improvements needed.

35. *2018 Referral: Item 10-01. On an Initiative to Repair Critical Infrastructure Needs of the Churches and Properties in the Historic Native American and Alaskan Native Mission Field of the PC(USA). Recommendation 2. Report—Findings of the Inventories Will Be Reported to All Responsible Parties During the Two Years Between Meetings of General Assembly and a Report Would Be Made to the 224th General Assembly (2020) in Baltimore, Maryland. To Be of Value, This Report Must Contain Estimates of the Identified Repairs and Improvements. Of Equal Value Is the Necessity to Provide a Mechanism to*

Prioritize the Repairs and Improvements and the Associated Estimated Costs—From the Presbytery of Grand Canyon (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 28, 29, 279 of the print copy, pp. 809–11 of the electronic copy).

Response: This referral is answered by the “Native American Church Property Report,” (Item 00-96).

36. *2018 Referral: Item 10-01. On an Initiative to Repair Critical Infrastructure Needs of the Churches and Properties in the Historic Native American and Alaskan Native Mission Field of the PC(USA). Recommendation 4. Repair—A Means Must Be Established to Match Identified Projects with Teams of Volunteers Capable of Making the Repairs, Including Presbyterian and Non-Presbyterian Groups Looking for Such Mission Work. This Is an Invitation to the PC(USA) Itself to Marshal Its Churches and Volunteers to Furnish Their Labor, Materials, and Funds for Mission Work Projects, Especially to Start with the Most Pressing and Immediate Needs—From the Presbytery of Grand Canyon (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 28, 29, 279 of the print copy, pp. 809–11 of the electronic copy).*

Response: The coordinator for Native American church property in Racial Equity & Women’s Intercultural Ministries performed inventories of Native American churches and chapels in the denomination. The coordinator consulted with a volunteer in the Presbytery of Grand Canyon who did assessments and completed inventory forms prior to his arrival. The coordinator then performed inventories of Native American churches and chapels in the denomination, documenting the priority of improvements needed. Pressing and immediate needs were reported to church members at the site at the time of the inventory, as some of these were repairs that church members and volunteers could perform themselves. Other repairs that could not be performed immediately by church volunteers were recorded in the inventory.

37. *2018 Referral: Item 10-02. On a Collaborative Study of the Place and Purpose of the Humanities in the Teachings of PC(USA) Liberal Arts Colleges and Universities. Recommendation 2. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Appoint a Cross-Disciplinary Team Drawn from (1) Existing Staff within the Theology, Formation, and Evangelism Unit and (2) the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy to Consult with the Moderators of the 222nd and 223rd General Assemblies (2016) and (2018) on the Appointment of a Seven-to-Ten-Person Task Force to Be Drawn from Faculty, Administrators, and Chaplains at Related Presbyterian-Affiliated Colleges and Universities—From the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 28, 29, 280 of the print copy, pp. 811–13 of the electronic copy).*

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency has appointed the Cross-Disciplinary Team. The team is in consultation with the Moderators on the appointment of the task force. The task force has not yet been named.

38. *Alternate Resolution to 2018 Referral: Item 10-09. Overture Concerning Small Churches. Recommendation. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Report to the 224th General Assembly (2020) on Its Efforts to Strengthen the Mission and Ministry of Small Congregations, Including the Progress of Implementing the Vital Congregations and Christian Formation Initiatives—From the Presbytery of Grace (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 28, 30–31, 290–91 of the print copy, pp. 827–30 of the electronic copy).*

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency has made efforts to strengthen the mission and ministry of small congregations specifically through the mission areas of Theology, Formation, and Evangelism (Office of Christian Formation and Office of Vital Congregations), and also Racial Equity and Women’s Intercultural Ministries.

Office of Christian Formation: Though Theology, Formation, and Evangelism does not have one specific office related to small church ministry and support, there are several important ministry initiatives and efforts that contribute to this focus. Since the last General Assembly (2018), the Office of Christian Formation has taken strides to intentionally address the issues and needs of small churches within our denomination. In April of 2019, small church support was added to the portfolio of the Mission Coordinator for Christian Formation. Although that staff position was already focusing on how intergenerational formation intersects with small church ministry, the adjusted job description helped hone those efforts toward the small church context.

As a consequence, the intergenerational pilot cohort with the Presbytery of the Cascades shifted its focus toward cultivating intergenerational formation in small churches, particularly those without ordained leadership. Christian Formation also made small churches the primary target demographic for its upcoming series on intergenerational formation, which consists of free resources and video shorts aimed at small churches. Christian Formation also held a small church think tank in the fall of 2019, that sought to understand the resourcing needs of small churches. Finally, Christian Formation has included a small church supplemental resource for its upcoming toolkit on key lifelong Christian practices (storytelling, prayer, service, hospitality, and retreat) that is aimed at small churches and their ministries.

Office of Vital Congregations: As part of Theology, Formation and Evangelism, this office supports smaller church ministries with the two-year Vital Congregations Initiative. This initiative, designed for churches of all sizes, has worked with smaller churches to help assess, discern, and move forward in paths that the Spirit of God is leading them on towards the future. This two-year initiative seeks to walk with mid councils to help congregations to discern actions such as missional clustering,

re-forming around 7 Marks of Vital Congregations, and death and resurrection. We believe by resourcing and supporting churches through a relational two-year process, we might better help equip churches to live into new vital ways of being and sharing church with one another today.

Racial Equity and Women's Intercultural Ministries (RE&WIM): Given the preponderance of small churches that are also racial/ethnic congregations, much of what RE&WIM does is work with small churches. Support for these racial/ethnic congregations is most realized through specific offices designated by ethnicity. Established office and staff are in place for each of the following groups: African Americans, Africans, Asians, Hispanic/Latinos, Native Americans, Koreans, and Middle Eastern. Additionally, RE&WIM also partners with the efforts of the Office of Vital Congregations to meet the particular needs of each racial/ethnic congregation.

39. *2018 Referral: Item 10-10. List of Schools and Colleges. Recommendation. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Will Use the Existing Criteria and Develop Additional Criteria as Needed for Placing and Removing Colleges, Universities, and Secondary Schools on This List—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 13, 31, 291–92 of the print copy, pp. 830–31 of the electronic copy).*

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency has reviewed the existing criteria for inclusion on the list of PC(USA)-related schools, colleges, and universities. Additional criteria have been identified for future use, including that each institution must be accredited, degree-granting, and in agreement with the following statement adopted by the Presbyterian College Chaplains Association:

Because we are a Presbyterian-related institution, we value learning, faith, service, and connection to each other, the Church, and the world, honoring the dignity and worth of every person.

- **Because:** We don't value learning and all faith traditions represented on our campuses *in spite of* our church-relatedness. It is *because* we are church-related that we value and cherish all inquiry and welcome and encourage all faith communities.
- **Learning, faith, and service:** This order is important. We are schools, not churches, and our primary mission is education. Learning comes first. Nevertheless, as church-related institutions we are concerned to educate whole people for the whole world. We strive to graduate students who are not only academically well-prepared but also spiritually and socially mature participants in the religious and civic communities of which they are a part.
- **Service:** Although the term "civic engagement" is widely used on our campuses, we decided that it is not a common term in the life of the Church. We believe "service" communicates this value more clearly to our church partners.
- **Connection:** We value our relationships with the Presbyterian Church and with other schools who share a similar relationship. We are not, and do not wish to be, identical institutions. Yet we appreciate our common connections and commitments. We benefit from our mutual relationship, we are all grateful for the historic and ongoing support of the Presbyterian Church, and we are committed to maintaining that relationship.
- **World:** Our connection to the world is both social and environmental. We seek to serve the whole world through our service to each student. We understand ourselves to be part of a global community of teaching, learning, and inquiry. We also work to exhibit, embody, and encourage environmental responsibility on our campuses and beyond. As was stated above, we strive to educate whole people for the whole world.
- **Honoring:** Our efforts to live out our commitment to learning, faith, service, and connection take place in the context of our ongoing and pervasive commitment to honor the dignity and worth of all people. Our schools are resources and instruments through which the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) serves the world as we serve each of our students in all their magnificent variety and particularity.

Following the 224th General Assembly (2020), the Presbyterian Mission Agency will initiate conversation with the institutions on the list, asking them to state their acceptance of the revised criteria. The list of institutions responding in the affirmative will be presented to the 225th General Assembly (2022) for approval.

40. *2018 Referral: Item 10-11. On Establishing a Grant to Develop Resources to Educate Entities Regarding Serious Mental Illnesses. Recommendation 2. Establish a \$250,000 Grant to Be Used to Implement the Provisions of This Overture. The Funds Will Be Used to Develop Plans of Action and Resources That Will Be Used by Presbyteries, Congregations, and Seminaries of the PC(USA) to Further Educate These Entities Within PC(USA) Regarding Serious Mental Illness Issues with the Intent to Provide a Foundation for Action within the Denomination, and That the Materials Developed Include Help for Congregations Interfacing with Mental Illness Found in the Homeless Population Surrounding the Church—From the Presbytery of Mission (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 28, 32, 292–93 of the print copy, pp. 831–38 of the electronic copy).*

2018 Referral: Item 10-11. On Establishing a Grant to Develop Resources to Educate Entities Regarding Serious Mental Illnesses. Recommendation 4. Conduct a Review and Evaluation of the Actions That Have Been Taken Since the Policy Statement Was Approved, with a Report to Be Presented at the 224th General Assembly (2020)—From the Presbytery of Mission (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 28, 32, 292–93 of the print copy, pp. 831–38 of the electronic copy).

2018 Referral: Item 10-11. On Establishing a Grant to Develop Resources to Educate Entities Regarding Serious Mental Illnesses. Recommendation 5. Review, Update, and Present a Second Edition of "Comfort My People" for Approval at the

224th General Assembly (2020). This Review and Update Would Examine Terminology, Facts, Findings, Hyperlinks, and Add Any Additional Resources (i.e. Websites, Books, Movies) Published Since 2008 That Would Add Value to the Statement—From the Presbytery of Mission (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 28, 32, 292–93 of the print copy, pp. 831–38 of the electronic copy).

Response: The above referrals will be answered by the report with recommendations titled “On Furthering Mental Health Ministry in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)” (Item 02-094).

41. *2018 Referral: Item 10-12. Overture on Expanded Response to the Doctrine of Discovery. Recommendation 1. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) to Develop Resources That Aid Members, Congregations, Mid Councils, and the National Church on the Areas of Theological Understanding Described in a.–c.—From the Presbytery of Yukon (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 28, 32–33, 293–95 of the print copy, pp. 838–41 of the electronic copy).*

Response: Work on this referral was delayed due to staffing changes and a period of significant short staffing in the Office of Theology & Worship. Additional staff has been hired and began work in November of 2019. The resources called for will be completed in the spring of 2020. When completed they will be posted on the PC(USA) website.

42. *2018 Referral: Item 10-12. Overture on Expanded Response to the Doctrine of Discovery. Recommendation 3. Direct the PMA to Undertake a Study on Relationships Within Our Own Denominations as Described in a.–b.—From the Presbytery of Yukon (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 28, 32–33, 293–95 of the print copy, pp. 838–41 of the electronic copy).*

Response: This referral directs the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) to undertake a study to investigate the allocations and distributions of funds for supporting Native American ministry at the national level since the merger that founded the PC(USA) in 1983. The Finance and Accounting area in the Administrative Service Group (ASG) performed a review of Native American funds assigned to the PMA. It was not possible to review funds from the reunion of the PC(USA) in 1983, as these financial systems and records no longer exist. ASG was able to go back as far as 2006. The majority of funds expended were disbursed to the Native American Consulting Committee (NACC), a national caucus of the PC(USA) and to support the Office of Native American Intercultural Congregational Support in Racial Equity & Women’s Intercultural Ministries. Funds were also awarded to support Native American organizations, including Native American Presbyterian Women, Native American Presbyterian Men, the American Indian Youth Council, and other organizations, groups, mid councils, and Historically Presbyterian Institutions Equipping Communities of Color, particularly those offering leadership development events as part of the Native American Leadership Fund. Finally, funds were awarded to Native American Presbyterian leaders for event scholarships.

43. *2018 Referral: Item 10-12. Overture on Expanded Response to the Doctrine of Discovery. Recommendation 5. Direct the PMA to Form a Coordinating Council for the Purpose of Encouraging, Monitoring, and Sharing the Ongoing Responses by the National Church, Mid Councils, and Congregations to the Call to Action Issued by the Stated Clerk, as Listed in Recommendation 4, Above. The Council Will Also Have the Purpose of Making Recommendations to the 224th General Assembly (2020) on How the National Church, Mid Councils, and Congregations Can Support Native Americans in Their Ongoing Efforts for Sovereignty and Fundamental Human Rights—From the Presbytery of Yukon (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 28, 32–33, 293–95 of the print copy, pp. 838–41 of the electronic copy).*

Response: The Coordinating Council on Support for Native Americans, in their Ongoing Efforts for Sovereignty and Fundamental Rights, was formed in the fall of 2018. The council held two, face-to-face meetings in early 2019 and in the fall of 2019. This referral is answered by the “Native American Coordinating Council Report,” refer to Item 00-95.

44. *2018 Referral: Item 10-12. Overture on Expanded Response to the Doctrine of Discovery. Recommendation 6. Direct the PMA to Develop Resources for Congregations and Members in the Areas Described in a.–c. of Practical Understanding and Response to the Needs Beyond the Doors of the Church—From the Presbytery of Yukon (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 28, 32–33, 293–95 of the print copy, pp. 838–41 of the electronic copy).*

Response: Resources of four kinds have been posted to the Presbyterian Mission Agency website: Study resources, video resources, worship resources, and church statements. The resources are linked from this page: <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/racial-equity-womens-intercultural-ministries/gender-and-racial-justice-ministries/doctrine-of-discovery/>. These resources provide significant support for members, congregations, mid councils, and this denomination, as we seek deeper and wider understanding of the historical and on-going impact of the Doctrine of Discovery in our world and in the church.

45. *2018 Referral: Item 10-13. The Doctrine of Discovery: A Review of Its Origins and Implications for Congregations in the PC(USA) and Support for Native American Sovereignty. Recommendation 2. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Create Resources for Education on Racism That Address the Themes in This Report Involving Native American Presbyterians and Congregations—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 28, 33, 295–96 of the print copy, pp. 842–53 of the electronic copy).*

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency, as mandated by the 222nd General Assembly (2016) and the 223rd General Assembly (2018), is seeking to become a Matthew 25 Church. One of our emphases is structural racism/white supremacy, where Presbyterians dismantle structures and ideologies oppressing people of color. Educational resources on racism that address the themes in the Doctrine of Discovery report were created. See “Matthew 25 in the PC(USA)”: www.pcusa.org/matthew25 and “Matthew 25 Resources (Dismantling structural racism resources)”: www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/matthew-25/resources/.

46. *2018 Referral: Item 10-13. The Doctrine of Discovery: A Review of Its Origins and Implications for Congregations in the PC(USA) and Support for Native American Sovereignty. Recommendation 5. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Create a Speaker’s Bureau on Indigenous Issues and Publicize the List to the Church—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 28, 33, 295–96 of the print copy, 842–53 of the electronic copy).*

Response: A list of speakers on indigenous issues has been created and is available on the Native American Intercultural Congregational Support website at: <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/racial-equity-womens-intercultural-ministries/native-american-intercultural-congregational-support/> and the Facing Racism website at: <https://facing-racism.pcusa.org/item/41901/>

47. *2018 Referral: Item 10-13. The Doctrine of Discovery: A Review of Its Origins and Implications for Congregations in the PC(USA) and Support for Native American Sovereignty. Recommendation 7. Direct the Agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to Begin Each Meeting with an Acknowledgement of Whose Land They Are Meeting on and That Greetings to the Assembly Include a Welcome from Those Indigenous Peoples Currently Living on the Land—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 28, 33, 295–96 of the print copy, 842–53 of the electronic copy).*

Response: At its September 2018 meeting, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board amended its Manual of Operation to include this acknowledgement in the standard format for each face-to-face meeting of the Board.

48. *2018 Referral: Item 10-13. The Doctrine of Discovery: A Review of Its Origins and Implications for Congregations in the PC(USA) and Support for Native American Sovereignty. Recommendation 12. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Initiate a Survey in Order to Create a Listing of Courses Taught in COTE-Member Seminaries That Focus on the Histories of Indigenous Peoples and Current Issues Facing Indigenous Peoples, Identifying Specific Instructors, Courses, Texts, and Syllabi When Possible—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 28, 33, 295–96 of the print copy, pp. 842–53 of the electronic copy).*

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency has initiated a survey in order to create a listing of courses taught in Presbyterian-related seminaries that focus on the histories of Indigenous peoples and current issue facing Indigenous peoples, identifying specific instructors, courses, texts, and syllabi when possible. When the survey is concluded, results will be posted on the PC(USA) website.

49. *2018 Referral: Item 10-13. The Doctrine of Discovery: A Review of Its Origins and Implications for Congregations in the PC(USA) and Support for Native American Sovereignty. Recommendation 13. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Identify in the Book of Confessions How Our Confessions May Support the Doctrine of Discovery, How Our Confessions May Challenge the Doctrine of Discovery, How Our Confessions Provide Evidence for Ways the Church Can Change, and to Report Its Findings to the 224th General Assembly (2020)—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 28, 33, 295–96 of the print copy, pp. 842–53 of the electronic copy).*

Response: This referral will be answered by the report without recommendations titled “The Book of Confessions and the Doctrine of Discovery” (Item 00-Info-04).

50. *2018 Referral: Item 10-13. The Doctrine of Discovery: A Review of Its Origins and Implications for Congregations in the PC(USA) and Support for Native American Sovereignty. Recommendation 14. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Include the Doctrine of Discovery and the Histories of Indigenous Peoples and Current Issues Facing Indigenous Peoples in Its Antiracism and Training Efforts—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 28, 33, 295–96 of the print copy, pp. 842–53 of the electronic copy).*

Response: The antiracism training material has been expanded. A new module includes “Roots of Injustice, Seeds of Change: Toward Right Relationships with America’s Native Peoples” also known as the Blanket Exercise. Facilitators of this exercise are certified trainers. The Blanket Exercise is an interactive educational activity that teaches the legacy of the Doctrine of Discovery as it has affected both European colonizers and indigenous colonized people of the United States since 1492. This exercise has been used as a teaching tool in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), including at the Big Tent in 2019, at the Antiracism Facilitators Consultation held at Stony Point Conference Center in 2019, during a PMA staff training in the fall of 2019, at a PMA Staff Development Day in 2018, at a PMA Board meeting in 2017, and at mid-councils in the PC(USA). This resource will supplement the basic antiracism training material.

For a list of certified Presbyterian trainers, contact the Office of Native American Intercultural Congregational Support or the Office of Gender and Racial Justice.

51. *2018 Referral: Item 10-13. The Doctrine of Discovery: A Review of Its Origins and Implications for Congregations in the PC(USA) and Support for Native American Sovereignty. Recommendation 16. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, in Consultation with the Native American Consulting Committee (NACC), to Devote an Issue of Unbound to the Doctrine of Discovery, Including Histories of Indigenous Peoples and Issues Facing Indigenous Peoples—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 28, 33, 295–96 of the print copy, pp. 842–53 of the electronic copy).*

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency has responded to this referral through the ministries of Compassion, Peace and Justice. “We Are Still Here” is the Fall 2019 issue of *Unbound: An Interactive Journal on Christian Social Justice*. The issue features interviews with and reflections from Indigenous leaders in the church on the lingering impact of the Doctrine of Discovery. The Fall 2019 issue of *Unbound* can be accessed at <https://justiceunbound.org/category/current-issue-we-are-still-here/>.

52. *2018 Referral: Item 10-13. The Doctrine of Discovery: A Review of Its Origins and Implications for Congregations in the PC(USA) and Support for Native American Sovereignty. Recommendation 18. Direct the Presbyterian Ministries at the United Nations to Monitor Indigenous Issues in the United Nations and to Share This Information in Its Reporting—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 28, 33, 295–96 of the print copy, pp. 842–53 of the electronic copy).*

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency, through the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations (PMUN), monitored indigenous issues at the United Nations by attending the 18th session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. The central theme of the Forum was Indigenous Peoples’ Traditional Knowledge: Generation, transmission & protection. It was held on April 22–May 3, 2019, at the United Nations Headquarters in New York City.

53. *2018 Referral: Item 10-16. Mutual Mission Agreement. Recommendation 3. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, Through Its World Mission Ministries and Latin America Regional Office, to Publicize and Oversee Implementation of the Mutual Mission Agreement Between the Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba (IPRC) and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Throughout the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)—From the 223rd General Assembly (2018) (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp.13, 34, 298–300 of the print copy, pp. 859–62 of the electronic copy).*

Response: World Mission’s Latin America and the Caribbean office have been actively promoting the study of the New Hopes and Realities in Cuban-American Relations: A “Nuevo Momento,” the social witness policy statement approved by the 222nd General Assembly (2016) in small groups engaged in local partnerships as part of the orientation for such groups, presbyteries, and among the Cuba Partners Network members. Along with that, we’ve been facilitating the engagement of our global partner in the various items of the Mutual Mission Agreement such as Mission and Ecumenical Participation, as stated in the document.

54. *2018 Referral: Item 11-02. On Calling for an Immediate Moratorium on All Executions. Recommendation 3. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, Through Compassion, Peace, and Justice Ministries, to Post and Publicize an Updating of Its Resources on Criminal Justice and Capital Punishment, Including the General Assembly’s Resolution on Restorative Justice (2000), Guidance for Prison Ministries, and Any Actions from the 223rd General Assembly (2018) Advocating Greater Fairness in Policing, Provision of Public Defenders, Availability of Diversion and Treatment Programs, Bail and Sentencing Standards for Drug and Other Crime, Consistent with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s Vision of a Less Violent and More Healing Society, Based in the Teachings and Example of Jesus of Nazareth—From the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 55–56, 313 of the print copy, pp. 991–94 of the electronic copy).*

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency has responded to this referral through the ministries of Compassion, Peace and Justice. Conversations were held in the month of October 2019 with three congressman discussing criminal justice and racial disparities. The House of Representatives Majority Whip, Jim Clyburn (S.C.), expressed his strong support for reform. Congressman David Price (N.C.) shared his commitment to racial justice and shared efforts to ensure justice in the criminal justice system. Congressman Jamie Raskin (MD) engaged in a discussion of violence and invited the director to participate in a rally he sponsored that evening in Silver Springs. The director spoke about an end to violence and for justice throughout the nation.

55. *2018 Referral: Item 11-04. On Clarifying the Position of the PC(USA) Regarding Appropriate Boundaries of Religious Liberty. Recommendation 3. Direct the Stated Clerk and the Office of Public Witness to Oppose Legislative, Judicial, and Administrative Efforts at the State and Federal Levels to Limit the Protection of Persons Based Upon Race, Ethnicity, Sex, Gender, Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Religion, or Gender Expression in the Guise of Religious Freedom—From the Presbytery of Boise (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 13, 57, 314 of the print copy, pp. 996–98 of the electronic copy).*

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency, through ministries of Compassion, Peace and Justice. The director of the Office of Public Witness testified before the House of Representatives Committee on Labor and Education in support of legislation limiting the ability of religious organizations to discriminate against persons based on their sexual identity in support of the “Do No Harm Act” as sponsored by Senator Kamila Harris. A major part of the discussion centered on the manner in which the Religious Freedom Restoration Act was being misused to justify discrimination based on religious beliefs. There have been several lawsuits of biased firings of gay and transgender persons simply because of sexual identity.

56. *2018 Referral: Item 11-05. Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns Name Change. Recommendation 2. Direct All Six Agencies of the PC(USA) to Move Toward Changing “Racial Ethnic People” to “People Of Color” in All Documents, Parlance, and Programs from This Point Forward—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 13, 57–58, 314–15 of the print copy, pp. 998–99 of the electronic copy).*

Response: At the September 2018 meeting of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, changes that required Board action were submitted and approved. Other name changes were submitted as information items at the same board meeting.

57. *2018 Referral: Item 11-05. Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns Name Change. Recommendation 3. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB) and the Committee on the Office of General Assembly (COGA) to Change “Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC)” to “Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC)” in All Documents, Parlance, and Programs—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 13, 57–58, 314–15 of the print copy, pp. 998–99 of the electronic copy).*

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board received these changes into its Manual of Operations as editorial corrections at its September 2018 meeting.

58. *2018 Referral: Item 11-09. A Resolution on Sexual Misconduct in the PC(USA). Recommendation 3. Direct the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Provide and, Where Necessary, Develop Pastoral, Trauma-Informed Clinical Care (TIC) Based and Theologically-Grounded Resources for Healing Survivors and Their Families, Congregations, and Presbyteries from Sexual Misconduct Within the Church, Including a.–c.—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 56, 58–59, 320–21 of the print copy, pp. 1024–30 of the electronic copy).*

Response: The Coordinator for Theology and Worship has consulted with the task force overseeing implementation of recommendations regarding theological resources, particularly those found in the PC(USA)’s statements of faith. The task force is developing a list of resources addressing the areas listed in the referral.

59. *2018 Referral: Item 11-11. Declare an Imperative for the Reformation of the PC(USA) in Being a Transformative Church in This Intercultural Era. Recommendation 2. Declare the Period from 2020 to 2030 as the “Decade of Intercultural Transformation” by Focusing on Transformative Priorities and Initiatives Across the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 55, 59, 323–25 of the print copy, pp. 1045–50 of the electronic copy).*

Response: The 223rd General Assembly declared the period from 2020 to 2030 as the “Decade of Intercultural Transformation.” The associate director of Racial Equity & Women’s Intercultural Ministries in the Intercultural Ministries area has communicated that this is the decade of intercultural transformation and has shared the assembly action throughout the church, including at mid council meetings, the Antiracism and Cultural Humility Facilitators’ Training in Louisville, Kentucky, in 2018, Intercultural Church Day in Chapel at the Presbyterian Center in Louisville in June 2019, in the PC(USA)’s *Mission Yearbook for Prayer and Study*, and in newsletter articles, as well as through sermons, greetings, speeches, and in the *Racial Equity Torch* magazine and the Racial Equity & Women’s Intercultural Ministries E-newsletter. The General Assembly mandate to *Declare an Imperative for the Reformation of the PC(USA) in Being a Transformative Church in This Intercultural Era* has been translated in Korean and Spanish and has been disseminated to the wider church, including intercultural constituencies.

60. *2018 Referral: Item 11-11. Declare an Imperative for the Reformation of the PC(USA) in Being a Transformative Church in This Intercultural Era. Recommendation 3. Immediately Denounce the Persistent and Demonic Presence of Racism and the Misuse of Power and Privilege in Our Individual and Institutional Lives. Invest in Training and Identifying Trained Antiracism Facilitators, Who Will Provide a Geographically Accessible and Affordable Network for Congregations and Mid Councils, and Develop a Process for Connecting Facilitators and Congregations and Mid Councils Who Seek Assistance—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 55, 59, 323–25 of the print copy, pp. 1045–50 of the electronic copy).*

Response: The Office of Racial Equity & Women’s Intercultural Ministries held two Antiracism and Cultural Humility Facilitators’ Trainings, bringing together trainers across the PC(USA). The first facilitators’ training was held in Louisville, Ky., in 2018, and the second training was held in Stony Point, N.Y., in 2019. Antiracism and Cultural Humility trainers have

been identified in various geographic regions throughout the church. For a list of antiracism facilitators in your area, contact the Office of Gender and Racial Justice.

61. *2018 Referral: Item 11-11. Declare an Imperative for the Reformation of the PC(USA) in Being a Transformative Church in This Intercultural Era. Recommendation 5. Direct the Office of the General Assembly (OGA), the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA), the Presbyterian Foundation (FDN), the Board of Pensions (BOP), the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation (PPC), and the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc. (PILP) to Develop Relevant Intercultural Programs, Resources, Events, and Antiracism Training to Assist Persons in Recognizing Intersectionality or How Differences Treated Oppressively Are Experienced Simultaneously in Ways That Amplify and Complicate the Consequences of Each Aspect of Oppression—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 55, 59, 323–25 of the print copy, pp. 1045–50 of the electronic copy).*

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency has connected with the Office of the General Assembly, who are taking lead on this work, including a race audit of the six agencies of the church, so that individuals and groups in the national church agencies may recognize intersectionality or how differences treated oppressively are experienced simultaneously in ways that amplify and complicate the consequences of each aspect of oppression. The Office of the General Assembly facilitated a kick-off meeting for “Agency Environmental Assessment” in August 2019. The Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly, as well as the other agencies of the church, have contracted with the Washington Group to meet with the national church agencies, distribute surveys, and hold focus groups with staff and elected leaders in each agency. The Office of Gender & Racial Justice will connect with the Office of the General Assembly as this work evolves and reports are produced and distributed.

62. *2018 Referral: Item 11-11. Declare an Imperative for the Reformation of the PC(USA) in Being a Transformative Church in This Intercultural Era. Recommendation 8. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly to Equip Congregations and Mid Councils to Form Intercultural Coalitions, Networks, New Worshiping Communities, and Congregations Across the Church That Worship, Work, Share Meals, Study, Share Communion, and Advocate for Racial and Intercultural Justice, with a Respectful Awareness and Appreciation of Each Other’s Ethnicities, Cultures, Socio-economic Status, Able-Bodiedness, Gender and Sexual Identity and Expression, and Languages—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 55, 59, 323–25 of the print copy, pp. 1045–50 of the electronic copy).*

Response: The associate director of Racial Equity & Women’s Intercultural Ministries has visited mid councils and created an intercultural guide to assist congregations and mid councils in the church to form intercultural coalitions, networks, new worshiping communities, and congregations that share a respectful awareness and appreciation of each other’s ethnicities and cultures. The intercultural guide, including a link to other intercultural resources, is available on the Intercultural Ministries website at: <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/racial-equity-womens-intercultural-ministries/intercultural-ministries/>

63. *2018 Referral: Item 11-11. Declare an Imperative for the Reformation of the PC(USA) in Being a Transformative Church in This Intercultural Era. Recommendation 11.a. Direct General Assembly to Focus on Planting New Congregations, and Raising Indigenous Leadership for All Levels of the Church from Within Communities of Color, with Special Emphasis on the Latin, African American, Native American, and Immigrant Communities—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 55, 59, 323–25 of the print copy, pp. 1045–50 of the electronic copy).*

Response: The office of 1001 New Worshiping Communities, in partnership with Racial Equity and Women’s Intercultural Ministries, is building language and culture-specific resources for the growth and vitality of new worshiping communities of color through the following efforts:

- Increasing the number and cultural diversity of leaders of color for the 1001 New Worshiping Communities coaching network.
- Identifying leadership and providing resources for a learning cohort of Spanish-speaking new worshiping community leaders.
- Developing new language and culture-specific church planting resources in Spanish and Korean first, and then in additional languages.
- Developing financial sustainability training specifically for communities of color and immigrant communities.
- Designing and offering a potential new worshiping community leader assessment in Spanish, while consistently working to provide language-specific assessments for potential leaders, as requested.

- Collaborating across PC(USA) agencies, particularly with OGA, in the production of a resource for mid councils supporting new worshipping communities among new immigrants.
- Developing leader training resources that are accessible to leaders who are bi-vocational or otherwise unable to travel to in-person training events.
- Designating financial assistance for new worshipping community leaders of color for participation in the 1001 National Gathering.

64. *2018 Referral: Item 11-12. On Affirming and Celebrating the Full Dignity and Humanity of People of All Gender Identities. Recommendation. Directs the Stated Clerk and the Presbyterian Mission Agency, Through Its Office of Public Witness, to Advocate for the Rights of Transgender People and for Legal Protections to Ensure and Protect the Full Humanity and Dignity of People of All Gender Identities—From the Presbytery of New Castle (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 13, 60, 325–26 of the print copy, pp. 1050–54 of the electronic copy).*

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency has responded to this referral through ministries of Compassion, Peace, and Justice. The director of the Office of Public Witness testified before the House of Representatives Committee on Labor and Education (Chair, Bobby Scott, Fla.) against discrimination, homophobia, and religious persecution of members of the LGBTQIA+ community. That was followed up with a written statement to the committee on behalf of the rights of the community against discrimination in hiring. The committee was deciding on whether to support the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, which was being used improperly to say that Christians have the right to discriminate in hiring and firing practices if the sexuality of those whose lifestyles with which they disagreed.

65. *2018 Referral: Item 11-12. On Affirming and Celebrating the Full Dignity and Humanity of People of All Gender Identities. Recommendation. Directs the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Consult with Existing LGBTQIA+ Focused Advocacy Organizations to Develop and/or Adopt Educational Resources to Support Congregational and Denominational Learning, and Encourages Synods, Presbyteries, Seminaries, and Congregations to Do the Same—From the Presbytery of New Castle (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 13, 60, 325–26 of the print copy, pp. 1050–54 of the electronic copy).*

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency has responded to this referral through ministries of Compassion, Peace, and Justice. In a meeting between the director of the Office of Public Witness and Senator Chris Coons (DE) in September of 2019, the rights of the LGBTQIA+ community were discussed. The senator’s concerns and positions aligned with the positions of the denomination as he shared his efforts to protect that community and to be a force against discrimination and intolerance. The director of the Office of Public Witness also participated in a rally before the Supreme Court as the justices were deliberating on workplace discrimination cases concerning employees fired for being members of the LGBTQIA+ community. The issue was the significance of the word “sex” in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

The Office of Racial and Intercultural Justice (Compassion, Peace, and Justice/Racial Equity and Women’s Intercultural Ministries) has partnered with More Light Presbyterians on three webinars discussing the intersections of racial justice and LGBTQIA+ justice.

Racial Equity and Women’s Intercultural Ministries has revised the “Well-Chosen Words” resource to include an updated and expanded glossary on sexuality and gender identity.

The Office of Gender and Racial Justice (Racial Equity and Women’s Intercultural Ministries) created and presented a learning opportunity on gender identity at Big Tent in 2019. The office will also partner with More Light Presbyterians to present at the NEXT Church National gathering on race and sexuality.

Antiracism education opportunities offered by the Office of Racial & Intercultural Justice now include a module on intersectionality and how people experience inequity at the intersections of race, gender, sexuality, and other identities.

66. *2018 Referral: Item 11-13. On Celebrating the Gifts of People of Diverse Sexual Orientations and Gender Identities in the Life of the Church. Recommendation 8. Calls on the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and All Who Represent the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to Actively Work for the Protection of Human and Civil Rights, Both in the United States and Around the World, Especially the Rights of Marginalized and Oppressed Groups, Including People Facing Discrimination on the Basis of Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity—From the Presbytery of New Castle (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 13, 60, 326–27 of the print copy, pp. 1054–56 of the electronic copy).*

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency has responded to this referral through ministries of Compassion, Peace, and Justice. The director of the Office of Public Witness assisted in the planning and implementation of an advocacy conference for the Presbytery of New York City, which featured workshops on the rights and protection of members of the LGBTQIA+

community in the fall of 2018 and 2019. Leadership from the LGBTQIA+ community discussed the current national climate and shared strategies of engagement. A similar event was held in Greensboro, North Carolina, for the Presbytery of Salem in 2019 with another planned for March of 2020.

67. *2018 Referral: Item 11-13. On Celebrating the Gifts of People of Diverse Sexual Orientations and Gender Identities in the Life of the Church. Recommendation 9. Calls Upon Mission Co-Workers and Ecumenical Representatives to Advocate for Justice and Equality for All God’s People in Ways Appropriate to Their Cultural and Ecclesiastical Context—From the Presbytery of New Castle (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 13, 60, 326–27 of the print copy, pp. 1054–56 of the electronic copy).*

Response: World Mission now organizes its orientation and training for mission personnel centered around “equity in mission,” which calls upon mission co-workers to advocate for justice and equality for all God’s people, including LGBTQ[IA]+ people.

68. *2018 Referral: Item 11-15. A Resolution on Religious Freedom Without Discrimination. Recommendation 3. Directs the Presbyterian Mission Agency, Through the Office of Public Witness (OPW), to Oppose Legislative and Judicial Efforts to Use “Religious Freedom” as a Justification for Discrimination and Denial of Equal Rights and/or Equal Provision of Services or Benefits by Any Legally-Chartered Entity—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 13, 61–62, 328–29 of the print copy, pp. 1060–64 of the electronic copy).*

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency has responded to this referral through ministries of Compassion, Peace, and Justice. The Office of Public Witness wrote a statement to Congress in support of the “Do No Harm Act,” which sought to correct injustices in the discriminatory firings of LGBTQIA+ persons; the bill is co-sponsored by Senators Kamala Harris and Joe Kennedy. The director of the Office of Public Witness participated in a panel discussion supporting the “Do No Harm Act” before Congress and argued in support of its passage.

69. *2018 Referral: Item 11-16. A Resolution on Honest Patriotism. Recommendation 6. The Presbyterian Mission Agency, Through the Office of Public Witness, and Other Ministries of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Are Directed to Advocate and Witness for Policies Consistent with the Affirmations in 1.–5.—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 13, 62, 329–32 of the print copy, pp. 1064–70 of the electronic copy).*

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency has responded to this referral through ministries of Compassion, Peace, and Justice. The director of the Office of Public Witness was part of a two-day symposium on religious freedom with the Committee on Civility, which focused on civil discourse but also on the proper dictates of one’s faith, especially Christianity. Christians are people of tolerance and love. This symposium resulted in a creation of a document that has been distributed nationally and is available to congregations. The director also wrote a statement for the Joint Baptist Committee on Religious Liberty for a document they produced wherein “Honest Patriotism” was quoted offering clarity on what it means to be a Christian living in a secular nation.

70. *2018 Referral: Item 11-18. Responding to Racist Nationalism. Recommendation 3. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, Through Presbyterian World Mission, to Send This Resolution to World Mission Partners—From the Presbytery of Hudson River (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 55, 62–63, 332–33 of the print copy, pp. 1072–73 of the electronic copy).*

Response: World Mission distributed this statement to our global partners in August 2018 in a communication from our area offices explaining that we were sharing this communication with them at the request of our General Assembly. Several global partners responded appreciatively of the statement and described how it also spoke to their contexts.

71. *2018 Referral: Item 11-20. Commissioners’ Resolution. On Church Support in Response to Support of Suicide Prevention Efforts. Recommendation 11. Direct the General Assembly to Publish the List of Resources Found in the Rationale in All Online Denominational Resources to Congregations—From the 223rd General Assembly (2018) (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 13, 63, 333–34 of the print copy, pp. 1095–97 of the electronic copy).*

Response: In response to the assembly’s directive, we created a page on the Presbyterian Mission Agency website at <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/suicide-prevention/> that describes the action that the assembly took and lists out the resources, with links, that we were asked to publish. This page is easily accessible by typing “suicide” or “suicide prevention” in the search box anywhere on the site.

In addition, we shared this page with PMA ministry directors with an invitation for them to have their staff send us information about other relevant suicide prevention resources as they become available to keep the page dynamic.

72. *2018 Referral: Item 11-22. Commissioners’ Resolution. On Advocating for the Citizens of Puerto Rico. Recommendation 4. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, Through Its Office of Public Witness, to Advocate for the U.S. Government to Repeal the Provisions in the Jones Act That Limit Puerto Rico’s Imports to Using U.S.-Owned Shipping Companies, a*

Requirement That Has Substantially Hindered Its Recovery from the 2017 Hurricanes and Its Economic Growth More Generally—From the 223rd General Assembly (2018) (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 55, 63, 335 of the print copy, pp. 1100–02 of the electronic copy).

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency, through Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP), sent staff to visit the offices of several senators and representatives in Washington, D.C., who are members of committees that deal with the political and economic situation in Puerto Rico. The problems presented in the overtures and the position of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) were addressed with staff/officials.

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance has hosted two webinars addressing the topics presented in the mandates and how they have affected the recuperation process on the island.

During the month of February 2019, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance provided help in the coordination of the visit and meetings of the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy held in Puerto Rico. Representatives from the synod and presbyteries participated in dialogues and presentations by a Puerto Rican theologian and economist. The Jones Act and debt were discussed in the presentations. The committee also visited Caño Martín Peña land trust, an organization and community that has been affected by both situations.

In November 2019, the Peacemaking Program will hold a domestic travel study seminar in Puerto Rico. This seminar is hosted in coordination with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance. Participants will have the opportunity to engage in conversations with leaders in Puerto Rico who are advocating against the Jones Act and for a just resolution to the debt crisis. The group will also participate in conversations with economists, professors, and leaders of the synod and presbyteries.

In January 2020, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance will be assisting the synod executives with their meeting that will be held in Puerto Rico. The agenda will focus on ways to get involved in dialogues around various topics related to the crisis and recovery process, including the Jones Act and debt.

In coordination with the disaster recovery coordinator of the Presbytery of San Juan and the host site coordinator of La Casona de Monteflores, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance volunteers have participated in workshops with an economist who has provided information about the economic situation as well as how the island arrived at current debt levels and how the Jones Act has increased the prices of imports since it was established. At the end of the presentation, the groups were asked to become advocates for Puerto Rico in their churches and communities. This process will continue with all groups who volunteer through La Casona Host Site, with the hope to provide the same in all of Presbyterian Disaster Assistance's host sites in Puerto Rico.

The Office of Public Witness has been in conversations with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance on alleviation of the Jones Act and how to engage Presbyterians to advocate before members of Congress. A webinar is planned in the fall for Presbyterians to become informed on the situation in Puerto Rico.

73. 2018 Referral: Item 11-22. Commissioners' Resolution. On Advocating for the Citizens of Puerto Rico. Recommendation 5. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, Through Its Office of Public Witness, to Advocate for the U.S. Government to Conduct Another Rescheduling of Puerto Rico's Debt Obligations, Given the Way That, Since the Previous Rescheduling, the Hurricanes (and the Insufficient Support for Recovery) Have Greatly Reduced the Island's Fiscal Capacity to Service Its Debt—From the 223rd General Assembly (2018) (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 55, 63, 335 of the print copy, pp. 1100–02 of the electronic copy).

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency, through the Office of Public Witness, drafted a letter in August addressing the issues of Puerto Rico's debt obligations and seeking a means by which to resolve it. Likewise, the Office of Public Witness director wrote a statement in conjunction with the Stated Clerk that the Presbyterian News Service published online, <https://officeofpublicwitness.blogspot.com/2019/08/rev-jimmie-hawkins-speaks-out-in.html>.

At its October 2019 meeting, the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy reviewed the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) statements and those made jointly with the ecumenical and interfaith Jubilee Coalition in light of the dramatic change in governor and improvement in the release of aid voted by the U.S. House of Representatives, which have not (as of August 2019) led to significant change in the operation of the Puerto Rico Oversight, Management, and Economic Stability Act (PROMESA), the fiscal oversight board. Drawing on economic and demographic data, the committee will consider providing further information to Puerto Rican Presbyterians, the Office of Public Witness, the Peacemaking Program, and the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance. If new matters of policy significance emerge where General Assembly guidance is warranted, the committee will consult with those representatives and programs prior to its meeting in January of 2020.

74. 2018 Referral: Item 12-01. On Opposition to Congressional and State Anti-BDS Legislation. Recommendation 6. Direct the Stated Clerk and Appropriate Presbyterian Mission Agency Program Staff to Develop Resources and Implement

Strategies for Member Education, Interreligious Dialogue, and Public Witness Concerning the Importance of the First Amendment Freedoms of Speech, Association, Press, and Exercise of Religion for All Americans, Including the Right to Protest Through Boycott and Divestment, and Other Nonviolent Means—From the Synod of the Covenant (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 13, 75, 339 of the print copy, pp. 1117–19 of the electronic copy).

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency has responded to this referral through ministries of Compassion, Peace, and Justice in collaboration with others. The Office of Public Witness issued a series of action alerts and articles on the issues around the anti-BDS legislation and the importance of freedom of speech and first amendment rights. The office continues to work in coalition with Churches for Middle East Peace and the Faith Forum on Middle East Policy on advocacy in support of the right to boycott.

75. 2018 Referral: Item 12-02. On Advocating for the Human Rights of All Citizens of Israel. Recommendation 4. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, Through the Office of Public Witness and the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations, to Advocate for and Witness to the Human Rights of All Israeli Citizens Regardless of Their Religious or Ethnic Minority Status Until Israel Is in Compliance with International Humanitarian Laws, Specifically the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights—From the Synod of the Covenant (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 75, 76, 339–40 of the print copy, pp. 1120–26 of the electronic copy).

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency, through the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations (PMUN), in its capacity as a member of the NGO Working Group on the Security Council, engaged with members of the Security Council and the Israel-Palestine Working Group to advocate on behalf of the rights of all Israeli citizens under international human rights and international humanitarian laws.

76. 2018 Referral: Item 12-02. On Advocating for the Human Rights of All Citizens of Israel. Recommendation 5. Direct the Office of the General Assembly and Presbyterian Mission Agency, Through Its Program Units, to Study, and Inform All Presbyterians Regarding the Discriminatory Practices in Israel Today and to Advocate for Equal Rights for All Citizens Who Live in Israel, Regardless of Their Religious and Ethnic Identity—From the Synod of the Covenant (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 75, 76, 339–40 of the print copy, pp. 1120–26 of the electronic copy).

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency, through the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations (PMUN), created a digital resource fact sheet, which provides an overview of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s history in the region, current policy, and the work of the church in Israel/Palestine. This resource can be downloaded from the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations webpage (www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/un).

77. 2018 Referral: Item 12-03. On Creating a Task Force to Examine the NCCOP’s Call to Ecumenical Solidarity for Justice for Palestinians. Recommendation 2. All Relevant, Appropriate, Official PC(USA) Staff, Committees, Task Forces, and Mission Networks Are Directed to Continue to Respond in Ecumenical Solidarity for Justice for Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza, in Israel, Throughout Refugee Camps and the Diaspora, as Informed by Existing Policy Statements of Previous General Assemblies—From the Presbytery of Grace (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 13, 76, 340–41 of the print copy, pp. 1126–30 of the electronic copy).

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency has responded to this referral through ministries of Compassion, Peace, and Justice and World Mission. Solidarity with Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza is being enacted through emergency and partnership grants given to support work being done by the DSPR, ecumenical partners in the West Bank and Gaza, and the Middle East Council of Churches.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP), with the assistance of several staff from the Middle East Staff Team, developed a short solidarity visit to Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Ramallah in the summer of 2019. A study team appointed by the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy and the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee met with church representatives and other partners and disseminated some of their insights in the report to be presented to the 224th General Assembly (2020) on the intensifying annexation of Jerusalem. The report focuses on the pressure on Christian and Muslim residents but also on their nonviolent witness in resistance and formation of their youth. The report includes references responding to virtually all of Item 12-03.

The Office of Public Witness has continued to advocate on behalf of the General Assembly for Israel Palestine through Churches for Middle East Peace, The Faith Forum on Middle East Policy as well as with other faith-based groups and NGOs. The office has issued monthly alerts and participated in Capitol Hill visits on the different issues effecting Israel Palestine including child detention, Gaza, settlements, humanitarian concerns, home demolitions, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, and others. Staff participate in a variety of different groups to stay informed and participate in continuing advocacy on Israel Palestine.

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) solidarity visits were made in Palestine and Israel in March and November 2019, including mission network leadership through the New Wilmington Mission Conference. The Presbyterian Peacemaking Program through the *Mosaic of Peace* Conference will take Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) members and ministers to the region for learning and accompaniment, followed by a Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) staff leadership trip, focused on listening and accompaniment in both humanitarian and advocacy partnership, in March 2020.

78. *Alternate Resolution to 2018 Referral: Item 12-05. On Jewish-Christian Dialogue and the Israeli Occupation of Palestine. Recommendation 3. Facilitates the Dialogue Mentioned in 1. by Directing the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Consider Preparing Study Resources and Urge Presbyteries to Provide Opportunities for Study to Further Educate Church Members About Truthful, Open Interfaith Dialogue—From the Presbytery of San Francisco (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 75, 76, 341–42 of the print copy, pp. 1135–38 of the electronic copy).*

Response: The General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations has a subgroup developing a statement on Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia. This statement promises to provide solid grounding for the work called for by the referral. As staffing transitions in the Office of the General Assembly and the PMA's Office of Theology & Worship are completed, both agencies will have the capacity to work with the developing statement in addressing the work called for in this referral.

79. *2018 Referral: Item 12-07. On Urging RE/MAX to Stop Facilitating the Sale of Property in Israeli Settlement Colonies. Recommendation 1. Call for RE/MAX, LLC to a. Stop Facilitating the Sale and Rental of Property in Israeli Settlement Colonies in East Jerusalem and the West Bank. b. Exclude Settlement Property Listings from Its Global Database. c. Publicly Urge That RE/MAX Europe Stop Its Franchises from Selling or Renting Property in Israeli Settlement Colonies in East Jerusalem and the West Bank—From the Presbytery of Redwoods (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 75, 76, 342–43 of the print copy, pp. 1141–45 of the electronic copy).*

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency, through the office of Faith-Based Investing and Corporate Engagement, worked with the Stated Clerk's office to draft a letter for the Stated Clerk to send to RE/MAX, LLC, explaining the General Assembly directive and urging the company to stop facilitating the sale or rental of properties in Israeli settlement colonies in East Jerusalem and the West Bank. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) currently holds no stock in RE/MAX LLC.

80. *2018 Referral: Item 12-09. On Responding to the Current Syrian Crisis. Recommendation 3.a. Direct the Stated Clerk of the PC(USA), Presbyterian World Mission, and Presbyterian Disaster Assistance to Call on Congregations and Presbyteries, Nonprofit Organizations, the United States Government, and Agencies of the United Nations, to Provide Robust Financial Support for Organizations Engaged in Alleviating the Suffering of Syrians, Especially Those Displaced Inside Syria and Those Now Living as Refugees in Neighboring Countries—From the Presbytery of the Cascades (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 13, 77, 344–45 of the print copy, 1148–52 of the electronic copy).*

Response: World Mission's Middle East and Europe office, in partnership with the Syria Lebanon Partnership Network and PDA, has been encouraging congregations and presbyteries to respond to the suffering in Syria, and those displaced from Syria through support for our partner the National Evangelical Synod in Syria and Lebanon that is involved in direct efforts to alleviate suffering and rebuild the lives of those in Syria and those displaced from Syria. Similarly, our Jinishian Memorial Program operating through its offices in Aleppo and Damascus, has also developed initiatives to alleviate suffering and to help people rebuild their lives in Syria. The UN Office continues to work with the Syria Negotiations Working Group and the Security Council on the peace process and reengagement in final peace negotiations, and the Office of Public Witness has been advocating for increased foreign assistance through the Interfaith Working Group on Foreign Assistance.

81. *Alternate Resolution to 2018 Referral: Item 12-11. Commissioners' Resolution. Resolution on Reconciliation Ministries in Israel and Palestine. Recommendation 2. Directs the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Identify Grassroots Organizations and Ministries (Especially for Youth) in Palestine or Israel Working for Radical, Systemic Change—From the 223rd General Assembly (2018) (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 75, 77–78, 345–46 of the print copy, pp. 1154–55 of the electronic copy).*

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency has responded to this referral through the ministries of Compassion, Peace, and Justice. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has sought to support grassroots work in advancing ecumenical and interfaith educational programs that bring Israeli and Palestinian children into contact with each other, promoting craft and agricultural partnership enterprises, monitoring military courts in occupied territories, preserving and renewing sustainable agriculture and Palestinian access to farmland and orchards, protecting water resources, and supporting reentry of formerly imprisoned Palestinians. The PC(USA) also encourages justice-oriented forms of tourism that connect visitors with Israelis and Palestinians engaged in reconciliation ministries and exposes them to the struggles of communities for survival, freedom of movement, and freedom of worship.

In coordination with partners, the Presbyterian Mission Agency is presently compiling a list of these grassroots organizations and ministries and will have it ready for distribution by May 1, 2020. Examples of such organizations and ministries include:

- Arab Women’s Union
- The Applied Research Institutue (ARIJ)
- B’Tselem - the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories
- Diyar Consortium
- Gush Shalom
- HaMoked – The Center for the Defense of the Individuals
- The Interreligious Coordinating Council (ICCI)
- The Jerusalem Center for Jewish-Christian Relations (JCJCR)
- Mar Elias Educational Institutions (MEEI)
- Military Court Watch
- Parents’ Circle/Families Forum (PCFF)
- Rabbis for Human Rights (RHR)
- Refusniks (Israeli Soldiers who Oppose the Occupation)
- Sabeel – Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center
- Sindyanna of Galilee
- Tantur Ecumenical Institute for Advanced Theological Studies
- Tent of Nations
- Wi’am – The Palestinian Conflict transformation Center
- Yesh Gvul
- YMCA and YWCA of East Jerusalem
- YWCA of Palestine

82. *Alternate Resolution to 2018 Referral: Item 12-11. Commissioners’ Resolution. Resolution on Reconciliation Ministries in Israel and Palestine. Recommendation 3. Directs the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Make These Ministries and Organizations Known to Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Congregations for Support and Encouragement—From the 223rd General Assembly (2018) (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 75, 77–78, 345–46 of the print copy, pp. 1154–55 of the electronic copy).*

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency has responded to this referral through the ministries of Compassion, Peace, and Justice. The completed list will include the name of each organization or ministry, a brief description of its work for radical, systemic change, and contact information. The list will be posted as a downloadable resource on the Presbyterian Mission Agency website and a Presbyterian News Story will be written to announce the availability of the list. It is expected to be completed by May 1, 2020.

83. *2018 Referral: Item 12-13. Commissioners’ Resolution. On Opposing and Disengagement from Iran. Recommendation 7. Directs the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Office of the General Assembly, and Other Presbyterian Agencies to Include This Resolution in Their Witness, and Urges Members, Congregations, and Presbyteries to Continue to Support Peace and Reconciliation Efforts, and to Include the People of Iran, as Well as Our Mission Partners, in Their Prayer, Study, and Witness—From the 223rd General Assembly (2018) (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 14, 78, 346–47 of the print copy, pp. 1158–59 of the electronic copy).*

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency, through the Office of Public Witness, issued two action alerts calling on Presbyterians to urge Congress and the administration to support diplomacy rather than war with Iran as well as support for rejoining the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Likewise, the Office of Public Witness has signed on to several letters organized by the ecumenical and NGO community calling for peacemaking rather than war mongering. A new working group on Iran will be taking steps to organize a consistent voice on opposing a war with Iran and will be led by Office of Public Witness staff. The office is also in the preliminary stages of planning a heads of communion delegation to meet with Iranian

counterparts—either in Iran or in the region. The Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations (PMUN) created a digital resource to inform Presbyterians on the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s history and policy on Iran including ways the policy has strived to support peace and reconciliation efforts in the region. This resource can be downloaded from the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations webpage (www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/un/).

84. *2018 Referral: Item 14-02. On Amending Portions of the Directory for Worship. Recommendation 1.–10. The Assembly Referred Recommendations 1.–10. To the Presbyterian Mission Agency, Office of Theology and Worship—From the Presbytery of Santa Fe (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 14, 17, 355–58 of the print copy, pp. 1198–1205 of the electronic copy).*

Response: This referral will be answered by the report with recommendations titled “Amendments to Portions of the Directory for Worship” (Item 02-098).

85. *2018 Referral: Item 14-12. Commissioners’ Resolution. On Supporting the Reclaiming Jesus Statement with Prayer and Study. Recommendation 3. Authorizes the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to Develop, in Coordination with the Reclaiming Jesus Movement, Ancillary Materials to Expand This Process of Study, Examination, Comment, and Prayer, and to Make These Materials, Along with the Reclaiming Jesus Materials, Available to Individuals, Congregations, Sessions, and Presbyteries—From the 223rd General Assembly (2018) (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 17, 19, 362–63 of the print copy, pp. 1224–25 of the electronic copy).*

Response: The Office of Theology & Worship has reviewed the Reclaiming Jesus statement and the significant resources available for study of the document. It has prepared a document that briefly explains the contents of the Reclaiming Jesus statement, considers ways in which the statement is in line with theological affirmations of the PC(USA), and provides links to the strong materials available for study of the statement. That document is available on the PC(USA) website: <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/reclaiming-jesus-movement-invites-presbyterians-to-rethink-discipleship/>.

F. Presbyterian Publishing Corporation

2018 Referral: Item 11-03. On Recognizing the Reverend Henry Highland Garnet’s Prophetic Voice for Today—From the Presbytery of San Francisco (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 56-57, 994-96).

Response: Completion anticipated by General Assembly of “2. Authorize an anniversary publication of “A Memorial Discourse,” to be published by the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation.” PPC anticipates publication in May 2020 of the book, *Let the Monster Perish: The Historic Address to Congress of Henry Highland Garnet*, which will contain Garnet’s 1865 address to Congress—titled “A Memorial Discourse” but known by many as “Let the Monster Perish,” a refrain from the sermon—along with a timeline of Garnet’s life. PPC participated in discussions about the resource in 2018–19 in which several interested parties were invited, including the sponsors of the overture, pastors of the churches Garnet served, and representatives of the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy and the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee. Proceeds will benefit 15th Street Presbyterian Church, Grace Memorial Presbyterian Church, and St. James Presbyterian Church, churches where Rev. Garnet served as pastor. Regarding “5. Request Presbyterian Publishing Corporation to include ‘A Memorial Discourse’ in any materials developed in the future for the study of The Confession of Belhar,” no additional materials regarding the Confession of Belhar have been developed by PPC since the 2018 Assembly.

G Rules of Discipline Task Force

1. *2018 Referral: Item 06-09. On Amending G-2.0509 Regarding Renunciation of Jurisdiction—From the Presbytery of Central Florida. Recommendation 2. Refer the question of permitting trials in absentia for those who have renounced jurisdiction in the midst of a disciplinary proceeding to the Office of the General Assembly and Rules of Discipline Task Force to bring a recommendation to the 224th General Assembly (2020). (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 73, 621)*

Response: That the referral of the question of permitting trials in absentia for those who have renounced jurisdiction in the midst of a disciplinary process be answered by the addition of language within Church Discipline regarding process to be followed when someone in ordered ministry renounces the jurisdiction of the church during disciplinary process. The language below is taken from the text of Recommendation 1 of the Proposed Church Discipline section and is repeated here for clarity.

D-7.0301 ...

e. Jurisdiction in a disciplinary process ends when a church member or a minister of the Word and Sacrament against whom an allegation has been filed renounces the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in accordance with G-2.0407 or G-2.0509. In this case, the clerk of session or stated clerk of the presbytery shall report to the council both the renunciation and the status of the matter at that time, including the name of the accused, the date and fact of renunciation during an investigation or trial, and the charges, if filed.

02 RECOMMENDED REFERRALS TO THE 225TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2022)

(1) A person alleged to have been harmed may make the request for a pastoral inquiry at any time to the clerk of session or stated clerk, and it shall be brought to the council for consideration. In the interest of continuity, the council by its rules may appoint members of a former investigating committee to the membership of any subsequent committee or commission appointed to make inquiry into the matter.

(2) For instances of alleged sexual abuse of another person, if an accused has died or is no longer under the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the investigating or prosecuting committee shall ask the accuser, and if reasonably possible, those alleged to have been harmed, if they request the council to continue a pastoral inquiry under the provision in G-3.0109b(6). If they choose to make that request, the investigating or prosecuting committee shall communicate it to the clerk of session or stated clerk, who shall bring the matter before the council for consideration.

Church discipline has to do with the internal discipline of members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The rules allow for trials in absentia in cases when members of the church fail to respond to a citation to appear for a trial (D-11.0202b in the current Rules of Discipline, and D-5.0305 and D-8.0305 in the proposed revision, Church Discipline).

Those who have renounced jurisdiction in the midst of a disciplinary proceeding have removed themselves as members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and therefore, from the jurisdiction of the church and its authority in disciplinary matters. A trial in absentia in such cases is not possible.

2. *2018 Referral: Item 06-19. A Resolution to Amend the Book of Order, D-11.0403a—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns. Refer this Item to the Task Force on the Rules of Discipline. (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 73, 621)*

Response: The Rules of Discipline Task Force has answered the referral with the following language of the Proposed Church Discipline section:

D-8.0902 Decision on Guilt

Members of the session or permanent judicial commission may find that the accused is guilty *when a comparison and consideration of all the evidence compels an abiding conviction that the material facts necessary to prove the charge are true.*

In seeking to clarify the language of the current Rules of Discipline to make the rules “more accessible to the church” as was a part of its charge, the Rules of Discipline Task Force determined, in consultation with stated clerks and others across the church, that it would serve most clearly to spell out the definition of “beyond a reasonable doubt” as it is currently in D-11.0403 rather than replacing it with another standard. The definition makes clear that the standard is “an abiding conviction that the material facts necessary to prove the charge are true.” Retaining the current standard also means that all General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission decisions and advisory opinions on this section of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), which are currently used for guidance in decisions, would remain in effect. The standard applies to all disciplinary cases and is provided to achieve justice and compassion for all participants involved (D-1.0101 in the current Rules of Discipline, D-1.0301 in Church Discipline). The standard of evidence in a disciplinary case must provide for clarity and uniformity in its application. The proposed amendment’s definition for “clear and convincing evidence” [“substantially more likely than not that the material facts to prove the charge are true”] is ambiguous as it leaves the fact finder to determine what is “substantial.”

Item 02-002

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022).]

Minutes of the General Assembly Committee on Representation.

For report, see [https://pcbiz.s3.amazonaws.com/Uploads/6f14978f-ddb4-4336-873b-d64e752381d4/GACOR_Minutes - Full and Executive Meetings 2018-2019.pdf](https://pcbiz.s3.amazonaws.com/Uploads/6f14978f-ddb4-4336-873b-d64e752381d4/GACOR_Minutes_-_Full_and_Executive_Meetings_2018-2019.pdf).

Item 02-003

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 308.]

On the Merger of the Congregations and Minister Members of the Presbytery of Sacramento and the Presbytery of Stockton to Form a New Presbytery to Be Known as the Presbytery of North Central California—From the Synod of the Pacific.

The Synod of the Pacific overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) to approve the merger of the congregations and minister members of the Presbytery of Sacramento and the Presbytery of Stockton to form a new presbytery to be known as the Presbytery of North Central California, and to include in the geographic region of the new Presbytery of North Central California all of the geography of the current Sacramento and Stockton presbyteries, except for Mariposa and Merced counties, California, and to transfer Mariposa and Merced counties, California, to the Presbytery of San Joaquin, with all actions to be effective July 1, 2020.

Rationale

The Stockton Task Force was created by the Synod of the Pacific to address the future options for the Presbytery of Stockton, which was on the cusp of falling below the minimum constitutional requirement of ten congregations to be viable as an independent presbytery. In order to strengthen their viable ministry, a synod task force studied several options, including a future relationship with neighboring Presbytery of Sacramento to the north and with Presbytery of San Joaquin to the south. Ultimately a decision was reached and approved by the synod to merge all congregations and minister members of the Presbytery of Sacramento and the Presbytery of Stockton, including all geographic territories of both existing presbyteries with the exception of Merced and Mariposa counties, both adjacent to the Presbytery of San Joaquin. These two counties (no longer containing any PC(USA) congregations) will become a part of the existing Presbytery of San Joaquin, along with adequate funding from the Synod of the Pacific and from Stockton and Sacramento presbyteries for the development of at least two new worshipping communities. These counties are well-suited, culturally, to the Presbytery of San Joaquin, and San Joaquin has a strong reputation for establishing sustainable new church plants. This addition of geography and funds will strengthen the Presbytery of San Joaquin's own sustainability.

Item 02-004

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 308.]

Promoting Peace with Justice with the Presbyterian Church of Colombia—From the Presbytery of Seattle.

The Presbytery of Seattle overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to take the following actions on behalf of the Presbyterian Church of Colombia in support of lasting peace with justice at this critical moment in that country's peace process:

1. Direct the Stated Clerk to communicate with Colombia's President Iván Duque Márquez the PC(USA)'s profound concern about increased violence and threats towards community leaders, ex-combatants, human rights defenders, church leaders, and journalists, and urge him to ensure the letter and spirit of the peace accords are fulfilled and new dialogues are initiated with the ELN guerrilla group. Encourage the Stated Clerk to invite other world ecumenical leaders to write similar letters.

2. Request that the (Co-)Moderator(s) of the 224th General Assembly (2020) visit the Presbyterian Church of Colombia as soon as possible as an embodied expression of our oneness in Christ, to learn about the current state of Colombia's peace process, and to educate the PC(USA) about what they learn.

3. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through the Office of Public Witness and the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations, to build upon their support for the cause of peace in Colombia, taking the actions they consider most strategic and beneficial, including

a. organizing one or more webinars on the issues facing Colombia and its neighbors, particularly the international tensions with Venezuela;

b. advocate for the United States to support and fund the holistic justice system established as part of Colombia's peace process and the mechanisms for reincorporation of former members of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia into civilian life;

c. Renew the calls of the 218th General Assembly (2008)'s Report on Human Rights in Colombia, particularly for "ending the aerial fumigation for coca crops and focusing on programs that provide higher levels of support for farmers to convert to alternative crops and that reduce demand for drugs in the United States" (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 1180).

4. Call on PC(USA) congregations to pray for just and lasting peace in Colombia, to educate themselves about the peace process, to support PC(USA) mission co-workers appointed at the request of the Presbyterian Church of Colombia, to visit the Presbyterian Church of Colombia in its three presbyteries and varied ministries, and participate in the Colombia Mission Network.

5. Express our gratitude to the Presbyterian Church of Colombia for:

a. bearing bold and faithful witness to the gospel and maintaining steadfast hope in a nation struggling to overcome violence and practice reconciliation;

b. giving and receiving hospitality and common service—signs of God's grace—through mission partnerships with PC(USA) churches and presbyteries and through the Colombia Mission Network;

- c. receiving mission co-workers appointed by Presbyterian World Mission to work with them in theological education and in promoting peace and reconciliation;
- d. receiving young adult volunteers and nurturing them as they discern God's presence and action in their own lives and in the lives of our Colombian neighbors;
- e. inviting U.S. volunteers to walk with them in faithfulness through the Colombia Accompaniment Program. For more than fifteen years this program, administered by the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship, has been a mutually transforming expression of gospel solidarity.

Rationale

Presbyterian Witness and Partnership in Colombia

For more than 163 years, since the first Presbyterian worship service was held in Bogotá in 1856, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its predecessors have been engaged in ministry with our Christian siblings in Colombia. Today, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) supports ministries of peacemaking, education, and evangelism with the Presbyterian Church of Colombia through two denominational mission co-workers, young adult volunteers, the Accompaniment Program administered by the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship, advice and support from the Presbyterian Foundation, and the presbyteries and congregations that participate in partnerships and in the Colombia Mission Network.

The Presbyterian Church of Colombia gives strong and vital witness to the teachings and ministry of Jesus Christ and has called on us for support in its ministries with the most vulnerable Colombians in this crucial time of advancing peace with justice following the historic peace accords with the FARC guerrilla group (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) signed in 2016. The Presbyterian Church of Colombia has a national Peace Commission that outlined specific requests for accompaniment, advocacy, and prayer from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in January 2020. The actions proposed in this overture reflect those requests.

Challenges to Colombia's Peace Process

The peace accords, whose government implementation was halting from the start, have been intentionally weakened by Colombian President Iván Duque Márquez and the ruling party since his election in 2018. Key provisions of the transitional justice system have been attacked, and incipient dialogues with the ELN guerrilla group (National Liberation Army) were derailed almost immediately after Duque's inauguration.

The past two years have brought an alarming increase in murders and threats against Colombia's grassroots community leaders, human rights defenders, and land rights activists, reaching an average of one such assassination per day in the first month of 2020. Mass displacement is also on the rise again, adding thousands to the more than 7 million people (around 15 percent of the national population) forcibly displaced from their homes and lands over the last three decades of Colombia's internal armed conflict. Ex-combatants of the FARC who laid down their weapons in the first months of 2017 have also been under attack, with 173 of them murdered from the time the peace accords were signed through the end of 2019.

Nearly 100,000 farm families involved in coca production signed up for the voluntary illicit crop substitution program the Colombian government established as agreed in the peace accords. The overwhelming majority (94 percent) of the families—who live in some of the most remote and underserved locales in Colombia, with few roads or other infrastructure—complied with the terms of the program, voluntarily eradicating 87,000 acres of coca crops. But by mid-2019 the government had only provided complete payments to 10 percent of them, while 40 percent of the families had yet to receive any of the promised compensation. Advocates and participants in the crop substitution program represent a significant portion of the community leaders killed in Colombia in recent years. To the consternation of rural communities and human rights groups, the United States government has urged Colombia to return to aerial fumigation with glyphosate, a practice previously suspended due to its ineffectiveness at eradicating coca crops and its harmful effects on human health, food crops, and the environment.

Further complicating the stability of the region are tensions with the government of Venezuela. Around 4 million Venezuelans have opted to emigrate since 2015, seeking employment, food security, and medical care, with the largest portion of them currently living in Colombia. The governments of Colombia and the United States have been publicly pushing to force a change in Venezuela's government since early 2019, adding the specter of potential military incursion to the difficult humanitarian situation faced by Venezuelans, both at home and abroad.

Needed Support from the PC(USA)

In this context of threats, violence, and egregious human rights violations, the Presbyterian Church of Colombia remains faithful in promoting the Good News of the Prince of Peace, partnering with other churches and faith-based organizations to accompany vulnerable communities of farmers, displaced persons, migrants, and ex-combatants, teaching skills for nonviolent action, advocating with the government, calling all to peaceful and negotiated solutions, and working toward reconciliation and peace.

Letters of support and financial contributions are valuable, but the physical presence of official delegations from the highest levels of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the ongoing presence of mission co-workers appointed at the request of the Presbyterian Church of Colombia, and regular visits by local church and presbytery groups provide an irreplaceable testament to our unity in Christ and a tangible expression of the message that our siblings in Colombia are not alone. As they continue to stand boldly for a new future for their country, they do so at personal risk, demonstrating their unwillingness to be dissuaded by violent actors. They ask us to increase our visibility in accompanying them and Colombia's most vulnerable citizens in this crucial moment for the cause of peace.

Foundations in PC(USA) Polity and Previous General Assembly Actions

In the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) we understand the joyful privilege of membership in Christ's church to include "lifting one another up in prayer, mutual concern, and active support," and "working in the world for peace, justice, freedom, and human fulfillment" (*Book of Order*, G-1.0304). Our siblings in the Presbyterian Church of Colombia are inviting us to join them in faithful praxis, in ways well aligned with our own constitution.

In a broken and fearful world
the Spirit gives us courage
to pray without ceasing,
to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior,
to unmask idolatries in Church and culture,
to hear the voices of peoples long silenced,
and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace. (*Book of Confessions*, "A Brief Statement of Faith," 11.4, Lines 65–71)

The Presbyterian Church of Colombia has grown increasingly vocal and engaged in promoting peace and human rights through direct service and accompaniment of the most vulnerable communities in the context of Colombia's internal armed conflict, as well as public declarations, pastoral letters, and political advocacy with the Colombian government and international bodies. In this vital and courageous ministry, which has led to death threats and intimidations for numerous church leaders over the years, they have welcomed the accompaniment and solidarity of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in various ways, including the following General Assembly actions:

- The 210th General Assembly (1998) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) called upon the Colombian government to "make strenuous efforts to curtail the violence and provide protection and assistance to those affected" (*Minutes*, 1998, Part I, p. 663). In addition, the assembly encouraged "access for international human rights organizations and the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and humanitarian assistance" (*Minutes*, 1998, Part I, p. 663).
- The 213th General Assembly (2001) responded to the United States involvement in the crisis in Colombia. Specifically, the assembly "declare[d] it morally repugnant for the U.S. and its allies to grant large amounts of aid to a military with Colombia's grievous human rights record, while waiving the obligation of the Colombian government to meet acceptable standards of human rights as a condition of continued aid" (*Minutes*, 2001, Part I, pp. 54, 471).
- The 216th General Assembly (2004): "Join[ed] with the Presbyterian Church in Colombia, other Christian churches, and other Christian organizations in calling for the redirection of United States Military aid into social, educational, health, and developmental assistance in the hope that peace would be restored. ... Decr[ie]d the characterization of human rights workers as terrorists" (*Minutes*, 2004, Part I, pp. 70–71, 861).
- The 218th General Assembly (2008) approved a Report on Human Rights in Colombia prepared by the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy at the direction of the 217th General Assembly (2006). It provided a detailed list of actions to take in advocacy, prayer, and humanitarian aid at a time when the flaws in Plan Colombia's anti-drug policy and military aid had been abundantly documented. One of these actions—ending aerial fumigation—is directly quoted in Recommendation 3.c. of this overture because this policy objective had been achieved but is now being reversed <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/1625>.
- The 219th General Assembly (2010) called on the United States government "to assist with a process for the negotiation of a peace accord in Colombia in order to end Colombia's internal armed conflict that has lasted more than fifty years and which is a threat to the entire Andean region" <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3285>.

Item 02-005

[Concurred with Item 02-025. See pp. 10–11, 306.]

On Reaffirming Our Commitment to Gun Violence Prevention—From the Presbytery of Hudson River.

The Presbytery of Hudson River overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to endorse the following affirmation and recommendations:

Affirmation:

We remember that the disciples asked Jesus when he saw them in faithful ministry and he answered, “... as you did it to one of the least of these, ... you did it to me” (Mt. 25:40, NRSV). In our country, 40,000 people are losing their lives each year to gun violence. Each one of these represents to us the crucified Christ, as do their orphans, their grieving parents and families, as do the nearly 100,000 who are injured and the countless others who are traumatized by gun violence through suicides, murders, family violence, and accidents. In faithfulness to the Prince of Peace, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) stands with, grieves with, and calls for change alongside the victims of our uniquely American epidemic of gun violence.

Recommendations:

1. Commend and give thanks for those who have stood with “the least of these” and taken action:

a. Every local congregation that has held a study group or conversation, reached out to the community and their elected officials, or taken other actions; specifically, we celebrate the Lincoln Park Presbyterian Church and First United Church of Oak Park, congregations in Chicago that have jointly received the 2019 Peaceseeker Award of the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship for pioneering work to prevent gun violence.

b. Every part of the Presbyterian family that has taken action on gun violence prevention, including: our General Assembly Moderators; the Office of the Stated Clerk; Presbyterian Disaster Assistance with its film and book resources and its pastoral presence with communities that experience gun violence; the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program & Presbyterian Peace Fellowship, for the co-sponsored webinar series, *Standing Our Holy Ground*; the Office of Public Witness, the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, Presbyterian News Service, the Presbyterian Writers Guild, *The Presbyterian Outlook*; the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship with its *Gun Violence Prevention Congregational Toolkit* and other resources; the Presbytery of Grace in Dallas, Texas, for recognizing God’s call to the Reverend Deanna Hollas, ordained as the first minister of Gun Violence Prevention; and all other entities, staff, officers, and individuals in the PC(USA) that have taken action to save lives from gun violence.

c. The students of America who demand change; the businesses such as Walmart, Dicks’ Sporting Goods, and 130 other corporations that have called for common sense laws to prevent gun violence; the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms for banning the sale of bump stocks to convert guns into automatic weapons; the action of the U.S. House and Senate to update the National Background Check System; the U.S. House in passing legislation for universal background checks, greater protection of women from domestic gun violence, and for restoration of federal funding for research into the causes and best solutions to gun violence—and for all the organizations and individuals across America who call upon the U.S. Senate and all elected officials and candidates to support these actions and turn them into real change.

2. Call upon every congregation in the PC(USA) to prayerfully consider their role in helping to prevent gun violence. As Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. reminded us, “Everyone can do something.”

3. Direct the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, in partnership with others, including, but not limited to: the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program; the Advisory Committee for Women’s Concerns; the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee; and the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship, to update the historic policy of the 219th General Assembly (2010), *Gun Violence, Gospel Values: Mobilizing in Response to God’s Call*, and to present this update for a vote at the 225th General Assembly (2022), which includes:

a. An update of the 2010-era statistics and sources to current statistics and sources about gun violence; and an update on current legislative actions and efforts to seek common ground for saving lives.

b. The sinful, historical intersection between guns and race. Issues to pursue:

02 RECOMMENDED REFERRALS TO THE 225TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2022)

(1) The history of gun ownership being too often a means for white people to “protect” themselves and their families from perceived threats from black, brown, and native people, creating a culture of entitlement to gun ownership that is born out of racism, white supremacy, and violence.

(2) The beneficiaries versus the populations most at risk of becoming victims due to guns without safety technology, and distribution systems at risk of theft or illegal sale.

(3) The acknowledgement that structural racism has perpetuated trauma in communities of color that has resulted in the gun violence that we see, and that the systematic disinvestment in these communities is a root cause that needs to be repaired.

(4) The sources of and solutions to gun violence in predominately black and brown communities, seeking effective solutions that do not further contribute to mass incarceration.

(5) The need for changes in police use-of-force training, police culture, and fair prosecution of cases of police gun violence, so that all citizens feel safe in relation to those whose calling is to protect them.

c. The impact of gun violence on women and children: such as domestic gun violence, murder-suicides of entire families, school shootings, and accidents; including review of the legal responsibility of adults whose guns are used by children and others to commit violence or accidental shootings.

d. The affirmation, inclusion, and referral to actions of the General Assembly subsequent to 2010 on gun violence prevention (2014, 2018) and of resources to help every congregation with education, pastoral care, and action as they seek God’s plan for their role in helping to prevent gun violence.

Rationale

The 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) unanimously passed a major and comprehensive policy, *Gun Violence, Gospel Values: Mobilizing in Response to God’s Call*. Based on prior General Assembly actions against gun violence since 1968, the 2010 document placed the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) at the forefront of spiritual communities calling for common sense changes in gun regulations and for an affirmation that the uniquely American obsession with guns is not consistent with the love, healing, and nonviolent witness of Jesus Christ. Rooted in biblical values and reform theology, this historic and excellent ten-year-old document deserves to be updated and reissued as a contemporary policy to help our congregations and our nation heal from the escalating epidemic and tragedy of gun violence.

The 2020 overture reaffirms the work of prior General Assemblies on this issue and commends those who have led the way in faithful witness to prevent gun violence.

The overture calls on every congregation in the PC(USA) to ask for God’s guidance to them on how their congregation can faithfully respond to the challenge and reality of gun violence.

The overture proposes that the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) coordinate an update to the 2010 policy to be presented for a vote to the 225th General Assembly (2022). The overture does not call for a complete revision of the 2010 policy, which is excellent, but rather for an update based on changes in American culture and policy over the last ten years. There are now many outdated statistics and sources in the document, including, most unfortunately, the increase in annual gun deaths from 30,000 to 40,000.

The 2010 document does address the relation between guns and race and the impact of gun violence on women and children. However, there has been a great deal of new light shed on issues such as the historical connection between racism and gun “entitlement.” A new generation of activists, elected officials, and candidates have offered new approaches to protecting women from domestic gun violence and to preventing gun violence in black and brown communities beyond the failed approach of mass incarceration. Over the last ten years we have seen an increase in mass shootings, school shootings, and police shootings. All of these difficult topics deserve review in light of current events and proposals.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-005

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-005—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 02-005.

While much of the material in this overture is answered by Item 02-25, for which the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy also recommends approval, we find the focus on the role of individual congregations a helpful focus in this overture. While the justice work of our denomination is undergirded by its policy [in this case, Gun Violence and Gospel Values (2010)] much of the progress towards justice begins place in our local communities. Congregations will always be the primary means that our social justice policy becomes real in the world.

REAC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-005

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-005—From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee

The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 02-005.

“REAC shall be a prophetic voice for involving people of color in the formation of public policy and monitor the implementation of policies adopted by the church that impact the quality of life of people of color in the church and in the world” (Organization for Mission, VI.1).

There is a direct correlation in gun violence deaths, “gun entitlement,” and racism that requires changes in public policy based on substantial new data. REAC concurs with Hudson River Presbytery in our support of our reaffirming our commitment to gun violence prevention by recognizing that ownership of guns because it arises out of racism, white supremacy, and violence.

Item 02-006

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 308.]

On Celebrating the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations—From the Presbytery of Hudson River.

The Presbytery of Hudson River overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to:

1. Celebrate with gratitude the 75th anniversary of the United Nations that occurs in 2020: The United Nations Charter was signed on June 26, 1945, and entered into force on October 24, 1945.
2. Affirm the church’s historic support for the United Nations as an instrument of peacemaking and peacebuilding, and a guarantor of the human and legal rights of people and nations.
3. Give thanks for the engagement of Presbyterians with the United Nations that began with calls for its creation and continues to this day.
4. Commend the United Nations for its efforts to address global poverty and hunger; work for economic development; expand educational opportunities; care for creation; combat HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, and other disease, and improve the health of the human family; and enhance the status of women, children, indigenous peoples, people of color, and others who are pushed to the margins of nations and societies.
5. Acknowledge the importance of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals, adopted by the United Nations in 2015, and give thanks for the ways the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and our global partners have been working, and continue to work, to achieve this sustainable development agenda.
6. Commend the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations, and its predecessors, for ministries of education, ecumenical and interfaith cooperation, strategic reflection, and advocacy for international justice and peace within the United Nations community in the name of Jesus Christ, based on the policies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) General Assemblies.
7. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to identify liturgical and educational resources to help the church observe the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations and to encourage participation by Presbyterians in “UN75,” the global conversation on the role of global cooperation on building the future being promoted by the UN secretary-general.
8. Call Presbyterians individually and collectively to
 - a. observe United Nations Day, which occurs on October 24, on Sunday, October 25, or other appropriate Sunday;
 - b. pray for the efforts of the United Nations;

- c. learn about the United Nations and its work;
 - d. use the Study and Devotional Guide of the Sustainable Development Goals produced by the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations to learn about efforts of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its global partners to help achieve the goals identified in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; and
 - e. urge our national elected representatives to support fully the United Nations.
9. Encourage seminaries, universities, colleges, and campus ministries related to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to provide opportunities for faculty and students to learn about the purposes and mission of the United Nations.
10. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to advocate with the United States government to:
- a. foster peacemaking through multilateral diplomacy rather than unilateral force;
 - b. support efforts to strengthen the United Nations and the rule of international law;
 - c. assure that its financial obligations to the United Nations are adequately and promptly met;
 - d. overturn laws that mandate an automatic cut-off of U.S. support to UN agencies that allow Palestine as a member;
 - e. showing its commitments to the extension of international order by the ratification of international treaties still pending action in the U.S. Senate, including the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights; the Convention on the Rights of the Child; and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women; and
 - f. encourage the U.S. to rejoin the Paris Agreement on climate change.
11. Direct the Stated Clerk to communicate this resolution to the church, the secretary-general of the United Nations, and the president of the United Nations General Assembly.

Rationale

Affirming God’s sovereignty and call upon us, Presbyterians and other Reformed Christians seek to live our faith in all aspects of life. This includes ministry in public life: participating in government and governance, serving as elected officials, and engaging in advocacy that seeks to live out the church’s responsibility to assist government to become what God requires it to be. Presbyterians and other Reformed Christians have done so on the local, state, and national level. We have done so in the realm of international relations where we have long supported international cooperation and institutions.

Even as World War II raged, Presbyterians joined conversations about how to shape the life of the world after the war. These conversations came to focus on the call for an international organization that would prevent future world wars, protect human rights, dignity, and worth, and promote economic development. The Commission on a Just and Durable Peace of the Federal Council of Churches, of which Presbyterians were a part, made recommendations about the United Nations that was to come including that it should emphasize justice, human welfare, and human rights including religious freedom. It also called for membership for all countries, a commission to oversee the progress of colonies to freedom, and the limitation and reduction of arms.¹

The 155th General Assembly (1943) of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America spoke of the need for organized international cooperation, using the name United Nations:

We believe that international cooperation should be organized to preserve peace, maintain international law, provide adaptations to changing conditions, and that it should be directed towards cultivating the will to peace and progress . . . We believe that by expanded collaboration of the United Nations an international conference, representative of all sovereign peoples, should be convened to work out with deliberation a comprehensive plan for a dynamic peace. (*Minutes*, PCUSA, 1943, Part I, pp. 167–68)

The Charter of the United Nations was signed on 26 June 1945, in San Francisco, by representatives of the countries that participated in the United Nations Conference on International Organization. The charter entered into force on 24 October 1945, following its ratification by the five original members of the Security Council and a majority of the other signatories.²

In 1953, the 93rd General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States recognized “the defects and failures of the United Nations,” but also took note of “the outstanding achievements which the United Nations has to its credit and reaffirms belief in the purpose and program of this organization” (*Minutes*, PCUS, 1953, pp. 93–94).

Since its creation, the United Nations has:

- adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on December 10, 1948;
- created funds and programs specialized in various kinds of humanitarian and development work (such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Population Fund, the World Food Program, and the United Nations Development Program);
- saved lives of 90 million children since 1990 through the work of United Nations Children’s Fund;
- eradicated smallpox led by the efforts of World Health Organization; and
- sponsored by the UN Environment Program, countries adopted the Montreal Protocol to halve the production and emission of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), ozone destroying chemical, a success in environmental protection of the ozone layer.

The United Nations adopted the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development with the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in September 2015. The SDGs serve as a call to action for all countries in global partnerships that include civil society. The SDGs address ending poverty and hunger, providing health care, establishing gender equality, promoting justice, protecting creation, and more. While they are not couched in biblical or theological language, the SDGs resonate with Matthew 25. Guided by our faith in Jesus, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its partners are at work to achieve these goals. The Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations has created a study and devotional guide to help Presbyterians learn how, through the lens of Matthew 25, that work takes place.³

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and its predecessor denominations, have had a presence and witness at the United Nations since its creation. In 1998, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) received special consultative status through the United Nations Economic and Social Council. This allows the Presbyterian voice to be heard as the church can contribute to the United Nations agenda by participating in meetings of commissions, making statements and taking part in advocacy and networking. Presbyterian Women in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has supported the work with the United Nations through its participation in the Commission on the Status of Women and received special consultative status in 2017. The Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations represents the church within the United Nations community and helps educate Presbyterians about the work of the United Nations and international issues.

Having the United Nations Headquarters in New York City benefits the city and the United States. People reflecting the rich diversity of God's creation gather at the United Nations to make the world a better, more peaceful place. The United Nations plays host to the largest diplomatic community in the world, drawing leading intellectual, political, and civic leaders to address the world's pressing problems. The United Nations boosts the economy of New York City by \$3.69 billion a year and creates thousands of local jobs.⁴ The United Nations continues to enrich the city and the country in valuable educational, cultural and economic ways. It is on this dynamic world stage that Presbyterians witness as followers of Christ.

In this 75th anniversary year, the United Nations secretary-general has called for a global conversation on the role of global cooperation in building the future we want. Information about this conversation and ways to participate may be found at <https://www.un.org/en/un75>.

It is appropriate, on this anniversary, for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to give thanks for the United Nation and its work. It is appropriate to remember our relationship with the United Nations. It is appropriate to call Presbyterians to pray for and learn more about the United Nations.

Endnotes

1. Mia Adjali and Deborah Storms, *The Community of Nations*, Friendship Press: New York, New York, 1995), pp. 9–10.
2. <https://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/introductory-note/index.html>.
3. <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/study-devotional-guide-for-the-sustainable-development-goals/>.
4. <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/international/programs/un-impact-report-2016.page>.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-006

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-006—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP)

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 02-006.

In January 2020, ACSWP held its meeting in New York, met with the Presbyterian Ministry at the UN and ecumenical colleagues, heard from a high-placed Presbyterian elder in the United Nations staff, and toured the UN, thus heightening our appreciation of its role.

This overture supports actions that have been blocked for too long: such as reviving the Paris Accord to combat climate change, ratifying the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, ending laws that mandate an automatic cut-off of U.S. support to UN agencies that allow Palestine as a member, and endorsing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Strengthening the UN would help implement Item 02-15—emphasizing non-military solutions to international conflict. Support for this overture would also help inform the project outlined in Item 02-38, Reimagining the World House, which recalls the ecumenical study conferences on world peace, but with a model that pairs US and overseas voices to broaden horizons and deepen solidarity. Now, as this is submitted in a time of COVID-19, the unity of humanity and the need to cooperate is more visible than ever: we are glad that we have the UN-related health programs, and the framework for standing together.

REAC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-006

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-006—From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee.

The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 02-06.

REAC concurs with Hudson River Presbytery in our support of the celebration of the 75th anniversary of the United Nations, and REAC advises that the Presbyterian Mission Agency develop liturgical and educational resources for this celebration.

Item 02-007

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 308.]

On Transferring Korean United Presbyterian Church (Pin #10887) from the Presbytery of New York City to the Presbytery of Long Island - From the Presbytery of Long Island.

The Presbytery of Long Island requests that the 224th General Assembly (2020) permit the Korean United Presbyterian Church (Pin #10887) to transfer from the Presbytery of New York City to the Presbytery of Long Island.

Rationale

The Korean United Presbyterian Church has found itself bouncing around Eastern Queens over its lifetime. It has landed successfully in the building of the New Hyde Park Presbyterian congregation (Pin #5301 in the Presbytery of Long Island). A significant number of Korean United Presbyterian Church's members live conveniently near New Hyde Park Presbyterian Church. While they worship separately, they are already engaged in numerous collaborative ministry experiences.

Concurrence to Item 02-007 from the Presbytery of de Cristo.

Item 02-008

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 308.]

On Recognition of the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico, San Juan, Puerto Rico, as a Racial Ethnic Institution; and to Include the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico on the List of Racial Ethnic Institutions Supported by the Christmas Joy Offering—From the Synod of Boriquen.

The Synod of Boriquen overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) to direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to recognize the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico, San Juan, Puerto Rico, as a racial ethnic institution; and to include the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico on the list of racial ethnic institutions supported by the Christmas Joy Offering.

Rationale

Founded in 1919, the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico has one main mission "... the integrated formation of pastoral and lay leaders to serve in Christian ministries and to participate in service and mission of God's people in Puerto Rico, the Caribbean, United States of America, Latin America, and the world in an ecumenical, inter-religious and social context."

The Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico (from now on the SEPR) is chartered under the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the Higher Education Council of Puerto Rico. In 2019 it was re-accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) and in 2020 it was re-accredited by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS). The SEPR is also accredited by the University Senate of the United Methodist Church. Furthermore, the SEPR is the only Latin/Hispanic seminary endorsed and in covenant with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) through the Committee on Theological Education (COTE).

The current relationship between the SEPR and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is more than 100 years old. The ever-growing need to develop Spanish-speaking local clergy and lay leaders, brought together the denominational leaders in charge of the Portorricense Theological Seminary (Presbyterian), the Grace Conaway Institute (Baptist), the Robinson Institute (Methodists), and the Disciples of Christ Institute (Christian Church Disciples of Christ). In 1919, their efforts paved the way to what is known now as the SEPR. In addition to the original four merged schools, the United Evangelical Church of Puerto Rico and the Lutheran Church of America, Caribbean Synod, also became sponsor denominations.

The SEPR is committed to the development of racial ethnic Christian leaders. Graduates and alumni are currently serving in leadership positions and roles in all sponsoring denominations and in diverse ministries. From local church pastoral missions, Christian education teachers, and seminary professors to nationwide church ministries such as mission co-workers, Christian publication editors, disaster assistance coordinators, and committees and boards membership, the graduates and alumni of the seminary live the mission and goals of the SEPR through their work, dedication, commitment, mission, and service.

The recognition of the seminary as racial ethnic institution by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is greater now than ever. This recognition proclaims that our denomination values God's diverse calling to all people. The financial support through the Christmas Joy Offering will ensure that the critical and informed theological thinking demanded from our clergy and lay leaders will be provided to racial ethnic sisters and brothers, and especially Latinx people who are called to ministry. The SEPR is committed to continue with the education and academic formation of future generations.

Therefore, the Synod of Boriquen overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to recognize the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico as a racial ethnic institution and to support their education efforts through the Christmas Joy Offering to strengthen the century old relationship and unique mission of the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico.

Concurrence to Item 02-008 from the Presbytery of de Cristo.

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 02-008

On Recognition of the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico, San Juan, Puerto Rico, as a Racial Ethnic Institution; and to Include the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico on the List of Racial Ethnic Institutions Supported by the Christmas Joy Offering to the 224th General Assembly (2020).

Seminario Evangélico de Puerto Rico is a Presbyterian-related theological institution. Because of their longstanding relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Episcopal Church, American Baptist Church, and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Seminario Evangélico de Puerto Rico is in covenant relationship with the PC(USA) and has been since 1993. As a Presbyterian-related theological institution, the seminary is eligible to receive funding support from the denomination. Seminario Evangélico de Puerto Rico receives funding from the Theological Education Fund. The Presbyterian Foundation recently dispersed funds to the seminary, as well as to other Presbyterian-related theological schools, in May 2020.

The Theological Education Fund, <https://www.presbyterianfoundation.org/tef/>, supports theological education for students at Presbyterian seminaries throughout the U.S.A. Once located in the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Theological Education Fund is now housed at the Presbyterian Foundation and is the source of denomination-wide funding for seminaries in the PC(USA). Once donations are collected each year, the Committee on Theological Education proportionately allocates the funds to each school.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) also has continuing responsibility for historically Presbyterian secondary schools (or high schools) and colleges educating students of color as found in Article 8.4 of the Articles of Agreement of the Presbyterian Church:

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... The General Assembly Council shall propose to the General Assembly ways whereby the General Assembly shall be able to fulfill its responsibility for education through colleges and secondary schools and for meeting the operational and developmental needs of those Presbyterian schools that historically have served Black Americans and those serving other racial ethnic groups.

The Articles of Agreement distinguish between the denomination's continuing responsibility for historically Presbyterian high schools/secondary schools and colleges educating students of color (Article 8.4) and the Presbyterian-related theological institutions (Article 10). The Historically Presbyterian Institutions Equipping Communities of Color connect to the denomination through the President's Roundtable, facilitated by staff in the Racial Equity & Women's Intercultural Ministries area in the Presbyterian Mission Agency. Fifty percent of the Christmas Joy Offering is disbursed to Historically Presbyterian Institutions Equipping Communities of Color. Many of these secondary schools and colleges serve primarily poor students, who are often the first in their families to attend college.

The 218th General Assembly (2008), 219th General Assembly (2010), 220th General Assembly (2012), 221st General Assembly (2014), and the 222nd General Assembly (2016) affirmed the current interpretation, designees, and distribution of the Christmas Joy Offering (CJO). The report of the Special Offerings Review Task Force of the Presbyterian Mission Agency to the 224th General Assembly (2020) also affirms the current interpretation and distribution of the offering. The report reads: "The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) affirm the current interpretation and distribution of Special Offerings."

And the Special Offerings Review Task Force report reads:

CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING: interpreted and received during the Advent season in gratitude for God's gift of Jesus Christ. Causes:

- i. Assistance programs to meet identified and emerging needs for professional church workers and spouses through the Board of Pensions, 50 percent;
- ii. Racial ethnic education and leadership development through Racial Equity and Women's Intercultural Ministries, 50 percent.
- iii. Recommends that funding to the Presbyterian Schools and Colleges Equipping Communities of Color, eligible to receive funding through the Christmas Joy Offering, be maintained at current percentages, as long as the Institutional Standards for Participating in the Christmas Joy Offering are met, and that any funds received beyond what are allocated to these schools and colleges be designated for Presbyterian Mission Agency leadership development programs for people of color.

The list of Historically Presbyterian Institutions Equipping Communities of Color is maintained by the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through its Racial Equity & Women's Intercultural Ministries area through a covenant process with the General Assembly. The 223rd General Assembly (2019) approved the Institutional Relationship Agreement (or partnership covenant) between the Historically Presbyterian Institutions Equipping Communities of Color and the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The Institutional Relationship Agreement highlights the PC(USA)'s shared responsibility in supporting and articulating the unique challenges and blessings of educating secondary and college students of color attending Historically Presbyterian Institutions Equipping Communities of Color. It also states that the PC(USA) shares mutual responsibility for supporting economically poor secondary school and college students of color, as well as joining as a partner in enhancing their success through the Christmas Joy Offering.

REAC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-008

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-008—From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee.

The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 02-008.

The SEPR is the only PC(USA) institution of higher theological education where Spanish-speaking prospective ministers can get their education fully in the Spanish language. Given the demographic and cultural changes in the United States specifically, where people of color and specifically Hispanic/Latinx communities are fast becoming the majority, it is important for the denomination to support the SEPR for the benefit of the church at-large and specifically the PC(USA).

Item 02-009

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 308.]

On Recognition of the National Caucus of Korean Presbyterian Churches as One of the Racial Ethnic Caucuses—From the Midwest Korean American Presbytery.

The Midwest Korean American Presbytery overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) to officially recognize the National Caucus of Korean Presbyterian Churches (NCKPC) as one of the racial ethnic caucuses of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Rationale

A racial ethnic caucus provides a safe space for any group of people of color/ethnicity to work explicitly and intentionally on its shared experiences of internalized racism for healing, justice, and equity. As such, each racial ethnic group is to be acknowledged, organized, and assembled separately in recognition that every group's experiences and perceptions are unique to itself. Therefore, when any certain racial ethnic group appeals to the larger comprising body to form its own caucus out of needs to be heard, to be recognized, and to express and advance its own concerns, such a plea ought to be ratified to preserve, affirm, and honor its own distinctive voice. It is by this reasoning that the 40,000-member strong Korean-speaking and culturally Korean PC(USA) community seeks to form its own caucus.

Presently, the PC(USA) officially endorses five caucuses, representing five racial ethnic groups (African American, Asian, Hispanic/Latino-a, Native American, and Middle Eastern), and representing Asian ethnic group is the National Asian Presbyterian Council (NAPC). However, NAPC consists of disproportionately large Korean constituents, who are estimated to account for more than 85 percent* of its total membership—in fact, the Korean members outnumber all other caucuses combined, excluding the African Americans. It should be also noted that Korean language, culture, immigrant experience, and spirituality are distinctively different from those of the other Asian groups (as it is for those of each and every Asian group). Subsequently, there is an inherent imbalance when the overwhelming number of Korean members are in one caucus group along with the members representing all the other Asians. Reflecting such imbalance, the Racial Equity & Women's Intercultural Ministries has had two associates, one for Asian Intercultural Congregational Support and another for Korean Intercultural Congregational Support, in acknowledgement of the need to serve the two separately.

Indeed, the Korean American community is the only racial ethnic group served by the positions in both the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) and the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) dedicated to support its particular needs. It has roughly 400 congregations** along with the three nongeographic presbyteries, and the size of its membership is comparable to that of the African Americans, the largest racial ethnic group in the denomination. Although the Korean American congregations have long been vibrant, thriving, and contributing, they have been regrettably at times underrepresented and not fully heard within the PC(USA), hamstrung by language deficiency and cultural inadaptability due to their relatively short immigrant history compared to other minority groups. In light of this, creating a caucus for the Korean-speaking and culturally Korean constituents would be the natural, well warranted next step to celebrate, advocate, monitor, and share their voice and the unique gifts they bring to the whole church.

Fortunately, the Korean American community already has had a well-established and highly functioning caucus-like entity called the National Caucus of Korean Presbyterian Churches (NCKPC) for almost fifty years. The NCKPC is the sole organization in the PC(USA) that has the contact and the knowledge of all Korean American congregations (defined as those whose membership comprises of 80 percent or more ethnically Korean) and works to promote their causes. It was originally created in 1972 as a fellowship association but has later evolved into a caucus-like group with the explosive growth of Korean American membership. It currently labors to support and protect the interests of diverse subgroups ranging from female clergy and men's & women's lay leadership to second-generation Korean Americans, young pastors, and retired pastors.

Not surprisingly, NCKPC has already been collaborating with OGA, PMA, and Board of Pensions (BOP) on various occasions that entail the role of caucus for years, and on the official PMA website it is even stated that "The National Council of Korean Presbyterian Churches (NCKPC), PC(USA) is a racial ethnic caucus representing 430 Korean-American churches in the PC(USA). It is the second largest racial ethnic caucus in the denomination with about 55,000 active members and 40 years of history"*** (<https://www.pcusa.org/resource/directory-of-korean-american-organizations-22001/>). For all intents and purposes, NCKPC has been essentially functioning as a caucus without the official recognition from the General Assembly.

Formally validating NCKPC as a caucus will only foster equity and enrich the diversity that the PC(USA) upholds and cherishes, and it could help Korean American churches to become healthier, to build stronger relationships with other churches and councils, and to engage more fully within the life of the PC(USA).

Endnotes

* This percentage is based on the 2018 Sessional Annual Statistical Report, the Korean American Congregational Directory, and the Asian American Congregational Directory, along with some additional analysis performed by the PC(USA) Research Services.

** According to the 2016 Asian Presbyterian Church Directory, there are 410 Korean fellowships and churches.

***The numbers in this statement are based on the 2010 estimation, therefore, they may not accurately represent the current figures.

Concurrences to Item 02-009 from the Presbyteries of Atlantic Korean, de Cristo, and Eastern Korean American; and from the Synod of Lincoln Trails.

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 02-009

PMA Comment on Recognition of the National Caucus of Korean Presbyterian Churches as One of the Racial Ethnic Caucuses.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) no longer uses the term “racial ethnic people,” rather we use “people of color.” In 2018, National Racial Ethnic Caucuses and Councils was renamed National Caucuses and Councils Serving Communities of Color. The 223rd General Assembly (2018) also approved the name change of the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns to the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC). Thus, the request in Overture 54 is that the General Assembly recognize the National Caucus of Korean Presbyterian Churches as one of the National Caucuses and Councils Serving Communities of Color in the PC(USA).

The National Caucus of Korean Presbyterian Churches (NCKPC) has been, unofficially, a part of the National Caucuses and Councils Serving Communities of Color for some time. It was recently discovered, however, that NCKPC had not gone through steps to request recognition by the General Assembly as one of the national caucuses and councils in the PC(USA).

The caucuses, including NCKPC, have for many years attended the National Caucuses and Councils lunch and events at General Assembly as well as convocations and conferences for communities of color held at the Big Tent sponsored by the Racial Equity & Women’s Intercultural Ministries area in the Presbyterian Mission Agency. The caucuses and councils have national caucus groups, as well as regional caucus groups that meet across the country. Caucuses and councils also have national leadership, normally a president or moderator, vice president or vice-moderator, treasurer and secretary. These representatives assist a network of local caucuses and councils throughout the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and have, in the past, held caucus lunches, dinners, and service projects at General Assembly. They have their own websites and bank accounts and many caucuses, in partnership with offices in Racial Equity & Women’s Intercultural Ministries, give scholarships for leadership development to leaders of color and some engage in service projects.

There were originally four historic national caucuses and councils at reunion of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), as found in Articles 8.2 and 8.3 in the Articles of Agreement of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). They are:

National Black Presbyterian Caucus (NBPC)

National Hispanic/Latino Presbyterian Caucus (NH/LPC))

National Asian Presbyterian Council (NAPC), and

Native American Consulting Committee (NACC).

Two more caucus formed post-reunion. They are:

National Middle Eastern Presbyterian Caucus (NMEPC) (recognized by General Assembly in 1996), and

National Caucus of Korean Presbyterian Churches (NCKPC) (seeking official recognition by General Assembly).

Article 8.2 of the Articles of Agreement of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) reads:

Governing bodies of the Church shall be responsible for implementing the Church’s commitment to inclusiveness and participation which provides for the full expression of the rich diversity within its membership. All governing bodies shall work to become more open and inclusive and to correct past patterns of discrimination on the basis of racial ethnic background.

Racial ethnic members in the United States (Presbyterians of African, Hispanic and Asian descent and Native Americans) shall be guaranteed full participation and access to representation in the decision-making of the Church, and shall be able to form caucuses. Participation and representation of racial ethnic membership shall be assured by the Committees on Representation (8.1).

As the overture from Midwest Korean American Presbytery states, the National Caucus of Korean Presbyterian Churches, for all intents and purposes, has been functioning as a caucus in the PC(USA) without the official recognition as such from the General Assembly. They are now seeking to serve officially as a part of the National Caucuses and Councils Serving Communities of Color in the PC(USA).

REAC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-009

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-009—From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee.

The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) disapprove Item 02-009.

REAC advises this item be disapproved as Korean Presbyterian churches continue to fall behind in ordaining talented, called women. These actions have been harmful within the Korean American community as second and third generations of called women have not been affirmed. This begs the questions, “How many talented women have we lost?” and “What kind of damage has this caused to these women and all Korean women?” The voices of Korean women must be given priority.

Furthermore, the National Asian Presbyterian Council already includes the Korean caucus.

Item 02-010

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 308.]

Approval and Distribution of Statement Denouncing Islamophobia—From the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations.

The General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations (GACEIR) recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020)

1. Approve this *Statement Denouncing Islamophobia* as official policy of the PC(USA).
2. Distribute the document and invite all PC(USA) churches and mid councils to a time of study and reflection.

Statement Denouncing Islamophobia

The news is filled with stories of violence directed against Muslims across the United States and around the world. Most of us can recount incidents of anti-Muslim prejudice in our local communities, including systemically discriminatory policies such as surveillance, profiling, anti-sharia laws, registration systems, deportations, extraordinary renditions, and the Muslim ban. Many of us have Muslim friends or family who are increasingly afraid.

Islamophobia is an evil at work today in our world. In Christian terms, it is sin. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) condemns this sin, the racism that helps fuel it, and the violence and contempt it generates. Presbyterians recognize that we are complicit in the rise of Islamophobia. We are called by God to confess that we are part of the history of Islamophobia and have contributed to the pain inflicted on Muslims, who we recognize as our Abrahamic siblings in the family of God. We desire to heal our broken relationships with Muslim people, to make amends, and to stand with those who are targeted with intolerance and hatred because of their beliefs.

Many North American Christians have not taken the time to get to know Islamic beliefs and history, in part, because Islam has been a minority religion in the United States while Christianity has been dominant. Additionally, many Muslims who have been here for centuries have been forced to assimilate to the Christian majority in order to survive. Islam emerged in the Arabian Peninsula six centuries after the birth of Christianity, and at times has seemed to Christians to be irrelevant to Christian beliefs and practices, or to be a hostile threat to Christian beliefs and practices.

Christian ignorance about Islam and our history with Muslims has led many of us to see all Muslims as a threat, and to focus on radical (and often stereotyped) differences between us rather than on our common bonds. Such ignorance and indifference have led to acts of systemic violence and to individual acts of hatred. In this time in which Islamophobia is clearly on the rise, we are called to confess the harm we have done and to offer genuine repentance that can be measured by our actions.

The Interreligious Stance of the PC(USA) affirms our motivations for friendship and cooperation: “many things draw us together in respect for those who have religious commitments different from our own, including the example and person of Jesus Christ, the evident need for religious peace, the necessity of meeting human needs in a world of poverty and want, and the biblical call to solidarity amid our diversity” (Stance, p. 1, Introduction).

We invite all in our Presbyterian family into a work of self-examination, repentance, and renewal in our relationships with Muslims. We are clearly called to confront our assumption of Christian superiority and our prejudice against Muslims and Islam wherever it occurs. We are committed to work with our Muslim siblings for a world in which they are not at risk and have no reason to be afraid.

Congregations and councils are invited to participate in a time of study and reflection by taking the following actions:

1. **Establish honest, respectful, and healthy relationships with our Muslim neighbors and friends.**

Christian belief that human beings are divine image-bearers to one another grounds our efforts to combat Islamophobia. Hospitality is the act of recognizing the image of God in others. As Christians, we are taught to welcome the stranger and to feel blessed and not threatened by difference. We are called to provide nourishment, care, and protection to all. We seek to love and serve as Jesus loved and served, to all people in all places. In relationship with our Muslim neighbors, we can, as friends do, learn what hurts others and change our behavior, thus removing obstacles in the path of our sincere desire for friendship.

Churches are encouraged to:

- Develop deeper relationships with Muslims through dialogues, dinners, youth encounters, food banks, refugee resettlement, and so on, in partnership with mosques and other Muslim organizations.
- Engage in interfaith relationships more as a guest than as a host, which means speaking less and listening more, and coming with a spirit of vulnerability and humility.
- Learn to appreciate Muslim daily piety in dress, prayer, and food, and consider how it anchors and shapes their daily life.
- Listen closely to Muslim friends and leaders, especially when they carefully name assumptions, attitudes, or behavior of ours that they find thoughtless or hurtful or destructive of our common commitment to mutuality and friendship.
- Learn about the love of and respect for Jesus, Mary, and the prophets that is so prominent in the Qur'an.

2. Stand publicly with Muslims when they are targeted because of their Muslim identity.

In the nearly two decades since the 9/11 attacks, political and religious leaders have used Islamophobia to fan the flames of fear and hatred of Muslims. We have too often been blinded by our own prejudices and stereotypes and have often stood by silently while those who wish to incite fear and hatred played up racist stereotypes of Muslims, reinforcing Christian whiteness as the norm and identifying all “others” as a threat. Perhaps most significantly, we have failed to see the ways that this intentionally manufactured fear of Muslims fuels a larger story designed to protect and perpetuate white power and privilege in an ethnically, culturally, and religiously diverse United States.

Churches are encouraged to:

- Participate in and/or initiate public interreligious expressions of unity, mourning, and thanksgiving, as demonstrations of solidarity.
 - Speak out immediately and boldly against words and behavior that are anti-Muslim. It is important to act both privately and in public solidarity with our Muslim neighbors, especially when they are the victims of Islamophobia.
 - Refuse to participate in the condemnations of all Muslims for the extreme actions of a few.
 - Offer the litany provided in this document for use in times of public demonstration.
- 3. Learn about the history of Christian Islamophobia and teach about it in our churches.**

The roots of Islamophobia date back to the Middle Ages. The Crusades marked the beginning of extensive Christian violence targeting Muslims. The Christian armies that took control of Jerusalem in 1099 slaughtered almost all of the Muslims and Jews in the city. Ongoing conflict in the Holy Land persisted into the thirteenth century as Christians relied on theological justifications to carry out wars against Muslim kingdoms. Islam came to the shores of North America 400 years ago during the transatlantic slave trade, since many of those enslaved were Muslims. Many, particularly white, Americans do not know this history, and believe that Islam and Muslims have arrived on our shores only recently. Our history tells a different story.

Churches are encouraged to:

- Learn from historical sources, mission co-workers, ecumenical partners and interfaith friends, and, most importantly, from Muslims themselves, about the many complex histories between Muslims and Christians over the centuries and around the world, and especially the history of Muslims in the United States.
- Take responsibility when someone misuses Christian scripture or teachings to justify violent actions. Confront the misuse and publicly offer corrections to such teachings.

- Study connections between Islamophobia and white supremacy in our country, both historically and in the present.
 - Examine our own words and behavior for aspects of Islamophobia, unintentional or otherwise.
4. Learn about Christian scriptural and Presbyterian theological foundations of Islamophobia.

Many Christians in North America have misperceptions and misinformation about the Qur'an, some of which have been spread in order to sow hatred of Muslims in Christian communities. It is our task and responsibility to correct this misinformation and to learn about the faith that is central to so many here and around the world. As we learn, many of us will be amazed at the love of and respect for Jesus, Mary, and the prophets that are so prominent in the Qur'an.

Churches are encouraged to:

- Learn about the Qur'an, from Muslims and also through our own study. The Qur'an, the holy scripture of Islam, is the center of the Islamic faith.
- Learn about the Prophet Muhammad who received the scripture from God.
- Look with honesty at ourselves and understand that part of the enmity between Christians and Muslims in North America is due to Christian arrogance about our own understanding of and faith in God, and our ignorance about Muslim theology and practice. Sadly, the enmity is also often due to the misuse of some of the most precious teachings of our tradition.
- Explore occasions for open exchange and dialogue with Muslims about Islamic texts and traditions, learning from one another what Christians and Muslims believe.

A Litany for Public Use

What follows is a public litany for use in moments when we stand with others against acts of Islamophobia. We encourage you to work with your Muslim colleagues to adapt this to your community, or create your own litany together with your Muslim partners.

As Christians, we confess our complicity:

O God, as Christian believers we confess to you that we have long tilled the soil of mistrust and fear of those who come to you by a different path, that we ourselves have too often sown the seeds of hatred, and carried out unspeakable violence against those of other religious traditions. We recognize and confess our responsibility for the violence that is on the rise around the world and here in our own community. We have sinned against you in our assumption that only we can fully know you. In the face of acts designed to sow mistrust and fear among us, we turn to you in humility and prayer.

As Christians, we ask for forgiveness:

O God, we turn to you in shame for the times when we have been silent when you desired us to speak out, and when we have instead averted our eyes from the pain and sorrow and the tremendous risk experienced by your people who come to you through other religious traditions. We depend on your steadfast love and mercy to sustain us as we open our own souls to examine the violence that we carry within us. As broken people who desire to be better, we ask for your forgiveness, O God.

And to our siblings of other traditions, we say to you that we repent:

We repent for the harm we have caused you who are also made in God's image and who are a part of God's family. We commit to you that our repentance will be an ongoing act of self-examination. We pledge to stand with you in this moment, and in the times to come, when you are targeted because of who you are or what you believe as God's beloved family.

Having confessed our sin, asked for forgiveness from God, and taken the first steps of repentance before the people of God, we invite all present to pray with us:

God who mourns with us ...

We come to you in different ways, but we pray to you with one voice

God who comforts us ...

We pray to you as one people, with one voice

God who gives us the strength to endure ...

We pray to you as one people, with one voice

God who gives voice to our outrage ...

We pray to you as one people, with one voice

God who desires to see all people flourish and be made whole ...

We pray to you as one people, with one voice

God who stirs us to reach out to one another ...

We pray to you as one people, with one voice

God who calls us out when we hide our eyes from violence ...

We pray to you as one people, with one voice

God whose anger against injustice cannot be pacified ...

We pray to you as one people, with one voice

God who desires that we draw near to one another in times of sorrow ...

We pray to you as one people, with one voice

God whose mercy endures forever ...

We pray to you as one people, with one voice

Together, with one voice, we come to you:

Help us find strength together to build a beloved community in which we share beautiful visions with one another.

Let us read together from the Qur'an:

- ***“Had God willed, He would have made you a single community, but He wanted to test you regarding what has come to you. So compete with each other in doing good. Every one of you will return to God and He will inform you regarding the things about which you differed”*** (Qur'an 5, 48).

Let us read together from the New Testament:

- ***“Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind”*** (1 Peter 3:8).

Together, with one voice, as God's family made in God's image, we say: **Amen.**

Rationale

The General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations, a standing committee of the General Assembly that meets regularly between General Assemblies, is responsible for helping the entire PC(USA) nurture healthy relationships with partners of other religious traditions—both Christian and non-Christian. The committee provides advice and counsel to each General Assembly. Though there are staff in both the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency tasked with supporting the committee, its volunteer members are nominated and approved by the General Assembly.

For the past two years, the writing team of the GACEIR has taken on the task of drafting a Presbyterian response to the growing wave of Islamophobia. In particular, the writing team has sought to address the roots of Islamophobia—in our scripture, our confessions, our theology, and our history—in order to understand, to confess, and to repent.

Anti-Muslim attitudes and actions among Christians have deeply theological roots. Where Christians understand Jesus to be the Child of God and therefore indistinguishable from God's very being, Muslims understand Jesus as a Holy Prophet, just as they do Abraham and Moses before him. Further, Mary the mother of Jesus is revered among many Muslims as an example of piety and faith. But the belief among Muslims that God's truest revelation came in the Qur'an, through the Prophet Muhammad some six hundred years after the death of Jesus, is deeply problematic for Christians. For Muslims, it is the Holy Qur'an—not Jesus—that is the final, definitive revelation of God. Christians and Muslims have rarely been able to recognize the sharp contrasts in our beliefs as an opportunity to explore our different understandings of God's revelation with one another. On the contrary, throughout our history our theological differences have created a sharp line of division and provided the basis for the centuries of violence between us.

Another source of tension between Christians and Muslims is that each of our traditions is in some sense both expansionist and exclusivist. That is, both Christian and Muslim leaders have proclaimed their respective traditions to be the only legitimate path to God. Over the centuries, each has engaged in active, aggressive evangelization and sometimes even forced conversion. The effectiveness of the commitment to evangelism that they share is attested to in the reality that there are billions of Christians and billions of Muslims in the world today. In this way Christians and Muslims have often competed with one another, and this competition has frequently been tragically violent. It will take committed action to understand this history and heal the wounds we have created.

While GACEIR requests the approval at the 224th General Assembly (2020) of this brief *Statement Denouncing Islamophobia*, the committee continues to be committed to bringing a more robust report on these issues at the next General Assembly. The committee feels that more time is needed to carefully develop such a document, in consultation with our Muslim siblings.

In the meantime, due to the immediacy of the growing problems of Islamophobia, it is the recommendation of the GACEIR that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve this brief *Statement Denouncing Islamophobia*, that also conveys a commitment to take responsibility for and to combat Islamophobia in our communities. GACEIR commits to providing educational materials available to assist congregations in these efforts of understanding and combating Islamophobia. We pray that through this work we may recognize and celebrate the image of God in one another, choose to practice vulnerable hospitality to all, and pursue the repair of all that has been broken.

As GACEIR continues to prepare for the 225th General Assembly (2022), the committee will strive to follow the recommendations that are laid out here, strengthening relationships with our Muslim siblings, continuing to learn about the many forms of Islamophobia historically and currently, examining the scriptural and theological foundations of Islamophobia and its links with white supremacy, and supporting congregations and the PC(USA) to stand publicly with Muslims whenever they are targeted because of their Muslim identity.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-010

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-010—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) to approve this report with the following amendment:

“1. [Receive] [~~Approve~~] this *Statement Denouncing Islamophobia* as [a study document] [~~official policy~~] of the PC(USA).”

The Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations (GACEIR) is to be commended for its basic concept of linking denunciations of Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia in parallel statements. Their effort seems intended to stand strongly with followers of both Abrahamic faiths facing prejudice, hatred, and violence, and to approach both sibling traditions with contrition and humility.

GACEIR is correct also, however, in acknowledging in their statement’s rationale that “the committee continues to be committed to bringing a more robust report on these issues at the next General Assembly. The committee feels that more time is needed to carefully develop such a document, in consultation with our Muslim siblings.”

Thus, by *receiving* rather than approving a less than “robust” document, the assembly will ensure that the document is studied in an open discussion in the church and among ecumenical and interfaith partners. Information and comment gained in the period of sharing may then deepen and enhance the preparation of a more adequate document.

We make the same recommendation for the statement denouncing Anti-Semitism.

As a sibling Committee on the General Assembly concerned often with ecumenical and interfaith social witness, ACSWP would note a number of items not discussed but of considerable importance:

1. GACEIR is correct to note that since 9/11/01 there has been a rise in Islamophobia and related, but not sufficiently distinguished, anti-Arab feeling. Some of this prejudice and hostility has been behind a range of interventions and misadventures in the greater Middle East long before 9/11.

2. This statement does not mention the most recent prior effort to develop an official policy statement on Christian-Muslim relations in 2010. That proposed statement was not approved, though for reasons that do not parallel the prior non-adoption of statements on Christian-Jewish relations as policy.

3. This statement does summarize some of the theological differences and similarities between Christianity and Islam, and makes references to the Crusades, though not to the culture-shaping history of violence along long stretches of Europe's borders and then in the history of colonization. Cultural and political differences have been deepened or revived in many cases by U.S. foreign policies of the post WWII period, leading to a widespread feeling of injustice among younger Muslims that has led, in some cases, to terrorism rather than justified pushes for independence (as we saw in the "Arab Spring"). It might be important to stress the hunger for democracy and freedom revealed in those movements, even if in most cases non-democratic regimes regained power. The heroic protests in Khartoum, Sudan, in 2019, and in other Muslim nations show that these hopes are not extinguished.

4. This statement steps around the core of much Islamophobia and anti-Muslim propaganda, that Islam is a violent and intolerant religion, based on a militarized understanding of "jihad." It may be worth clearly dissociating the bulk of historical Islam, both Sunni and Shia, from these parodied or stereotyped understandings. Similarly, the vast majority of Muslim immigrants in Europe are peaceful and largely assimilated citizens.

5. Clearly it is hard to address the variety and size of Muslim communities in a short statement, but this variety makes the stereotypes even more problematic. Further, this variety is something U.S. citizens understand to some degree through immigrants, but should more be said about the virtual weaponization of immigration and asylum policy against Islam?

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy itself faced the challenge of condensing its analysis of the recent changes in Jerusalem into a short document, also presented to this assembly. The bulk of our historical, policy, and empirical material is submitted as a separate background document. Further to the intensity of this discussion to Presbyterians concerned with the fate of Christians and Muslims under Israel's control, there are several overtures looking at a door very much slammed shut on any "two-state solution." Yet the General Assembly has made a number of statements on human rights and peacemaking involving Muslim-majority nations and clearly recognizes the threats under which Christian minorities associated with the United States often labor. It would be our hope that careful discussion of the statement submitted, as a study document, would move the church in the direction GACEIR hopes.

Item 02-011

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 308.]

Minutes of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

For report, see https://pcbiz.s3.amazonaws.com/Uploads/087c7a8b-7dcf-4c6f-892f-3bc008c7f63b/COGA_Minutes_for_224th_General_Assembly_2020.pdf.

Item 02-012

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 308.]

Approval and Distribution of Statement Denouncing Antisemitism—From the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations.

The General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations (GACEIR) recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020)

1. Approve this "Statement Denouncing Antisemitism" as official policy of the PC(USA).
2. Distribute the document and invite all PC(USA) churches and mid councils to a time of study and reflection.

Statement Denouncing Antisemitism

We live in a moment of rising violence directed toward Jews. Our news feeds are filled with stories of violence from across the United States and around the world. Most of us can also recount such incidents in our own local communities, and many of us have Jewish friends or family who are increasingly afraid. Antisemitism exists on multiple levels, ranging from consistent, low-level aggression and negative stereotyping to significant acts of violence against Jews, their religious communities, and their property. All of these forms of antisemitism are on the rise.

Antisemitism is an evil at work in our world. In Christian terms, it is sin. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) condemns this evil, this sin, and the violence and contempt it generates. Further, Presbyterians recognize that we are complicit in the roots and

rise of antisemitism. That responsibility can be traced from our very foundations in Christian scripture, throughout a history of violence against our Jewish siblings, and is undergirded by assumptions of Christian centrality and supremacy that continue into our present day.

Today, too many Presbyterians remain unaware of the ways that we have internalized antisemitic attitudes. Our assumptions of Christian superiority and expectations of Christian centrality have blinded us to our own biases and privileges. Even our well-meaning attempt to emphasize unity through an embrace of what we have called the “Judeo-Christian” tradition has subtly nurtured in us the problematic assumption that there is nothing particularly distinctive about what it means to be Jewish. Christian supremacy is evoked when Christians speak of the God of the New Testament being a God of love, and the God of the Old Testament (Hebrew scripture) being a God of wrath.

Addressing the long history of antisemitism, and our current complicity in it, requires confession and repentance. We desire to heal our broken relationships with our Jewish siblings, to make amends, and to stand with all those who are targeted with negative stereotypes, low-level aggression, intolerance, violence, and hatred because of their religious and/or ethnic identity as Jews.

The Interreligious Stance of the PC(USA) affirms our motivations for friendship and cooperation: “many things draw us together in respect for those who have religious commitments different from our own, including the example and person of Jesus Christ, the evident need for religious peace, the necessity of meeting human needs in a world of poverty and want, and the biblical call to solidarity amid our diversity” (Stance, p. 1, Introduction).

We as Presbyterians recognize that our willingness to confess our complicity in antisemitism must be matched by active and intentional efforts to stand with—and in defense of—our Jewish siblings in this current moment when antisemitism is clearly on the rise globally and in our own country. It is critically important—for us, for our Jewish siblings, and for the whole world—that Christians speak out boldly and act decisively to stop antisemitism in its tracks.

Congregations and councils are invited to participate in a time of study and reflection by taking the following actions:

1. Establish honest, respectful, and healthy relationships with our Jewish neighbors and friends.

As we work to confront antisemitism in ourselves and in the world, we do so knowing that Christianity’s relationship to Judaism is unique. Jesus was a Jew. All the original apostles were themselves Jewish. Christianity and Judaism claim many of the same writings as scripture and share a common history. What we build from our common source is different. Rather than celebrating our differences, Christians have repeatedly turned theological disagreement into condemnation of the existence of Judaism and Jews, condemnation that has taken many forms, including murder and genocide. Addressing this long history of antisemitism, and our current complicity in it, requires confession, repentance, learning, and healing of relationships.

Churches are encouraged to:

- Develop deeper relationships with Jews through dialogues, dinners, youth encounters, food banks, refugee resettlement, and so on, in partnership with synagogues and other Jewish organizations.
- Engage in interfaith relationships more as a guest than as a host, which means speaking less and listening more, and coming with a spirit of vulnerability and humility.
- Create opportunities to learn from Jews about their experience of antisemitism as well as the treasured aspects of their Jewish identity.
- Listen carefully to critique from Jewish friends and leaders, especially when they attempt to name our problematic attitudes and behavior, and follow their lead when they ask for our support in confronting antisemitism.
- Work together on shared projects, building on the common hopes and dreams among Christians and Jews for our children and for our nation, and work together for a more peaceful and healthy world.

2. Stand publicly with Jews when they are targeted because of their Jewish identity.

The FBI has reported that 57.8 percent of hate crimes based on religious bias in 2018 in the United States were directed against Jews. Bomb threats against Jewish communities are dramatically on the rise. We clearly see antisemitism in the anti-Jewish rhetoric of the White Nationalist Rally in Charlottesville in 2017, the massacre at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh in 2018, the shooting at the Chabad Synagogue in Poway, California, in 2019, and the assaults against Jews in Jersey

City and Monsey, New York, at the end of 2019. Presbyterians can and must embody our commitment to resist these acts of hatred and be a proactive force of love and respect for our Jewish siblings.

Churches are encouraged to:

- Participate in and/or initiate public interreligious expressions of unity, mourning, and thanksgiving as demonstrations of solidarity.
- Publicly call out and condemn antisemitic language when it is used by political leaders of any party and religious leaders of all persuasions.
- Refuse to participate in the condemnations of all Jews, particularly when connected to a critique of the State of Israel. Denounce violence against Jews that is done in reaction to Israeli actions.
- Offer the litany provided in this document for use in times of public demonstration.

3. Learn about and teach the history of Christian antisemitism in our churches.

The fear felt by our Jewish siblings in the face of unchecked antisemitism in our time is rational in light of our deeply problematic history, and we must listen to their righteous anger. Christians have either ignored or perpetuated the sustained marginalizing, targeting, and killing of Jews for our entire history. When Christians do not even know the antisemitism woven into our history, we are unable to come to our Jewish siblings with repentance and seek repair for that history.

Churches are encouraged to:

- Learn and teach about the violence that Christians have perpetrated against Jews since the beginning of Christianity itself, continuing on through the Crusades and Inquisition, through pogroms and forced conversions, through the holocaust and into contemporary times.
- Take responsibility when someone misuses Christian scripture or teachings to justify violent actions. Confront this misuse and publicly offer corrections to the teachings.
- Study the connections between antisemitism and white supremacy in our country, both historically and in the present.
- Examine our own words and behavior for aspects of antisemitism, unintentional or otherwise.

4. Learn about Christian scriptural and Presbyterian theological foundations of antisemitism.

Recognizing that antisemitic ideas are embedded in our scriptures and our confessions, Presbyterians have a responsibility to understand and to teach the historical context in which these were written. Christian supremacy also leads to Christian symbols, prayers, beliefs, traditions, and holidays being assumed to be the norm for everyone. It is important that we offer contemporary theology, biblical study, and liturgy to affirm the ongoing covenant between the Jewish people and God, as well as our spiritual kinship with, and respect for, Jewish faith and life.

Churches are encouraged to:

- Re-examine our interpretation of problematic sacred texts, learning and teaching about their historical context.
- Offer contemporary alternative theologies and liturgies that reaffirm our commitments to our Jewish siblings.
- Confess and repent for our responsibility for theologies that have been used as justification for violence and hatred against Jews.
- Explore occasions for open exchange and dialogue with Jews about our shared scriptural texts, Rabbinic and Christian interpretations, as well as practices and traditions of faith.

A Litany for Public Use

What follows is a public litany for use in moments when we stand with others against acts of antisemitism. We encourage you to work with your Jewish colleagues to adapt this to your community, or create your own litany together with your Jewish partners.

As Christians, we confess our complicity:

O God, as Christian believers we confess to you that we have long tilled the soil of mistrust and fear of those who come to you by a different path, that we ourselves have too often sown the seeds of hatred, and carried out unspeakable violence against those of other religious traditions. We recognize and confess our responsibility for the violence that is on the rise around the world and here in our own community. We have sinned against you in our assumption that only we can fully know you. In the face of acts designed to sow mistrust and fear among us, we turn to you in humility and prayer.

As Christians, we ask for forgiveness:

O God, we turn to you in shame for the times when we have been silent when you desired us to speak out, and when we have instead averted our eyes from the pain and sorrow and the tremendous risk experienced by your people who come to you through other religious traditions. We depend on your steadfast love and mercy to sustain us as we open our own souls to examine the violence that we carry within us. As broken people who desire to be better, we ask for your forgiveness, O God.

And to our siblings of other traditions, we say to you that we repent:

We repent for the harm we have caused you who are also made in God's image and who are a part of God's family. We commit to you that our repentance will be an ongoing act of self-examination. We pledge to stand with you in this moment, and in the times to come, when you are targeted because of who you are or what you believe as God's beloved family.

Having confessed our sin, asked for forgiveness from God, and taken the first steps of repentance before the people of God, we invite all present to pray with us:

God who mourns with us ...

We come to you in different ways, but we pray to you with one voice

God who comforts us ...

We pray to you as one people, with one voice

God who gives us the strength to endure ...

We pray to you as one people, with one voice

God who gives voice to our outrage ...

We pray to you as one people, with one voice

God who desires to see all people flourish and be made whole ...

We pray to you as one people, with one voice

God who stirs us to reach out to one another ...

We pray to you as one people, with one voice

God who calls us out when we hide our eyes from violence ...

We pray to you as one people, with one voice

God whose anger against injustice cannot be pacified ...

We pray to you as one people, with one voice

God who desires that we draw near to one another in times of sorrow ...

We pray to you as one people, with one voice

God whose mercy endures forever ...

We pray to you as one people, with one voice

Together, with one voice, we come to you:

Help us find strength together to build a beloved community in which we share beautiful visions with one another.

Let us read together from Hebrew Scripture:

- **“All people may take refuge in the shadow of God’s wings. They shall again live beneath God’s shadow, they shall flourish as a garden; they shall blossom like the vine, their fragrance shall be like the wine of Lebanon” (Hosea 14:7).**

Let us read together from the New Testament:

- **“Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind” (1 Peter 3:8).**

Together, with one voice, as God’s family made in God’s image, we say: **Amen.**

Rationale

The General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations, a standing committee of the General Assembly that meets regularly between General Assemblies, is responsible for helping the entire PC(USA) nurture healthy relationships with partners of other religious traditions—both Christian and non-Christian. The committee provides advice and counsel to each General Assembly. Though there are staff in both the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency tasked with supporting the committee, its volunteer members are nominated and approved by the General Assembly.

For the past two years, the writing team of the GACEIR has taken on the task of drafting a Presbyterian response to the growing wave of antisemitism. In particular, the writing team has sought to address the roots of antisemitism—in our scripture, our confessions, our theology, and our history—in order to understand, to confess, and to repent.

Anti-Jewish sentiment and behavior by Christians is deeply rooted in problematic language in our holy scripture and in our confessions. For example, Matthew is the only gospel in which the crowds calling for Jesus’s crucifixion claim responsibility for his death. After Pilate says that he is “innocent of this man’s blood,” Matthew’s crowd responds, “His blood be on us and on our children!” (Matthew 27:25). This one verse, referred to as the “blood curse,” has been used for centuries to claim that Jews as a whole people throughout time are responsible for Jesus’s death.

Another example can be found in the development of Christian supersessionism. By the beginning of the third century, it became orthodox Christian teaching that the Christian church had replaced the Jews as God’s chosen people because Jews had refused to accept Jesus as Messiah. This includes the idea that Jews are cursed by God and are no longer in covenant with God. Such thinking lies behind the Second Helvetic Confession’s assertion that the sacraments of communion and baptism supersede earlier Jewish rituals: “But now, since Christ the true Messiah is exhibited unto us, and the abundance of grace is poured forth upon the people of The New Testament, the Sacraments of the old people are surely abrogated and have ceased; and in their stead the symbols of the New Testament are placed—Baptism in place of circumcision, the Lord’s Supper in place of the Paschal Lamb and sacrifices” (*Book of Confessions*, 5.177).

Presbyterians have since repeatedly rejected the idea of Christian replacement of Jews, looking instead to our continuity with the Jewish people. Yet, even today, for too many Christians, this supersessionist ideology provides a rationale to perpetuate violence and genocide against Jewish people. These and similar scriptures and confessions have been used to create an idea of Christian superiority or Christian supremacy: that Christianity and Christians are always right, true, normal and good, while Jews are marginalized and stereotyped as evil and dangerous, and worthy of being feared.

In addition to Christian supremacy, white supremacy also plays a role in contemporary antisemitism. This link is evident in recent shootings and other attacks on Jews by white supremacists. White supremacists target Jews as their common enemy, and yet, Jews are people of many races. Ashkenazi Jews descend from Eastern and Central European ancestors, Sephardi Jews descend from Spanish speaking Jews who fled or were expelled from Spain and Portugal in 1492, while Mizrahi Jews descend from Jews of North Africa and the Middle East. White supremacist ideology includes antisemitic beliefs taken from medieval Christian antisemitism, claiming that Jews are an inferior race or don’t have “pure blood.” While antisemitism cannot be reduced only to racism, it has been intertwined in modern history with racism and white supremacy. White supremacist ideologies are used as weapons of antisemitism, fostering hatred and violence.

While GACEIR requests the approval at the 224th General Assembly (2020) of this brief “Statement Denouncing Anti-semitism,” the committee continues to be committed to bringing a more robust report on these issues at the next General Assembly. The committee feels that more time is needed to develop such a document, in consultation with our Jewish siblings. In particular, we are aware that for many Jews, their core self-understanding is tied to the land that is now called Israel and

Palestine. Many Jews experience anti-Zionism as antisemitism. Given that the dynamics of Zionism and anti-Zionism and the political concerns related to Israel and Palestine impact our understanding of antisemitism, it is the GACEIR's judgment that more work should be done to perfect an expanded document on antisemitism.

In the meantime, due to the immediacy of the growing problems of antisemitism, it is the recommendation of the GACEIR that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve this brief "Statement Denouncing Antisemitism" that also conveys a commitment to take responsibility for and to combat antisemitism in our communities. GACEIR commits to providing educational materials available to assist congregations in their efforts of understanding and combating antisemitism. We pray that through this work we may recognize and celebrate the image of God in one another, choose to practice vulnerable hospitality to all, and pursue the repair of all that has been broken.

As GACEIR continues to prepare for the 225th General Assembly (2022), the committee will strive to follow the recommendations that are laid out here, strengthening relationships with our Jewish siblings, continuing to learn about the many forms of antisemitism historically and currently, examining the scriptural and theological foundations of antisemitism, and supporting congregations and the PC(USA) to stand publicly with Jews whenever they are targeted because of their Jewish identity.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-12

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-012—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP)

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) to approve Item 02-12 with the following amendment:

"1. [Receive] [~~Approve~~] this 'Statement Denouncing Antisemitism' as [a study document] [~~official policy~~] of the PC(USA)."

The General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations is to be commended for its basic concept of linking denunciations of Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia in parallel statements. Their effort seems intended to stand strongly with followers of both Abrahamic faiths facing prejudice, hatred, and violence, and to approach both sibling traditions with contrition and humility.

They are correct also, however, in acknowledging in their statement's rationale that "it is the GACEIR's judgment that more work should be done to perfect an expanded document on antisemitism." Thus, by receiving rather than approving a less than "robust" document, the assembly will ensure that the document is studied in an open discussion in the church and among ecumenical and interfaith partners. Information and comment gained in the period of sharing may then deepen and enhance the preparation of a more adequate document.

We make the same recommendation for the statement denouncing Islamophobia.

As a sibling committee of the General Assembly concerned often with ecumenical and interfaith social witness, ACSWP would note a number of items not discussed but of considerable importance:

1. Currently the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) does not have an official policy or theological position vis-à-vis Judaism. The 1987 report, "A Theological Understanding of the Relationship Between Christians and Jews," was not approved. Similarly, in 2010, another report, "Christians and Jews: People of God," was not approved. That latter paper tried to move the relation of Jews and Presbyterians forward after General Assembly actions critical of the State of Israel's treatment of the Palestinians had strained some relations between our two faith communities in the U.S. It may be a reasonable strategy to try to bracket both the theological issues (of Christology above all) and Israel's fifty plus year occupation of Palestine, but this should be noted as part of the motivation to propose a short document that could be viewed favorably by much of the Jewish community. Such a short document does not need to be a policy statement, however, and one that makes no reference to previous work of the assembly.

2. Among the theological issues lifted up in the denunciation of Anti-Semitism is what is termed, "supersessionism," or the general understanding that Christianity replaces Judaism in God's plan of redemption. The questions of how many covenants God maintains, and whether Jesus' death and resurrection were necessary, and whether all understandings of a messiah fulfilling promises or opening the covenant are inherently supersessionist, and thus devalue Judaism, are major. "Supersessionism" may, in fact, be a form of anti-Judaism that contributes to anti-Semitism, but it is also a polemic term for a multidimensional theological disagreement. Use of that term, without acknowledging significant differences of opinion among Presbyterians and Christians generally, may be a "short-cut" that leads quite far off-road theologically.

3. Previous Presbyterian study documents have made some distinctions between sins of the Christian tradition generally, which we must acknowledge, and particular views of Judaism in the Reformed tradition up to today, when (for the past two generations) intermarriage and tolerance have been more the rule than hostility or resentment, historic characteristics of anti-Semitism.

4. While anti-Semitism is related to racism and white supremacy, a number of studies of both the Holocaust period and today's anti-Semitism focus on nationalism and ethnic "tribalism" as forces encouraging hatred of a whole range of others, historically demonizing Jews, but sometimes today considering Jews to be "white" and opposing others far strongly. Some ethnonationalist parties in Europe seem quite friendly with the current government of Israel, and even conservative Arab regimes are tempering their official hostility with de facto tolerance. Any denunciation of anti-Semitism might well want to caution against certain kinds of nationalism and authoritarianism.

5. Criticism of the nation-state of Israel is not anti-Semitic, and in many cases, it is not anti-Zionist, as it advocates for the existence of Israel as a democratic nation living at peace with its neighbors. This is stated in the rationale to the statement, but it would seem to be worth including in the document itself, given the practiced effort to paint all criticism of Israel as anti-Semitic. Again, much ink and blood have been spilled and shed in the struggle to achieve a tolerable co-existence among Israeli Jews and Christian and Muslim Palestinians. We fear that this matter cannot be side-stepped as easily as the statement attempts to do, especially given the exclusivism of current Israeli government policy and the real divisions among U.S. Jews over that policy.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy itself faced the challenge of condensing its analysis of the recent changes in Jerusalem into a short document, also presented to this assembly. The bulk of our historical, policy and empirical material is submitted as a separate background document. Further to the intensity of this discussion to Presbyterians concerned with the fate of Christians and Muslims under Israel's control, there are several overtures looking at a door very much slammed shut on any "two-state solution." Thus, again, we salute an effort to state the principled opposition to anti-Semitism that we believe virtually all Presbyterians today share. It would be our hope that careful discussion of the statement submitted, as a study document, would move the church in the direction GACEIR hopes.

Item 02-013

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 308.]

Minutes of the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations.

For report, see https://pcbiz.s3.amazonaws.com/Uploads/86bb5a2e-29cf-4948-8395-81be8c2daad1/CEIR_2018_and_2019_Minutes_for_GA.pdf.

Item 02-014

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 308.]

Appointing a Committee to Write a New Confession—From the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations (GACEIR).

The General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020

1. Approve this proposal to amend the *Book of Confessions* by writing a new confession for the PC (USA) that would adequately address issues in need of confession for today.

2. Appoint a committee of ruling elders and ministers of Word and Sacrament, numbering no fewer than fifteen, to consider the proposal and report its finding to the 225th General Assembly (2022).

Rationale

The church of Jesus Christ is, since its very beginning, a body that "lives only through confessional renewal of [its] fundamental confession" (434 *Book of Confessions: Study Edition*, Revised 2017 Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville, Kentucky) that Jesus Christ is Lord (Phil 2:11, Rom. 10:9, for example). Throughout its history, by means of creeds, catechisms, confessions, and other "official" statements of church bodies, the church has clarified the meaning of the church's submission

to Christ the true Word. In many, if not most cases, these have been broadly dogmatic in nature, drawing out the church's beliefs in terms that hew to the texts of the Scriptures and/or to the church's traditional teachings.

However, at times, the church has perceived that the Lordship of Jesus Christ—the heart of the gospel—is at stake in light of contemporary movements, ideologies, and events. In such times the church speaks with greater force and particularity, as it surveys its situation, and by speaking words that echo the Word. It responds to God with humility and intention and bears witness to society with joy and invitation, and calls its members to action with a voice of clarity and summons.

We believe that, in light of false doctrines promulgated in both society and in church with regard to racism and racialized supremacy, God is calling the PC(USA) to develop a new confession that speaks directly to the North American situation.

At least since the arrival of Christopher Columbus and the promulgation of the Doctrine of Discovery, the Western Hemisphere has not experienced a single day free from the sin of racism. The economic development of nearly every nation has been founded on everything from displacement of indigenous persons to the enslavement and importation of human beings from other continents. The history of the U.S.A., from its colonial period up to the present moment, is fraught with white supremacy and racism, both root and branch.

In order for the PC(USA) to respond to the call of God with humility and intention, it is incumbent upon us to investigate the extent to which our own institutions and common life have benefited from the sins of racism and racialized supremacy. We cannot engage in the development of confessional documents without first looking backward and practicing the act of confessing our complicity. Further, looking forward, we must repudiate all manners of racialized supremacy and racism in both thought and practice. Initiatives that enable honest confession and faithful practices will call upon a broad coalition of scholars, agencies, and institutions to do bold, ground-breaking, and difficult work for the sake of the gospel.

However, the context in which we currently find ourselves has its own contours. White supremacy is foundational not only to the identity of hate groups that openly own “Christian Identity,” but also to countless everyday followers of Jesus who raise their own status and dehumanize persons of color based on race alone. “Replacement theory”—the notion that the power that white people have held for centuries is being disintegrated by virtue of higher birth rates among people of color—is finding greater currency, not only in “alt-right” circles, but even within the church, as the U.S.A. becomes more multicultural and traditionally white congregations dwindle. A prime example of this behavior was Charlottesville in 2017, where demonstrators wearing and carrying neo-Nazi paraphernalia shouted “You will not replace us!”

We name the current situation as a threat to the integrity of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The sovereignty of God has been warped into a pro-European white doctrine of discovery. The identity that Christians are given in baptism has been distorted into a race-based supremacy for which (Protestant) whites-only may apply. The notion of a covenant, chosen people has been misconstrued into replacement theory that uses notions of Lordship to subjugate not only people of color but also calls upon white women to “breed” enough white babies, in order to raise birth rates among “the chosen.” Pseudo-biblical readings of “the end times” have been used to justify the instigation of interracial violence and the baiting of race war. Racism and racialized supremacy are not merely sociological, political ideologies. They rely on half-truths and false teachings that show just enough spirituality to look “Christian” but in fact deny Christ and his teachings.

The PC(USA) has been responding in several ways, but has not developed its own confession to address the situation. The acceptance of the Confession of Belhar with its themes on unity, reconciliation, and justice is a step forward, but it was written on another continent to respond to the cries of different hearts. In 2017, a partnership between NEXT Church and the Presbyterian Foundation issued the Sarasota Statement, a confession that addresses racism and white supremacy. In the aftermath of Charlottesville, a statement by PC(USA) leaders, General Assembly Co-Moderators Jan Edmiston and T. Denise Anderson, Presbyterian Mission Agency Interim Executive Director Tony De La Rosa, and General Assembly Stated Clerk J. Herbert Nelson, II, spoke boldly to the PC(USA) and beyond. The 222nd General Assembly (2016) repudiated the Doctrine of Discovery. The 1999 document “Facing Racism,” while it did not deal with racialized supremacy, and tended to see racism as a sin that takes place outside the church, laid out both an analysis of racism and offered ways forward for the church. The Study Catechism of 1998 focuses more clearly than previous catechisms on social teaching, and in several instances (at questions, 16, 108, 115, and 128) addresses the ways in which God calls the church to view all human beings, maintain the dignity of all, repudiate racism, and discern how not only individuals but institutions sin.

In recent years, therefore, although the PC(USA) has made attempts to address racism (and, to some extent, white supremacy), it has not done so in a way that is broadly shared by the whole church. When the entire church collectively confesses, false teachings will continue to find a foothold in the hearts of believers, in the practice of congregational life, and in the structural and institutional life of the PC(USA). Until the PC(USA) develops, adopts, and lives into its own confession, the clear proclamation of the gospel itself continues to be at stake.

In order for the church to continue its work in the world with integrity, engage the church's dialogue partners with humility, and represent the PC(USA)'s intentions as embodied in its stance on ecumenism and interreligious relations, it is vital that the

whole church speak consistently to racism and racialized supremacy, rather than to speak about these sins in a fragmentary manner. A forceful and honest new confession will enable GACEIR to continue its works to develop and maintain relationships with our ecumenical partners and people of other religious traditions, and as it encourages a climate in which the work can be done faithfully at the local level. A new confession will strengthen the witness of the PC(USA) in the world as we walk faithfully in ministry as one part of the family (people) of God. [https://www.PC\(USA\).org/resource/interreligious-stance-44700/](https://www.PC(USA).org/resource/interreligious-stance-44700/).

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-014

Advice and Counsel on 02-014—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP)

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) to answer Item 02-014 with the action taken on Item 02-134.

Because so much of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s social witness policy is based upon the confessions of the church, the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy has examined both proposals for a new confession to be developed to add to the *Book of Confessions*. Our Advice & Counsel memorandum on Item 02-134 from the Presbytery of Arkansas, presents the committee’s reasons for seeing its framework as more theologically comprehensive while recognizing the case made in Item 02-014.

Item 02-015

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 308.]

Overture on Affirming the Effectiveness of Nonmilitary, Collaborative International Approaches to Resolving Conflict—From the Presbytery of Mission.

The Presbytery of Mission overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to:

1. Recognize the harm caused by Doctrine of Discovery and its legacy of influence on U.S. foreign policy, including the belief in Manifest Destiny and the evolution of the Monroe Doctrine to support U.S. military interventions in the Americas.
2. Reject the principles of exceptionalism and power through conquest that have led to overuse of military force.
3. Affirm the effectiveness of nonmilitary, collaborative international approaches to resolving conflict.
4. Commit to developing advocacy positions and actions in partnership with those most affected by U.S. foreign policy and military action and seek ways to ensure their voices are heard by the decision makers responsible for shaping these policies.
5. Commit to including in our discussions our global ecumenical partners and a broad range of Christian and other faith perspectives, as well as people from marginalized communities in the U.S. and from frontline communities in parts of the world affected by U.S. policy.

Rationale

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) approved an action to “start a flow of ideas and information ... directed at understanding how the Doctrine of Discovery has been present in our history and our theological positions, and continues to be present today” (*Minutes*, 2018, Part I, p. 839).

This overture asks that we include foreign policy in these reflections and recognize that U.S. foreign and military policy has too often harmed indigenous peoples in the Americas and around the world.

Concurrence to Item 02-015 from the Presbytery of de Cristo.

ACWSP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-015

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-015—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 02-015.

Along with slavery, the Doctrine of Discovery was one of the U.S.'s original sins, inherited from the Roman Catholic doctrine allowing for the lands to be claimed from unbaptized peoples—ostensibly to help in their conversion if possible. In practice, this became a general European Catholic or Protestant license justifying the use of force to conquer Native American peoples and take their land and resources with little or no compensation. A legacy from that has been the militarization of our nation's foreign policy—might makes right—and the military-industrial complex that has hard-wired militarization into our economy and political structure. A military response has too often become the U.S.'s initial and default response to international conflicts.

Restoring the primacy of nonmilitary and international collaborative approaches would embody Christ's peacemaking spirit and be more efficient for the welfare of our people and restoration of our positive influence in the world. Part of this would entail strengthening our support for the United Nations, as called for in Item 02-06.

For more resourcing and information, *Unbound* published extensive material and analysis on the repudiation of the Doctrine of the Discovery as well as the risks we Presbyterians must take to be an effective body of peacemakers. This second item reflects six years of discernment by groups of Presbyterians on what next steps were needed—after years of war in the greater Middle East—to work toward the non-military goals of this overture.

REAC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-015

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-015—From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee.

The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) to approve Item 02-015.

The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC) concurs with the Presbytery of Mission in our support of the use of nonmilitary and collaborative approach to resolving conflict. For too long this country has believed in the policy of “might is right.”

Manifest Destiny is used as a tool to claim other peoples' lands without thought or care for the peoples because they are considered less than human and expendable.

We cannot keep believing that we can take what we want and damn the consequences to the affected peoples. We need to see the world through the lenses of Jesus who called us to treat one another as siblings; to love one another and treat one another as if we were welcoming Jesus himself into our homes.

In the book of Jonah, God called Jonah to preach to the Ninevites that he would destroy them in a matter of days. The Ninevites repented, and God forgave them. God is demonstrating to us in this passage that God is for all peoples no matter where one is from, the color of one's skin, no matter one's circumstances, one's race/nationality or what one looks like.

We cannot stand by where peoples' countries are devastated by wars and strife, where people are unable to provide for themselves and their children and to enjoy a good life, being constantly faced with conflict. The death toll and devastation are enormous; it is incalculable how many lives have been lost, and furthermore, people are unable to feel secure.

Item 02-016

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 308.]

Participation in the Thursdays in Black Campaign—From the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations.

The General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations, with our partners—Racial Equity and Women's Intercultural Ministries, Young Adult Volunteer Program, Presbyterian Women, and Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations—recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) do the following:

1. Launch its participation in the World Council of Churches' Thursdays in Black campaign and encourage congregations to participate in and connect with grassroots social agencies that serve vulnerable populations impacted by gender-based violence and advocate for change.

2. Invite Doug Chial, the WCC moderator or any other WCC representative to talk about the Thursdays in Black movement and its importance to the Church.

Rationale

Thursdays in Black is a campaign that grew out of the World Council of Churches (WCC) Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women (1988–1998). The campaign advocates for an end to rape and violence by making visible not only gender-based violence, which often takes place in most intimate places on the one hand but also occurs as a result of sex trafficking, at work, in the streets and in other places and events in our society. Although black is often used to represent resistance and resilience, (as the campaign recognizes) you have been invited to join in a shared expression of our commitment to end all forms of violence against women, children, and LGBTQI+ persons by wearing black on Thursday, June 25th. Follow this link for more information: [Thursday in Black Campaign](#).

ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-016

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-016—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC)

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) to approve Item 02-016.

This campaign takes a stand against rape and violence by inviting people to wear black each Thursday to end all forms of violence against women, children, and LGBTQI+ persons. ACWC applauds Presbyterian Women and other PC(USA) organizations that already participate in Thursdays in Black, and supports widespread denominational and congregational involvement in this ecumenical campaign.

Item 02-017

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 307.]

On Learning About and Starting the Process of Divestment from Fossil Fuels—From the Presbytery of Arkansas.

The Presbytery of Arkansas overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) to:

1. Encourage all congregations and presbyteries to learn about and start the process of divestment from fossil fuels through the Presbyterian Foundation and the Board of Pensions using the Carbon Underground 200 and the S&P Global Industry Classification Standard’s list of publicly traded companies engaged in coal, oil, and gas exploration, extraction, and production as the criteria to identify which companies are considered to be fossil fuel companies.

2. Direct Mission Responsibility Through Investment to add all companies on the Carbon Underground 200 and the S&P Global Industry Classification Standard’s list to the divestment list and recommend divestment to the Board of Pensions.

3. Recognize that the fossil fuel industry has long provided employment for many, including members of our denomination, and therefore:

a. Affirm that working in the fossil fuel industry is a necessity for many and assure our members that divestment is not a condemnation or judgment of their choice of employment.

b. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) to be in conversation with presbyteries whose members are most dependent on the fossil fuel industry, in order to discern ways that we can support them as our society transitions away from our dependence on fossil fuels and jobs are inevitably lost.

4. Recognize that the fossil fuel industry has also caused a climate crisis, and that many around the world are already suffering the impact of climate change, including many within our own denomination, and therefore direct the PMA to be in conversation with presbyteries whose members are most affected by climate change to discern ways we can continue to support them and minimize the impact of climate change in their lives and communities as we divest from fossil fuels

Rationale

Although human use of fossil fuels has caused economic and social growth, burning fossil fuels has already raised the average temperature of the earth by 1°C (1.8°F). The latest report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change¹ (IPCC) shows the extent of the damage we will cause to creation if we allow the earth’s temperature to rise by 1.5–2°C, the targets agreed to by all nations of the world under the Paris Agreement of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate

Change.² Even at 1.5°C of warming, we can expect to see the extinction of more than 300,000 species of animals, have an ice-free Arctic in most summers, expose 14 percent of people to extreme heat waves (especially in the Global South), expose 250 million people to severe drought, and raise sea levels by at least 1.3 feet.

Thus, knowing we must keep climate to 1.5°–2°C of warming, we are limited to how much fossil fuel can be burned and how much time we have to use our prophetic and moral voices as people of faith called by God to love people and all creation.

We have about ten years after the 224th General Assembly (2020) to stay within these warming limits. However, the fossil fuel industry's own estimates³ show that burning the proved reserves of fossil fuels will release almost three times the carbon budget at 2°C⁴ and an astounding five times the 1.5°C budget—CO₂ that will remain in the atmosphere for hundreds of years. Despite these dire realities, oil and gas production is increasing, and PC(USA)'s money has helped allowed oil and gas companies to spend more than \$114 billion in 2017⁵ to acquire new deposits of oil and gas that we can't afford to burn. We cannot trust the industry to listen to us and to respond with urgency.

Climate change is no longer some future threat that we will have to contend with at a later date. The effects of climate change are already being seen around the world by a nearly incalculable number of people who are already experiencing—due to the natural disasters—malnutrition, pollution, disease, and death that are also caused by overconsumption of fossil fuels and climate change.

This number is rising every year as we continue to consume fossil fuels at an unsustainable rate. Natural disasters such as hurricanes, floods, and wildfires are becoming more common and more deadly. In 2017, Hurricane Maria caused the deaths of more than 4,600 people in Puerto Rico.⁶ That same year Hurricane Harvey caused an estimated \$125 billion of damage in Texas.⁷ Of California's ten most destructive wildfires in history, six happened over a ten-month period in 2017–2018.⁸ Droughts in Latin America are decimating crops, causing a spike in migration north towards the U.S./Mexico border.⁹

We simply cannot continue to invest in fossil fuels at the rate that we have been if we want to stop the damage already being done to the environment and the millions of people already suffering the impacts of climate change.

Our investments must switch to renewable energy now, before it is too late. That being said, many within our denomination rely on the fossil fuel industry as their main source of income. Just as our members in places already feeling the brunt of the damage from climate change worry about their futures, our members who work in the fossil fuel industry worry about their own futures, as they wonder how they will earn a living as jobs in the fossil fuel industry disappear. Jobs in the fossil fuel industry are already on a decline, as mining resources like coal become less profitable. Whether or not the PC(USA) divests from fossil fuels, these jobs will inevitably disappear as our society makes the necessary transition to renewable energy. Just as we must continue to support those in our denomination most impacted by climate change, we must also begin searching for ways to support those who will lose their jobs as fossil fuels become obsolete.

Endnotes

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4. Richard Heede and Naomi Oreskes 2016. *Global Environmental Change*. Potential emissions of CO₂ and methane from proved reserves of fossil fuels: An alternative analysis. doi: 10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2015.10.005.
5. Robert Rapier 2018. *Forbes*. “Oil Company Spending and Oil Reserves Are on the Rise.” <https://www.forbes.com/sites/rrapier/2018/07/27/oil-company-spending-and-oil-reserves-are-on-the-rise/#207559c54a31>.
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7. nhc.noaa.gov/news/UpdatedCostliest.pdf.
8. Chris Dolce 2018. *The Weather Channel*. “Six of California's Most Destructive Wildfires Have Struck in the Past 10 Months.” <https://weather.com/news/news/2018-07-30-california-20-most-destructive-wildfires-carr-fire>.

9. Miranda Cady Hallet 2019. *Latino USA*. “How Climate Change Is Driving Emigration from Central America.” <https://www.latinousa.org/2019/09/09/climatechange/>.

Concurrence to Item 02-017 from the Presbyteries of de Cristo and Hudson River.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-017

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-017—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) to answer Item 02-017 with the action taken on Item 02-126.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-017

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-017—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC)

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) to disapprove Item 02-017.

ACWC recommends this item be disapproved or answered with an approval of MRTI’s report with recommendations, Item 02-97. MRTI has been entrusted by our denomination with doing this work, and MRTI’s process has been approved by the General Assembly and complies with General Assembly policy.

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 02-017

Presbyterian Mission Agency Comment on Item 02-017. On Learning About Starting the Process of Divestment from Fossil Fuels.

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) directed the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI), to continue its focused engagement process on climate change-related issues and, pursuant to the Divestment Strategy Principles and Criteria policy [approved by the 196th General Assembly (1984)], to recommend selective divestment if significant changes in governance, strategy, implementation, transparency and disclosure, and public policy were not instituted by the corporations during the engagements of MRTI and ecumenical partners. Following policy guidelines from the 196th, 222nd, and 223rd General Assemblies (1984, 2016, and 2018), MRTI recommended three companies for selective divestment, a recommendation that can be implemented by the investing agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) if the General Assembly approves the recommendations.

Specifically, Recommendation 2 in Item 02-17 goes against existing General Assembly policies and the process MRTI has for implementing those policies. The overture directs MRTI “to add all companies on the Carbon Underground 200 and S&P Global Industry Classification Standard’s list to the divestment list and recommend divestment to the Board of Pensions.” This directive bypasses MRTI’s research and engagement process outlined by the Guideline Metrics framework that was approved by the 223rd General Assembly (2018). It also circumvents the General Assembly’s Divestment Strategy: Principles and Criteria policy [approved by the 196th General Assembly (1984)] that includes seven criteria that need to be met before a divestment recommendation is made. In particular, Criterion #6 calls for “The proposed action should be sufficiently precise that the effect of its application can be evaluated,” which means that specific guidelines and metrics must be applied to determine if a company is moving towards or away from complying with the standards set by the General Assembly.

Item 02-17 also ignores the General Assembly’s evolving environmental policy, which was made more robust by the 222nd (2016) and 223rd (2018) General Assemblies and which MRTI has carried out through the application of the Guideline Metrics framework [approved by the 223rd General Assembly (2018)], which examine environmental, social, and governance performance of companies named by the General Assembly.

Item 02-17 relies on the Carbon Underground 200 list and the S&P list which ignores the fact that PC(USA), through MRTI, is a leader in the Climate Action 100+. This investor initiative has the backing of \$41 trillion USD in invested capital, to ensure the world’s largest corporate greenhouse gas emitters manage their operations toward compliance with the Paris Accord’s goal of limiting global warming to well below 2 degrees Celsius. The companies include 100 “systemically important emitters,” accounting for two-thirds of annual global industrial emissions, alongside more than sixty others with significant opportunity to drive the clean energy transition. This five-year initiative (2018–2023) has made real progress in the last two years, including securing major commitments from Duke Energy to reach net-zero emissions by 2050 and to reduce emissions by at least 50 percent by 2030. Several oil and gas companies have agreed to leave problematic U.S. trade associations and set ambitious targets to move towards compliance with the Paris Accords. Many of the companies included on the Carbon Underground 200 and S&P lists are also on the Climate Action 100+ list, which means if MRTI were directed to bypass existing

General Assembly policies and processes, and place these companies on the Divestment/Proscription List, MRTI's ability to lead in this influential initiative and represent the PC(USA)'s unique voice in these corporate engagement would be nonexistent.

Finally, Recommendation 3.b. of Item 02-17 directs "PMA to be in conversation with presbyteries whose members are most dependent on the fossil fuel industry, in order to discern ways that we can support them as our society transitions away from our dependence on fossil fuels and jobs are inevitably lost." This language is duplicative as the PMA, through MRTI, in accordance with Criterion #5 and Criterion #7 of the Divestment Strategy: Principles and Criteria policy, has already been in close contact with presbyteries and synods that would be impacted by a potential General Assembly divestment decision. As the MRTI response to directive 08-08 outlines: "In September 2018, MRTI sent letters to the leadership of the presbyteries where the focus companies are headquartered, informing them of the General Assembly Directive. A follow-up letter was sent to inform the leadership of the Presbytery of Maumee Valley that Marathon Petroleum, based in their region, had not responded to requests for dialogue. MRTI sent a final communication to leadership of the Presbytery of Maumee Valley, the Presbytery of Mission (Valero), and the Presbytery of Grace (Exxon) about the pending divestment recommendations in November 2019. MRTI members and staff held fifteen meetings and presentations with mid councils (including Grace, Mission, and Maumee Valley presbyteries) that would be affected by possible divestment recommendation between October 2018 and November 2019."

Additionally, MRTI, through ecumenical partnerships, is involved in discernment around just transition in the energy sector.

REAC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-017

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-017—From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee.

The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) disapprove Item 02-017.

Given the nature of our polity and our commitment to social justice, REAC strongly disapproves this resolution. The PC(USA)'s polity is grounded in committee work to allow for deliberate examination of issues, enable diverse voices to be heard, and ensure that power is not centralized. The work of social justice depends on voices that have long been silenced be heard on all matters. If special committees and task forces are eliminated, then people with power and of the majority culture will have more access to the decision-making process. Financial reasons for eliminating and/or disregarding programs and policies that affect people of color continue to be an excuse to prevent people of color and communities of color from obtaining any degree of equity. Therefore, we again strongly disapprove this resolution.

Item 02-018

Not assigned.

Item 02-019

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 308.]

Approval of the Theological Rationale for Interreligious/Interfaith Relationships as an Official Statement of the PC(USA)—From the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations.

The General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve the Theological Rationale for Interreligious/Interfaith Relationships as an official statement of the PC(USA):

Theological Rationale for Interreligious/Interfaith Relationships

The 221st General Assembly (2014) offered "The Interreligious Stance of the PC(USA)" to Presbyterians who sought concrete tools to guide them in developing interfaith relationships. That document was built on a series of foundational statements to guide us as we build relationships with those of other religious traditions, which can be summarized as follows:

1. We work with others because of our sure faith that the church, through the power of the Spirit, is a sign and means of God's intention for the wholeness and healing of humankind and of all creation.
2. We seek to develop relationships with people of various faiths in ecumenical and interfaith contexts wherever possible.

3. We approach others in a spirit of openness and trust as we follow Jesus Christ in respecting and affirming the freedom of others.
4. We are called by God to work with those of other religions for peace, justice, and the sustainability of creation.
5. We strive for a humble modesty in witness that recognizes God’s Spirit is at work in unexpected ways.
6. We acknowledge the unfinished nature of our conclusions about relationships with people of different faiths, in recognition of the limits of our knowledge, our sinful nature, and the mystery of God’s workings in human lives.

The General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations (GACEIR) recommends the study of the full Interreligious Stance to all Presbyterians, which directs our focus to “relationships with people rather than traditions—with Muslims rather than Islam, for example” (*Minutes*, 2014, Part I, p. 446; see also page 2, Foundations for the Future) and affirms our interfaith calling while confessing our failures to live up to this commitment.

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) reaffirmed the importance of that document and asked GACEIR to offer a concise theological rationale to help Presbyterians and our friends of other religious traditions better understand the value Presbyterians place on strong interfaith relations.

Our Religiously Pluralistic Context:

Presbyterians in the United States recognize that we are woven into a web of multicultural and religiously diverse relationships. We understand our religiously pluralistic culture as a gift from God. Interfaith marriages are common in our society, and “one-in-five U.S. adults were raised in interfaith homes” (*Pew Foundation Research 10/26/2016*). Ask many Presbyterians who are older adults how many of them grew up in an interfaith family, and almost none of them will raise their hands. Ask the same group how many of their grandchildren and great-grandchildren are doing so and many of them will. Many of us have close friends from other religious traditions.

Further, some Presbyterians themselves embody multiple religious identities. For example, some Native Americans who were forced to accept Christianity in mission schools are embracing practices that also allow them to honor their native traditions. Similarly, some African Americans for whom Christianity was imposed by slaveholders now seek to uncover their family’s spiritual roots in other traditions. Others, often raised by parents of different traditions, find meaningful ways to engage the traditions and ceremonies of more than one tradition.

We recognize that the movement of the Spirit is deep and mysterious. Within our Christian family there have been multiple and varied experiences of the Holy. For example, the Desert Fathers and Mothers removed themselves entirely from human community to experience the Spirit in profound and uninterrupted ways. Today, as throughout our history, many Presbyterians explore spiritual practices that enrich our own experience of the Holy, even as we remain centered in the Triune God through our reformed heritage, liturgy, scriptural grounding, and a shared witness for justice.

Our relationships with those of other traditions and even the ways in which some Presbyterians carry multiple religious identity, are signs that the cultural dominance of traditional mainline Protestantism that we once took for granted is largely a thing of the past. Far from lamenting this loss, we in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) choose to embrace our current moment as a gift from God that has the potential to enrich and expand our ability to more fully understand the indescribable nature of God.

Our Interfaith Calling:

All human beings and all of God’s creation have intrinsic worth. We are all bearers of the image of God, and we share a common humanity. We understand others not as the objects of our mission or service, but instead as co-receivers with us of God’s love. We enter interfaith relationships on the basis of God’s universal love, affirmed throughout the Bible. The Interreligious Stance insists on this critical foundation:

- “And teachings abound: all humans are made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26–27), all have access to God through God’s covenant with Noah (Genesis 9:8–17), strangers are to be treated with hospitality (Leviticus 19:33–34), and God has province over all the nations (which the Psalms tell us repeatedly, e.g. Psalm 47:8)” (*Minutes*, 2014, Part I, p. 446; see also Foundations for the Future) page 1).

- “God loves all people—and we are to do likewise” (Ibid. page 1). Christ’s command is to “love God and love your neighbor as yourself” (Mt. 22:37, 39) (Ibid., page 7).

Further, scriptural references to instances in which God’s people have been pushed beyond previously understood definitions of who belonged to the family of God are too numerous to fully exhaust. It is worthwhile to remember the tent of welcome created by Abraham and Sarah (Genesis 18), Jesus’ encounter with the Roman Centurion, Peter’s eye-opening relationship with Cornelius (Acts 10), and Paul’s respectful address to the nonbelievers at Areopagus (Acts 17) as clear examples that we are re-walking ancient paths.

These examples set the standard for all our relationships. The fullest expression of our love for God takes place in those moments when we engage, understand, and befriend others in mutual relationship, whether they are Christian, profess another religious faith, or do not identify with any religious tradition.

As Presbyterians, a central tenet of our Christian identity is the call we experience from God to reach across lines of religious difference to build loving, healthy and respectful relationships with those who understand their spiritual paths differently than we do. We do so fully confident that the God who calls us into these relationships will provide the opportunity both to bear witness—and to receive witness—to God’s love.

Our Transformation through Mission Engagement:

Many in our churches, both historically and in the present moment, have built personal relationships with Presbyterian mission co-workers, young adult volunteers, international peacemakers, and global interfaith partners itinerated by the PC(USA). Those encounters shape our understanding of interfaith engagement in powerful ways. Presbyterian missionaries have often reported that as they engaged people outside the Christian tradition, they found God already present there. This has often awakened in them a new understanding of God. Many report that their humility in the missionary task has grown even as their zeal for witnessing to the Good News of the Gospel remained stronger than ever.

For example, based on their own experiences of interfaith encounter, the missionary delegates to Commission IV of Edinburgh in 1910 were clearly wrestling with new understandings when they wrote about “the inward transformations that are in process in the mind of the missionary, the changes of perspective, the softening of wrong antagonisms, the centralizing and deepening of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the growth of the spirit of love to the brethren [sic] and to the world” [*World Missionary Conference 1910*, Vol. 4.].

A full century later, the writers of the Interreligious Stance meeting at Stony Point Center wrestled with similar questions as they grappled with the ways in which our mission impulse to share the Good News has been too tightly bound up with forces of colonization and unquestioned systems of white supremacy, and confessed that we too often understand ourselves either in isolation from or in opposition to—rather than in relation with—people of other faiths and ideologies.

In spite of the many structural and political forces that polarize us and create fear of one another, Presbyterians have a great opportunity to engage both cultural and religious differences through our personal relationships. In 2013, the Assembly of the World Council of Churches recognized the complexity of the task of mission and evangelism with the passage of a document called “Together Towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes.” Delegates to that assembly affirmed that “authentic mission makes the ‘other’ a partner in, not an ‘object’ of mission” (Paragraph 93). “Evangelism entails not only proclamation of our deepest convictions, but also listening to others, and being challenged and enriched by others (Acts 10)” (Paragraph 95).

Much of our engagement with those of other traditions occurs where we find common cause to work together for justice and peace in our local communities and around the world. As we do so, both our ecumenical and our interfaith partners offer a remarkable gift to us as they help us to discern where our understanding of the gospel has been captive to cultural misconceptions and bias.

To Be Presbyterian Is to Be Open to Others:

Ultimately, Presbyterians believe that positive interfaith relationships are characterized by openness to and deep relationships with people of other faiths and ideologies under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. This openness is simultaneously a bold and humble expression of the PC(USA)’s “joyful participation in Christ’s ongoing life and work” (*Book of Order*, F-1.0201).

In G-5.01, the *Book of Order* refers to the interfaith commitment of the PC(USA), including our secular relations, under the heading of “Ecumenical Commitment.” In our time, it might easily be retitled “Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations and Commitments,” in which Presbyterians affirm that we will “be open to and will seek opportunities for respectful dialogue and mutual relationships with entities and persons from other religious traditions. It does this in the faith that the church of Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit, is a sign and means of God’s intention for the wholeness of all humankind and all creation.”

Interfaith Relationships Are a Gift from God:

Presbyterians affirm that building interfaith relationships is deeply enriching and spiritually essential. The more we appreciate diversity as a gift from God, the greater our understanding of our responsibility for self-examination, repentance for the mistakes we have made, and humility as we share our religious story and convictions with others. As we commit to that work, we are likely to discover mysteries of God heretofore hidden from us, and experience the movement of the Holy Spirit in new and surprising ways.

As we build stronger relationships with all of God's people, many Presbyterians are discovering that God is far greater than we imagined. We are learning to be open to difference without understanding it as a threat, and to approach each interaction with the assumption that God is at work among us, offering an opportunity to draw closer to a more complete understanding of the unknowable face of God. These encounters are clearly a gift from God, offering Presbyterians the opportunity to strip away assumptions of bias that have colored our reading of the Bible and limited our understanding of who God is. Where we have historically been bound by power dynamics related to race, class, sexual identity, gender roles, and national and Christian hegemony, we now find ourselves reaching beyond what we think we know as we strive for our own moment of transfiguration—an experience of God that is ultimately both not fully describable and entirely transformational. As God opens our eyes to new possibilities, we learn that our transformation is a never-ending journey of discovery. There is always more to experience and to understand as we cross lines of religious and all other kinds of difference. God is never finished with us.

The Challenge of Interfaith Relationships:

The PC(USA) Evangelism document “Turn to the Living God” section on “Peoples of Many Religions,” 203rd General Assembly (1991) reads, “As our Christian affirmation meets the faith of others, we are not called to respond in judgment but in awareness of the limitless, saving presence, power, and grace of God” (*Minutes*, 1991, Part 1, p. 676).

When we demonstrate our own conviction without defensiveness or aggression, and invite others to do the same, God often surprises us. When we allow ourselves to be vulnerable and to honestly expose our deepest struggles, God almost always surprises us. Together, in all our relationships, we share pain and we share joy. Together, we are transformed in the process.

The hardest part of building intentionally interfaith relationships is often to affirm those things we hold dear while reaching out to others with genuine openness. God's mysteries are never wholly revealed to God's people, who must rely on the leadings of the Holy Spirit for guidance. Presbyterians know that we can never fully comprehend the mind of God. This conviction prepares us to enter into relationships with others with an open heart, prepared to learn from them and to share our experience of the Holy Spirit, which guides us and holds us steady in this sacred work.

We are called to enter into this work with our eyes wide open. There are people killing one another over matters of religious difference in our world today, and the flames that fuel conflict between us are often fanned by those who stand to gain by our divisions. Many in our Presbyterian family around the world, as well as many immigrants who are members of our churches, have experienced what it means to be threatened as a religious minority. We strive to honor the stories of those Presbyterians. Similarly, we strive to hear and respect the stories of interfaith sisters and brothers who share their own experience of violence in the midst of Christian dominant cultures.

As we confess our brokenness and complicity in situations and structures of violence, we recommit ourselves to break down barriers of division and mistrust with interfaith partners in our religiously pluralistic context in the United States. This task is more important than ever in our increasingly polarized society, and it lays the foundation for our strong commitment to confront Islamophobia, anti-Jewishness, and all manner of behaviors that isolate, dehumanize, or oppress others.

Yet another challenge in our interfaith commitment is that our sacred text contains stories and teachings we know to be problematic, especially as we attempt to enter into respectful dialogue with others. Too often, we have rationalized scriptures that legitimate misogyny, slavery, and unhealthy systems of power or oppression. Too often, we have not challenged ourselves to rethink biblical passages that seem to advocate violence and even genocide toward those of other traditions. We are grateful to biblical scholars today who help us understand these passages in ways that seem new to us and challenge our assumptions, pushing us to better understand the context in which they were written and the way that they would have been understood in the time that they were written.

Presbyterians place the authority and guidance of scripture at the center of our lives. As we do so, we recognize that God's people have always been imperfect, and we remain so today. This is a hallmark of our reformed faith. We acknowledge and confess the damage that we have done to others in our enthusiasm to share the Good News of the Gospel. We commit ourselves to a non-defensive examination of our complicity with systems of white supremacy and colonization that color all of our relationships—especially with those of other religious traditions. As we forge new relationships with our friends and neighbors of other religious traditions, we do so in a spirit of repentance for the times—from biblical times to today—when we have not lived up to our ideals.

The Call to Interfaith Relationships ...

There is nowhere we can go where God is not already present, nor is there anyone we can meet in whom we do not see God. Presbyterians act in faith as we enter into mutual relationships with those who experience God differently than we do. As we do so, we expect to be transformed, even as we share the Good News of the Gospel that has shaped and guided us as a Reformed people for the last four hundred years. We trust in God and find joy and fulfillment as we embrace all of God's family, everywhere and always.

Rationale

This recommendation is in response to the following referral: *2016 Referral: Item 07-06. 17. Develop and Recommend to the Next Meeting of the General Assembly (2018) a Theological Rationale for Interreligious/Interfaith Relationships of the PC(USA).* (Minutes, 2016, Part I, p. 448)

This rationale builds on the Interfaith Stance of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) approved at the 221st General Assembly (2014). The General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations (GACEIR) invited further response and reflections from stakeholders within the PCUSA (2018) as well as our ecumenical and interfaith partners. GACEIR took those responses, together with further conversations with interfaith partners and leaders to create this final report being submitted to the 224th General Assembly (2020).

Item 02-020

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 303.]

Disparities Experienced by Black Women and Girls Task Force Report.

The Disparities Experienced by Black Women and Girls Task Force recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve the following:

1. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) to create educational resources for congregations to learn and interrupt practices and policies that perpetuate the adultification of Black girls and criminalization of adolescent behavior, seeking the advice and input of the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC).

2. Direct the PMA, Office of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Foundation, Board of Pensions, Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., and the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation to invest in training and in identifying trained antiracism facilitators who will provide a geographically accessible and affordable network for congregations and mid councils, and intentionally include gender and gender identity focused on Black women and girls in antiracism and gender justice trainings.

3. Direct the PMA to

a. engage in the work of eradicating systemic violence against Black women and girls in its work throughout all ministry areas;

b. create educational opportunities at denominational gatherings centered on systemic violence as it relates to Black women and girls, seeking the advice and input of ACWC;

c. create opportunities for LGBTQIA+ identified Black clergy to come together for fellowship, education, and mutual support for the work of ministry with a specific focus on trans Black church leadership, recognizing that the PC(USA) does not currently have an ordained or installed openly Black trans minister of Word and Sacrament;

d. offer support and grants for congregations working with Black queer/trans organizations and engaging in work/programming directly addressing the needs of the LGBTQIA+ community;

e. provide resources for making gendered groups safe, spirit-filled places for Black queer and trans women;

f. direct the PMA to join with nonprofit organizations, like Sister Reach (<https://www.sisterreach.org/>), to

(1) provide grants for a core group of Presbyterians from different congregations in various regions in the church to receive sex education and curriculum and inclusive reproductive justice training in order to share information with their local congregations, and

(2) support legislation that actively protects Black queer and trans women/girls and speak out against legislation that harms this community.

4. Direct the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation to

a. develop theology and worship resources for educating congregations in Rites of Passage and a primer/introduction to Black women and other women of color, including biblical and theological studies for lay people (reference the works of Dr. Katie Geneva Cannon);

b. become proactive in finding Black women writers to develop theology, worship, and homiletics books and resources;

c. provide resources for awareness and sensitivity around intersections of race/gender/sexual orientation.

5. Direct Research Services in the PC(USA) to conduct a survey of Presbyterian Black women, including Black clergywomen, about their experiences within the denomination and hold regional focus groups with Black clergywomen conducted by trusted, notable, Black women facilitators, consulting with gender and racial justice staff in the PMA.

6. Direct the Board of Pensions to create opportunities for Black clergywomen to come together for fellowship, education, and mutual support, potentially in its CREDO program.

7. Direct the PMA to continue and to increase its mission engagement efforts and appeals for Presbyterians to

a. support the Dr. Katie Geneva Cannon Scholarship Fund for the purpose of scholarships specifically for women of color to pursue educational studies, including doctoral studies; and

b. increase support for the Legal Defense Fund in the Office of Gender & Racial Justice for the purpose of supporting Black women in achieving racial justice and legal defense.

8. Direct the PMA to continue providing scholarships and financial aid for Master of Divinity students and start providing scholarships for Doctor of Philosophy and Theology students to increase the number of Black Presbyterian women scholars.

9. Acknowledge that the work done in this area is being done by the office with the smallest budget (Office of Gender & Racial Justice in Racial Equity & Women's Ministries in the PMA). Direct the PMA to increase budget support and equity for the Racial Equity & Women's Ministries area in the PMA.

10. Acknowledge the current work being done to end Cash Bail by the Office of the General Assembly, Stated Clerk Dr. J. Herbert Nelson, II, and the Office of Public Witness. Support legislation efforts to end Cash Bail.

11. Acknowledge and celebrate items that the General Assembly of the PC(USA) has passed, which provides for the full inclusion of the LGBTQIA+, including the affirmation of the trans community.

Rationale

This report has been prepared in response to the immediate effects and long-term consequences of interpersonal and institutional violence perpetrated against Black women and girls in U.S. society and in the PC(USA). This intersectional (race/gender) and multidimensional (physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual) violence manifests in dehumanizing expressions of Black womanhood (e.g. pejorative stereotypes) and in theo-political sanctioned and socially accepted practices of disenfranchising (e.g. policing, silencing, making invisible, criminalizing). The dehumanizing tropes are intended to negate Black female identity and the disenfranchising practices serve to restrict Black female access to resources and opportunities otherwise afforded to those who enjoy hegemonic race/gender/sexual privilege. For example, society attributes sex as a natural role to Black women and girls, thus Black girls are stereotyped as hypersexualized.¹ This sexualizing of Black womanhood has its roots in U.S. chattel slavery to absolve White men of raping young Black girls, who were instead cast as evil, lascivious seductresses. The hyper-focus on the Black female body attempts to control Black female access to places/spaces hegemonically determined for "Whites only" and also serves to diminish Black female intellectual abilities and achievements, thereby re-inscribing generalized notions of Black inferiority/White superiority. This continued dehumanization and disenfranchisement of Black women has a deleterious effect upon the overall well-being of Black women, the Black community, and U.S. society as an interconnected communal body of the human family. For members of the household of faith, this dehumanization-disenfranchisement behavior necessitates critical reflection upon ecclesial themes such as theological anthropology (humanity's relationship with the divine and the interrelationship of the human community), upon biblical passages such as love for our sister whom we see, and love for God whom we have not seen (1st John 4:20), and upon theological doctrines and church practices that relegate women to second-class status and an afterthought. Provided herein are the background, recommendations and

rationale, biblical/theological framing, historical and contemporary sociopolitical contexts, and Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) history informing the recommendations of this task force on the five issues highlighted to address the varied concerns about the direct and indirect violence perpetrated against Black women and girls. Included also are select bibliographic resources from which educational materials can be developed to denounce the many and varied gross misunderstandings undergirding the policies and practices affecting this demographic of the American populace and from which the Disparities Experienced by Black Women and Girls Task Force advocates for acceptance of these recommendations.

Rationale

The Disparities Experience by Black Women and Girls Task Force offers recommendations and rationales to the 224th General Assembly (2020) for corrective action specifically to address these five areas of concern: (1) adultification of Black girls, (2) toxic theology/gender equality for Black women in ministry, (3) reproductive justice/human rights, (4) LGBTQIA+ equality, and (5) the elimination of cash bail practices. This report is an invitation to the faithful to take seriously the critical issues confronting Black women and girls in U.S. society and in the PC(USA), and to embody through praxis the words of womanist ethicist, the Reverend Dr. Katie Geneva Cannon, the first Black woman to be ordained in the PC(USA) who reminds us that as stewards charged with the sacred responsibility of justice-praxis for members of our species, our true worship of God is evidenced in a love ethic that is expressed in mutual equality, a process of making genuine, demonstrable, honest-to-goodness right-relating connections with all living things.²

Adultification of Black Girls

The courts have ruled that children have diminished culpability as compared to adults. However, when Black children display what psychological, developmental, and educational theorists have otherwise determined to be “age-appropriate” behavior, different standards of assessment are applied and far more serious consequences can result. For example, when seven- and eight-year old Black siblings fought on an Ohio school bus, both were arrested and taken into custody. Additionally, an eight-year-old Black girl in Illinois was arrested for acting out in 2013; a six-year old Black girl was arrested in Florida in 2012 for having a tantrum; and a twelve-year-old Black girl from Orlando was threatened with expulsion from a Christian Academy in 2013 unless she changed her natural hair style. These behaviors are not uncommon for young school age children. Yet, for young Black girls, arrest and expulsion are extreme, life-altering, life threatening, and no doubt frightening, traumatizing, and all too common outcomes for otherwise typical age-appropriate behaviors. These examples, moreover, demonstrate that Black bodies are routinely policed for adherence to comfortability and conformity to standards of dominant cultural ideals of behavior, beauty, and even place in so-called “White spaces.”

As these few incidents demonstrate, Blacks are perceived differently—as “nonconforming” to some arbitrarily imposed dominant cultural standard and as a “threat” both to White comfortability and to the hegemonic status quo, thereby warranting punishment for such infractions. In fact, repeated research documents an anti-Black bias across disciplines in this country. For example, research conducted at the University of Virginia revealed an anti-Black bias in pain management. Similarly, a 2017 report by Georgetown Law Center on Poverty and Inequality revealed an anti-Black bias against young girls demonstrating age-appropriate behaviors. In the Georgetown report, a mostly White female participant group perceived Black girls ages 5–14 as more adult and thus less innocent of the same childhood activities as their White peers. This age misperception known as “adultification,” assumes Black girls are older than their actual age. Implied in this age misperception is the assumption that Black girls “know better,” which somehow justifies more frequent and even harsher punishments for actual age-appropriate behaviors. As such, Black girls can end up with an expulsion or arrest record for simply engaging in 5-, 10-, and 12-year-old activities. In fact, Black girls frequently experience discipline for subjective reasons such as disobedience/defiance, detrimental behavior, and third-degree assault, and are punished more harshly including suspensions, which are connected to higher dropout rates and increased risk of contact with the juvenile justice system.³ This age mischaracterization leaves Black girls three times more likely to be removed from their homes, to be placed in state custody than their White peers, and to receive more severe dispositions even after accounting for seriousness of offense, prior record, and age.⁴ This age misperception also assumes Black girls “know more” thereby requiring less nurturing, less protecting, less support, and less comfort. As a result, Black girls receive less consoling after a disturbing incident, have less access to mentoring relationships, have fewer advocates or defenders on their behalf, and have fewer leadership opportunities.

As adultification of Black girls adversely affects healthy identity formation and risks access to a future unencumbered by false charges, suspensions, etc., the rationale for this recommendation is to bring attention to the problem young Black girls face as a result of adultification, to provide mentoring resources and leadership opportunities to young Black girls in order to counter the adverse effects of adultification, and to heighten personal self-awareness of unconscious race/gender biases in perpetuating this practice.

Toxic Theology/Gender Equality in Ministry

According to Dr. Katie Cannon, it is important to trace the origin and expansion of the church because the same general schemes of oppression remain prevalent and because as life-affirming moral agents, we have a responsibility to study the

ideological hegemony of the past so that we do not remain doomed to the recurring cyclical patterns of the hermeneutical distortions in the present (i.e. violence against women, condemnation of homosexuality, spiritualizing scripture to justify capitalism).⁵ Our rationale, therefore, begins with the toxic theology that dehumanized and disenfranchised Black women in the past and that still informs beliefs and behaviors toward Black women in society and in the church today.

Traditional theological discourse denied all women full fellowship in the human family as image bearers of the living God. In fact, the doctrine of the *imago Dei* has been misinterpreted to benefit male authority and to render women subservient in their defective humanity.⁶ This toxic theology, however, has been particularly problematic for Black women whose God-given identity according to Genesis 1:27 was transformed from image of God to property by a false claim of Blacks as the descendants of Ham cursed by Noah to be servants. Dehumanized and disenfranchised as an inanimate object/commodity, Black women were exploited and abused physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. For example, Black women were exploited sexually for their ability to reproduce human capital and physically for their ability to labor in the field or in the house, both for the purposes of individual and institutional wealth-building of colonial powers. History records that White men physically raped Black women to increase the cash crop of enslaved Black bodies. Yet history overlooks that White women mentally and emotionally raped Black women via verbal assaults. White women beat and killed Black women in ways so disturbing that historians judged White women barbaric.¹ The planation legend nevertheless enveloped White mistresses in an aura of light and vulnerability, goodness and agreeableness.¹ In fact, White women emerged from the slaveholding era as the epitome of gentle, virtuous womanhood, and a standard-bearer to which Black women are expected to acquiesce.

As chattel, Black women were not recognized as human theologically, socially, or legally, nor were they narrators of their own story. As such, they were pejoratively characterized as promiscuous, foreboding, strong, bad, and angry. Unflattering media images of Black womanhood have been popularized: Aunt Jemima—an overweight, unattractive, asexual; Sapphire—a loud, overbearing, emasculating, angry woman; Tragic Mulatta—a self-hating biracial representative of empire/empire building; Welfare Queen—the castrating matriarch who bilks hardworking White taxpayers; and Topsy—the lazy, mischievous, child-like, Black who must be watched at all times. Not one of these depictions of Black femininity in the hegemonic imagination is entitled to sociopolitical protection, legislative defense, or even sympathy, unlike White women who, as Brittney Cooper observes, the whole world rises in defense of their tears.⁷ The reimagining of Black humanity into property that can be placed in the house or in the field just as someone places a vase or a cup of sweet tea from the nation’s slaveholding past still informs the theo-political beliefs and behaviors toward people of African descent as evidenced by the frequent calling of police on Blacks in coffee shops, parks, and Airbnb. In fact, legal scholars note that by every social indicator, racism continues to blight the lives of people of color including holders of high-echelon jobs and police-community encounters serve as daily reminders.⁸

Contemporary racism manifests interpersonally, institutionally, and insidiously as microaggressions, defined as routine experiences that Blacks experience as racist, but appear normal to the dominant culture. For Black women, microaggressions manifest in overt and covert ways including: sexualizing, excluding, policing, silencing, erasing, appropriating their intellectual contributions without attribute, and the presumption of knowing/staying in “our” place lest police are called for sitting, walking, driving, or barbecuing while Black reminiscent of the Jim/Jane Crow segregation laws that dictated where Black bodies could eat, sit, swim, relieve themselves, or be buried. Womanist scholar, Kelly Douglas Brown, assesses this normative White gaze toward Blacks noting, the moment the Black body steps out of its chattel space, it is an imminent threat to cherished White property.⁹ The traditional raced/gendered theology and sociopolitical practices necessitated a nuanced response. Pioneering Black women created womanist discourse that was by/for/about Black women in order to counter the inherited toxic theology characterized by the Reverend Dr. Katie Cannon as the substantial omission of Black women from theological discourse from male theologians using analytical concepts and frameworks that take the male experience as the norm.¹⁰

The effects of U.S. chattel slavery still linger—yielding racist/sexist oppression that requires sacred spaces for Black women to share experiences and to support one another in the ministerial journey. They also need resources to educate themselves and the community about healthy ways to respond to routine microaggressions, and to expand their knowledge of the contributions of persons of color, Black feminists, womanists, and Black LGBTQIA+ scholarship. Thus, the rationale for highlighting this issue is to give voice to the dehumanizing and disenfranchising experiences of Black women in U.S society and in the PC(USA) and to provide resources and collaborative opportunities to enhance their personal and professional ministerial presence, consistent with womanist interpretive lens, an effective but underused pedagogy pioneered by the Reverend Dr. Katie Geneva Cannon and others.

Reproductive Justice

Reproductive justice encompasses the human right not to have a child, the right to have a child and to parent a child in a safe and healthy environment, and the right to have access to needed resources (i.e. quality medical care to ensure a healthy birth and to a living wage to materially meet the needs of the childrearing). Access to resources is justified on the grounds that safe, dignified fertility management, childbirth, and parenting constitute a fundamental human right. Reproductive justice also recognizes transgender concerns since the definitions of womanhood, birthing, and mothering do not fit neatly into the male-female binary.¹¹ In fact, some trans people have abortions, use birth control, and give birth.¹²

Reproductive justice has roots in the nation’s colonizing past. During U.S. chattel slavery, Black women’s forced sexual intercourse increased the cash crop of enslaved Black bodies for capitalist gain. Once these offspring no longer increased the wealth of slave-owning Whites, laws were enacted to encourage the sterilization of poor Black women. Medicaid actually paid for the sterilizations of poor women up to 150,000 annually; in fact, in 1980 a disproportionate number of the 700,000 sterilizations performed were on women of color.¹³ Moreover, thirteen states attempted to pass laws sterilizing women for having too many children while receiving day-care, housing assistance, welfare, or Medicaid.¹⁴ Today, “dog-whistle politics” enable politicians to attack select segments of the population using code words (e.g. thug, anchor baby, and welfare queen) rather than explicit racist/sexist language to refer to Black males, Latino/a, black women, and to misinform the masses. For example, despite the racialized stereotype of teen pregnancy as a Black phenomenon, White teenage pregnancy rates are rising in states that mandate the toughest restrictions on sex education, birth control, and abortion access.¹⁵

Thus while the rationale for addressing reproductive justice is to provide sex education, curriculum inclusive reproductive justice to Black women, the entire Presbyterian community would benefit in knowing the history of and evolving advocacy on reproductive justice, rights and resources available, sexual health and well-being, and to become better informed about agencies and other resources providing programming on this topic.

Intersection of Race, Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation

PC(USA)’s position is to welcome all gender identities into church membership. However, we still live in a society where people choose to cherry pick biblical texts to justify excluding full participation of LGBTQIA+ persons in the household of faith, gainful employment, marriage, parenthood, and even the purchase of a wedding cake (e.g. Masterpiece Cakeshop). In fact, the LGBTQIA+ community remains under sociopolitical and theological assault. In 2016, North Carolina passed legislation requiring trans people to use bathrooms corresponding to the gender on their birth certificate. In December 2019, the Trump administration removed sexual orientation from the antidiscrimination policy of the Interior Department.¹⁶ And in 2020, United Methodists are proposing a church split over LGBTQIA+ inclusion. These ongoing assaults on the personhood, sexual identity, and human rights of LGBTQIA+ persons necessitate training about the many and varied issues affecting their daily lives. For example, trans people report harassment and discrimination and a general lack of competence about trans healthcare issues.

LGBTQIA+ youth contemplate suicide at three times the rate of heterosexual youth and harassment or abuse increases the likelihood of self-harm. Black women were 91 percent of transgender and gender nonconforming people killed by violence. Nearly half (47 percent) of Black transgendered people have been incarcerated, a rate that is 10–15 percentage points higher than the rate for all Black folk,¹⁷ and 15 percent of trans people live on less than \$10,000/year, a rate of poverty that is four times the national average.¹⁸

Contemporary dehumanization and disenfranchisement practices affecting Black LGBTQIA+ persons are rooted in colonial experiences where the enslaved, male and female, were objectified, sexualized, and raped. While rape was a common method of torture used by White slavers to subdue recalcitrant Black women,¹⁹ White males also raped Black males as a show of hegemonic domination. This practice known as “buck busting” was done publicly, as a means of demonstrating social control over and humiliating Black males. Through these and other forced acts of humiliating genital exposure (e.g. scant clothing, forced intercourse via breeding farms, nakedness on auction blocks), Blacks learned to be ashamed of their bodies and of their sexuality. Adding toxic masculine theology via misappropriation of biblical contexts to inherited body shaming and a sociopolitical context that assaults the personhood, sexual identity and human rights of the LGBTQIA+ further dehumanizes and disenfranchises members of this community. Educational resources must be provided to assist LGBTQIA+ persons and allies in understanding sexual identity and in securing safe spaces, job support, healthcare, etc. This recommendation for LGBTQIA+ equality is intended for that purpose.

Cash Bail and Legal Support

The Supreme Court ruled in *Bearden v. Georgia* that punishing someone for poverty violated the equal protection clause. Therefore, an indigent defendant cannot be jailed for an inability to pay fines unless s/he willfully refuses. Nevertheless, to retrieve funding shortfalls caused by the Reagan administration tax cuts, municipalities across the country use public policies that target poor children, women, and homeless. For example, public policies require “resource officers” to be placed into public schools, many with “zero-tolerance policies” causing children to be arrested for age-appropriate behavior rather than reprimanded or respected for difference. There are public policies that target poor women who can be evicted for calling 911 too many times for relief from domestic violence situations, and that target the homeless for public urination and for sleeping outdoors.²⁰ Today, poor people’s inability to pay the bloated fines and fees criminalize poverty in an unwinnable cycle,²¹ and increases the likelihood that persons plead guilty to crimes they did not commit just to get out of jail. Guilty pleas generate revenue (e.g. for-profit prisons, food servicing, etc.), but also creates other problems (i.e. housing, employment, etc.) for the incarcerated and their families. Moreover, cash bail practices increase the likelihood of conviction if the case goes to trial and increases the likelihood of false confessions in order to be released. In fact, Georgetown law professor, Peter Edelman, reports that 50 percent of defendants not detained before trial over a ten-year period were convicted versus 92 percent of those who

had been detained and that clients take a plea in order to get out rather than fight the case while sitting in jail, even if they have a great defense or are totally innocent.²²

Due to widespread policing of Black bodies and the illegal enactment of stop and frisk policies across the country, cash bail practices adversely affects Blacks at a higher rate than other demographics and necessitates intentional, well-researched education by dedicated advocates. For example, African Americans are detained at rates nearly five times greater than Whites and at cost of \$9 billion per year.²³ In fact, between 2000 and 2014, local jail populations grew by 19.8 percent with pretrial detention accounting for 95 percent of that growth.²⁴

Cash bail practices destroy lives, cause job loss, separate families, and even kills. The highly publicized Sandra Bland case is a tragic example of this policy. Neither she nor her family had \$500 bail for an alleged “routine” traffic stop. She was jailed and found dead in her cell three days later. Her experience and that of untold thousands like Ms. Bland demand attention and revocation of this cash bail practice.

Presbyterian History

The Presbyterian church has a complicated history with Blacks in America. For example, Presbyterians, like Methodists and Baptists, were on both sides of the enslavement debate. Although both slavery and the institution’s most vocal critics were denounced at the 1850 assembly, the church eventually split. The Presbyterian church was again divided participation in and support of Blacks during the 1960s Civil Rights Movement. According to Frederick Heuser, many Presbyterians supported peaceful civil rights protests, but many did not.²⁵ In addition, Heuser adds:

The 1950s and 1960s were decades when Presbyterians, like Americans in general, had to come to terms with the racism that had been deeply embedded in American society since the founding of the United States. That racism assumed a new level in the years following the American Civil War. Despite the passage of the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments to the U.S. constitution, the concept of separate but equal affirmed by the Supreme Court in the landmark *Plessy v. Ferguson* case of 1896 became a part of the American mindset and legal landscape. Interestingly, Associate Supreme Court Justice John M. Harlan, a Presbyterian, had argued against the majority decision in the *Plessy* case, claiming the constitution as colorblind.²⁶

In 1983, with the reunification of the northern and southern branches, Black Presbyterians faced questions of cultural differences, identity, and ethnic-specific missions. Over the years, various committees have been charged with examining and instrumental in informing the Presbyterian church family of challenges uniquely faced by its Black membership. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) again stands at a crossroads as America is sharply divided over race, gender, and sexuality. PC(USA) must choose on which side of history she stands on these issues that sociopolitically and theologically adversely affect Black women and girls—like New School Abolitionists forging a path forward for the poor, dehumanized, and disenfranchised and thus embracing the recommendations of this task force or like others of that bygone era that concluded any further action would not be for the edification of the church.²⁷

Appendix 1

Select Bibliographic Resources

Following is a partial listing of scholarly resources that were used in the preparation of this report and that can be used to develop educational material to address the five issues of concern highlighted in this report.

Althaus-Reid, Marcella. *Indecent Theology: Theological Perversions in Sex, Gender and Politics*. New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2000.

Cannon, Katie Geneva. “Intellectual Faith Practitioners: African American Theological Education in the Twentieth-First Century.” In *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, 2012, 32(1), 17–24.

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02 RECOMMENDED REFERRALS TO THE 225TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2022)

Douglas, Kelly Brown. *Sexuality and the Black Church: A Womanist Perspective*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1999.

Edelman, Peter. *Not a Crime to Be Poor: The Criminalization of Poverty in America*. New York: The New Press, 2017.

Epstein, Rebecca, Jamilia J. Blake and Thalia González. *Girlhood Interrupted: The Erasure of Black Girls' Childhood*. Washington: Georgetown Law Center on Poverty and Inequality, 2017.

Gonzalez, Michelle A. *Created in God's Image: An Introduction to Feminist Theological Anthropology*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2007.

Hattery, Angela J. and Earl Smith. *Policing Black Bodies: How Black Lives Are Surveilled and How to Work for Change*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018. <https://www.hrc.org/resources/a-national-epidemic-fatal-anti-trans-violence-in-the-united-states-in-2019>.

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Ross, Loretta J. and Rickie Solinger. *Reproductive Justice: An Introduction*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2017.

Wilmore, Gayraud. *Black and Presbyterian: The Heritage and The Hope*. Louisville: Witherspoon Press, 2006.

Endnotes

1. Rebecca Epstein, Jamilia J. Blake, Thalia González. *Girlhood Interrupted: The Erasure of Black Girls' Childhood*. (Washington: Georgetown Law Center on Poverty and Inequality, 2017), 5.
2. Katie G. Cannon. "Intellectual Faith Practitioners: African American Theological Education in the Twentieth-First Century." In *Journal of the Interdenominational Theological Center*, Spring 2012, 23.
3. Epstein et al, 9.
4. Epstein et al, 12.
5. Katie Geneva Cannon. *Katie's Canon: Womanism and the Soul of the Black Community* (New York: Continuum, 2003), 46.
6. Michelle Gonzalez. *Created in God's Image: An Introduction to Feminist Theological Anthropology* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2007), 168.
7. Brittney Cooper. *Eloquent Rage* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2018), 175.
8. Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic. *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction* (New York: New York University Press, 2017), 12.
9. Kelly Brown Douglas. *Stand Your Ground: Black Bodies and the Justice of God* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2015), 116–17.
10. Cannon, *Katie's Canon*, 127.
11. Loretta J. Ross and Rickie Solinger. *Reproductive Justice: An Introduction* (Oakland: University of California, 2017), 196.
12. Ross and Solinger, 197.
13. Ross and Solinger, 51.
14. Ross and Solinger, 50.
15. Ross and Solinger, 177.
16. https://www.huffpost.com/entry/sexual-orientation-interior-department-ethics-guidelines_n_5dff99e3e4b0b2520d0ca480.
17. Angela J. Hattery and Earl Smith, *Policing Black Bodies: How Black Lives Are Surveilled and How to Work for Change*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018, 147.
18. Hattery and Smith, 148.
19. bell hooks. *Ain't I a Woman? Black Woman and Feminism* (Boston: South End Press, 1981), 18.
20. Peter Edelman. *Not a Crime to Be Poor: The Criminalization of Poverty in America* (New York: The New Press, 2017), xiv.
21. Edelman, xvii.
22. Edelman, 50–51.
23. Edelman, 46–47.
24. Edelman, 49.
25. Frederick J. Heuser. "Presbyterians and the Struggle for Civil Rights." In *Journal of Presbyterian History*, Spring/Summer 2012, 90(1):8.
26. Heuser, 8.

27. Hugh Davis, "The New York Evangelist, New School Presbyterians and Slavery, 1837–1857." In *American Presbyterians*, Vol. 68, No. 1 (Spring 1990), 15.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-020

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-020—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP),

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) to approve this report.

As this report's recommendations reflect, the church is in need of a more robust approach in its advocacy for ending the oppression of Black women and girls. Having a short-term study helps balance prior attention by the church to the situation of young Black men and boys, although the history of uneven or limited funding for these efforts should be cautionary, and the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee may be able to complement ongoing program work overall. This report has an intentionality around education, resources, and prophetic voice that leans into the future of what our denomination could be and how we as people of faith move ourselves into the work of dismantling systems of oppression. Partnering with grassroots organizations as well as "supporting legislation that actively protects Black queer and trans women/girls" offers holistic organizing and ecumenical partnerships that can serve as an example to the larger church.

Specific funding requests are often seen as the province of those with program responsibility, while General Assembly commissioners are to focus primarily on policy direction. In the pandemic context in which this is written, however, with its disproportionate impact on communities of color, the report's direct approach may be helpful. There are a number of antiracism programs in the Presbyterian Mission Agency, above all the Matthew 25 initiative, but none seem to be enacting the kind of bold work the report proposes.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-020

Advice and Counsel on Item 2-020—From the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC)

The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) to approve Item 02-20.

Black girls are overrepresented along the entire exclusionary school discipline system, including, but not limited to, suspension, expulsion, referrals to law enforcement, and arrest. Across the nation, girls of color have described experiencing discipline in response to their expressions, presentation, and/or identity, instead of in response to an actual threat to school safety.¹

According to the most recent U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights Data, Black girls are seven times more likely to be suspended from school, and four times more likely to be arrested on school campus. Punitive practices and policies in schools fuel systemic inequities and outcomes based on race and gender and have profound consequences for Black girls: rather than promote safety and well-being, these practices disproportionately push Black girls out of school and further into the margins. Black girls who have been subject to punitive school policies and practices are at an increased risk of coming in contact with the juvenile and criminal courts and leaving school altogether, ultimately impeding their ability to achieve future success and lead successful and healthy lives.²

To this end, the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns urgently requests that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 02-20.

Endnotes

1. Monique W. Morris, *Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in Schools* (New York: The New Press, 2016).
2. Ibid

OGA COMMENT ON ITEM 02-020

Office of the General Assembly Comment on Item 02-020, Recommendation 2.

COGA has recommended that this item be referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). However, should the assembly determine that this item of business is core and critical to our governance and sustainability, and needs to be considered by the 224th General Assembly (2020), OGA provides this comment.

Training materials, frames, approaches, and opportunities within and outside of the Office of the General Assembly, and those done in collaboration with other agencies of the church, regularly include gender, gender identity, and Black women and

girls in their content and consideration. Educational approaches seek to be antiracist and reject centering whiteness and White supremacy. OGA is responsible for and to a connectional church structure that is ecclesial, ecumenical, and constitutional. The *Book of Order* invests an accountability function for councils regarding their implementation plans for inclusion and equity in committees on representation. While the Constitution requires attention to diversity and inclusion in every council above session (G-3.0103), it does not require the same approach in every setting. Any assembly directive that seeks to do so defies the realities of contemporary church and society.

While all agencies are responsible to work on these issues internally, it is well beyond the purpose or mission of any of them to identify facilitators for congregations and mid councils to do the same. The OGA is not resourced adequately to take this task up and would be challenged logistically to maintain such a network. There are resources in church and society (not accessible to all geographic areas and not necessarily affordable) and while it may be possible to provide a clearinghouse function (gathering a list that is made public), vetting persons and organizations to ensure “a geographically accessible and affordable network” for councils below the General Assembly level is beyond staff capacities. Ecumenical cooperation is another resource in this kind of resourcing, as we are not unique in our demographic realities and the need for more education and praxis in antiracism and its intersecting isms. Every church setting is called to uphold the foundational principles including those for unity in diversity (F-1.0403).

Regular resourcing of equity and inclusion work denomination-wide is included in mid council newsletters, trainings, workshops in national and regional events, consultations, and coaching provided for leaders and groups.

Current OGA work:

- Trouble the Water (a series of four short films and curricula on antiracism targeted to PC(USA) structures/functions). Episodes are titled: Why Church? Why Now?; Whiteness; Racial Identity; and Intersectionality and Disruption. The series was developed by OGA and PMA and will be available for release in 2020.

- EQUIP modules (anticipated 2020) are being built for the Equity and Representation office in the areas of disability concerns (Disability and the Way of Jesus), antiracism/anti-oppression materials for applications in denominational life (Trouble the Water), and general equity and inclusion skills. Equip is accessed at <http://equip.pcusa.org>.

REAC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-020

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-020—From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee.

The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) to approve Item 02-020.

The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee strongly advises the approval of the report. Martin Luther King Jr. prophetically proclaimed, “injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.” Black women and girls experience injustice daily, and we the church must answer our call to dismantle this injustice and inequity.

Item 02-021

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 308.]

Recommendations from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) direct the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation to do the following:

1. Continue its churchwide gifts program, as well as utilize the Foundation’s subsidiary, New Covenant Trust Company, N.A., for the benefit of churches, church organizations, and individuals who wish to use the foregoing to make gifts as an expression of Christian faith and stewardship.

2. Explore and initiate ways to enhance its expertise and capacity in support of planned and deferred giving (including wills emphasis) and to explore the services of New Covenant Trust Company, N.A., that will allow these programs and entities to be ever more effective contributors toward the fulfillment of the Great Commission for the Glory of God.

3. Continue to explore and cultivate the growing number of national and worldwide ecumenical partner and business relationships consistent with the mission of the PC(USA) and the General Assembly’s commitment to the Lund principle, to further advance the Presbyterian Foundation’s & New Covenant Trust Company’s (NCTC’s) work to serve the church in ministry and mission.

4. Continue its research and work to lead and encourage Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) congregations, mid councils, and other ministries, by continuing to learn and promote best practices and provide support in the areas of wealth transfer and church property issues.

5. As donors increasingly ask for more transparency from the mission and ministry organizations they support, continue the Foundation's commitment to focus on its fiduciary obligation to ensure funds are used in accordance with donor intent.

Rationale

General Foundation Work

Each General Assembly, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation trustees ask the General Assembly to endorse the Foundation's work in support of mission and ministry throughout the church. This unbroken series of affirmations allows the Foundation to confidently pursue its ministry among congregations, presbyteries, synods, related organizations, and individual Presbyterians. General Assembly validation of our vital work on behalf of mission and ministry is essential to our effectiveness throughout the church.

Directed Research and Work

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) acknowledged that the Presbyterian Foundation has begun inquiry into financial sustainability to better ensure the ministries and missions to which the PC(USA) is called have adequate resource available to them in the future. In urging further work in that area of study, the General Assembly specifically urged, among other things, that data be gathered from sources such as investment income, giving opportunities, bequests, property sales, etc. In response to this, the Presbyterian Foundation has collaborated with the Presbyterian Mission Agency to engage professional research services to better understand the gathering of assets in two key areas: (1) intergenerational wealth transfer and (2) church property issues.

Intergenerational Transfer of Wealth

The massive transfer of personal wealth now underway is occasioned by the maturing and passing of the Baby Boomer generation. Some \$30–\$40 trillion in personal wealth is expected to pass to children and charities over the next fifteen years. Presbyterian demographics are favorable to this opportunity and the Foundation continues to explore best practices and emerging social trends in order to be well-equipped to serve Presbyterians as they craft their own estate plans. Through theological interpretation, educational programming, advisory services, and by offering user-friendly giving vehicles, the Foundation will assist congregations, mid councils, institutions, and national agencies in receiving gifts from the faithful to maintain and expand their mission purposes.

Church Property Issues

Following trends observed in Europe and other U.S. mainline denominations, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) can be expected to dispose of or transfer hundreds of millions of dollars in property over the next ten years. In 2012, the Foundation initiated its program called Project ReGeneration, which has already made efforts to assist congregations and mid councils in developing wise strategies for innovative repurposing of existing properties, and for ensuring that sales proceeds are put to effective mission use. Further significant and careful work will be necessary, as the needs in this area will inevitably increase.

2018–19 New Gifts for Mission

Additionally, as a ministry of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Foundation's efforts to nurture the accumulated resources of Presbyterians to further the mission of the church, call us to grow the resources that support mission giving for the future. New gifts and accounts amounting to more than \$148 million were received over the course of the two-year period.

Resultant Gifts to Mission

More than \$141.3 million was made available for mission and ministry to congregations, mid councils, national agencies, and related entities through the Foundation in 2018–2019. These striking results are a testament to the power of giving witnessed by the Foundation as it lives its goal of bringing people and mission together. Because of the generosity of faithful Presbyterians, over the past decade (2010–2019) the Foundation has made available more than \$635.5 million for the work and mission of the church nationally and around the globe.

Item 02-022

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 307.]

On Recognition That Israel’s Laws, Policies, and Practices Constitute Apartheid Against the Palestinian People—From the Presbytery of Grace.

The Presbytery of Grace overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to do the following:

1. Recognize that Israel’s laws, policies, and practices regarding the Palestinian people fulfill the international legal definition of apartheid. Apartheid is legally defined as inhuman acts committed for the purpose of establishing and maintaining domination by one racial group of persons over any other racial group of persons and systematically oppressing them This occurs in Israel/Palestine through:
 - a. Establishing two sets of laws, one for Israelis and one for Palestinians, which give preferential treatment to Israeli Jews and oppressive treatment to Palestinians,
 - b. Expropriating Palestinian land and water for Jewish-only settlements.
 - c. Denying the right to freedom of residence to Palestinians.
 - d. Dividing the population along racial lines by the creation of separate reserves and ghettos for the Palestinians.
 - e. Denying Palestinians the right to a nationality.
2. Urge members, congregations, presbyteries, and national staff units, including the Office of Interfaith Relations, to seek appropriate ways to bring an end to Israeli apartheid.
3. Direct the Stated Clerk to communicate this action to all other PC(USA) councils.

Rationale

Purpose

This overture is pursued with the hope it will lead to a peaceful reconciliation for the people of Israel and Palestine similar to that which occurred in South Africa when apartheid was internationally acknowledged.

Just thirty years ago there was serious injustice, widespread suffering, and major human rights abuses in South Africa because of apartheid laws, practices, and policies that established a preferential legal status and material privileges to one group of people based on their identity while discriminating against another group based on their inferior status. The favored group received preferential access to land, water, other resources, and to government benefits and services while the disfavored group was confined to ever shrinking non-contiguous territorial enclaves. The peaceful reconciliation of the peoples in South Africa and the creation of a stable political state were accomplished only after the churches and the nations of the world recognized that South Africa’s laws, practices, and policies constituted a crime against humanity In the 1960s South African soccer teams were banned from international soccer competition because of the government’s apartheid policies. A few decades later South Africa hosted the 1995 Rugby World Cup, a remarkable demonstration of the political transformation that can take place when the world recognizes apartheid and a government responds by granting human rights for all people. It is hoped that the Israeli government policies toward the Palestinian people will undergo a similar transformation if Israeli apartheid is internationally acknowledged.

Why Presbyterians Must Act

To solve a problem, one has to honestly recognize and acknowledge that the problem exists. The rationale section of this overture will demonstrate how Israel’s practices towards Palestinians fit the United Nations and World Court definitions of apartheid. As Presbyterians we believe the prophetic mission of the church is to speak the Word of God courageously, honestly, and lovingly in the local context and in the midst of daily life; following the example of Jesus, the church is called to stand alongside the oppressed to help bring about justice, peace, and reconciliation. Christians spoke out in the 1950s against segregation in the United States and later against apartheid in South Africa. They must again raise their voices and condemn Israel’s discrimination against Palestinians and give a name to the crime against humanity that this discrimination represents, the crime of apartheid.

The PC(USA) would not be the first to name Israel's practices as constituting apartheid. As Nobel Peace Prize laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu wrote to the 221st General Assembly (2014) delegates, "I know firsthand that Israel has created an apartheid reality within its borders and through its occupation."

The National Christian Coalition of Christian Organizations in Palestine (NCCOP), in a letter to the World Council of Churches that was formally received and recommended for study by the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the PC(USA), called upon the church to urge "the ending of [Israel's] occupation, Apartheid and discriminations, and accept refugees to return to their home land and properties" (*Minutes*, 2018, Part I, p. 1129).

Many Jewish leaders, both Israeli and American, have similarly named Israel's practices as apartheid. Yossi Sarid, former Israeli Minister of Education, said: "What acts like apartheid, is run like apartheid and harasses like apartheid, is not a duck—it is apartheid. ... What should frighten us, however, is not the description of reality, but reality itself" (2008). Shulamit Aloni, also a former Israeli Minister of Education, said: "Jewish self-righteousness is taken for granted among ourselves to such an extent that we fail to see what's right in front of our eyes. It's simply inconceivable that the ultimate victims, the Jews, can carry out evil deeds. Nevertheless, the state of Israel practices its own, quite violent, form of Apartheid with the native Palestinian population" (2007). Henry Siegman, former director of the American Jewish Congress & Synagogue Council of America, said, "Successive Israeli governments have long sought to preclude the two-state solution. Israel has crossed the threshold from 'the only democracy in the Middle East' to 'the only apartheid regime in the Western world'" (2007). Indeed, a 2012 poll of Israeli Jews found that a majority recognize that Israel practices apartheid. <https://www.haaretz.com/premium-israelis-say-no-vote-to-arabs-if-w-bank-annexed-1.5194145>.

Recent events have only made the situation clearer, most especially with Israel's Nation-State law, passed in 2018, that declares that "The right to exercise national self-determination in the State of Israel is unique to the Jewish people." The Palestinians who have lived there for centuries have no such right.

For too long, too many Americans and Presbyterians have seen the conflict between Israeli Jews and Palestinians through the frame of two peoples who can't get along. This frame is not accurate, and thus not helpful. The core of the conflict is not enmity between two peoples but an unjust structure of power that privileges one group of people over another, a structure that is reflected legally at all levels of society. Following our Palestinian Christian siblings, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, many Israeli Jewish leaders, and the majority of the Israeli Jewish populace, we must name this unjust structure by its most accurate name—apartheid.

2016 General Assembly Assessment of Israel-Palestine Facts on the Ground

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) approved a report entitled "Israel-Palestine: For Human Values in the Absence of a Just Peace" that assessed the situation in the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza. This report was prepared in response to a mandate from the 221st General Assembly (2014) to prepare a report assessing the viability of the two-state solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict. Below are some of the conclusions of Section 1 of this report, which summarizes the facts on the ground in Israel/Palestine.

- Two different sets of laws apply to Jews and non-Jews in East Jerusalem

East Jerusalem, which the Oslo Accords identified as the capital of a future Palestinian state, has been cut off from the rest of the West Bank by Israel's erection of a fortified wall and security checkpoints, keeping out most Palestinians. The Israeli government has annexed all Jerusalem and expanded the city's boundaries to include settlements, while depriving Palestinian residents of citizenship and public services, despite their full payment of taxes to Israel. This claim that Jerusalem is all part of Israel and its united capitol, in violation of international law, made Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem stateless, with tenuous and frequently cancelled permission to continue living in their homes. Systematic land reconfiguration and large, strategic settlements in support of "an exclusionary Jewish Jerusalem" are "marginalizing the other national and religious equities in the city," increasing interreligious tension and contributing to the loss of Christian presence.

- Two different sets of laws apply to Jews and non-Jews living in the West Bank

Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, illegal under international law, have continued to expand in number, territory, and population—now including more than 650,000 settlers. Their location and the roads connecting them (for exclusive Israeli use) hem in Palestinian cities and towns and block time-honored transport connections with each other and with Jerusalem and the wider world. Jewish settlers in the occupied Palestinian territory receive treatment as Israeli citizens under a civil justice system, while Palestinians are under military occupation orders without full citizenship rights and legal protections.

- Two different sets of laws apply to building permits for Jews and non-Jews living in the West Bank

The 650,000 Jewish settlers in the West Bank are living in housing that received permits from Israeli government agencies. Israel issues almost no permits for Palestinian citizens living in the West Bank that is controlled by Israel. The Israeli government routinely destroys Palestinian homes, wells, businesses, and farms in East Jerusalem and most of the West Bank if they are built or repaired without Israeli permits, which are rarely granted. Palestinian property is expropriated for Israeli parks, heritage sites, security zones, and the enclosure wall.

- Two different sets of laws apply to Jewish and Palestinian refugees

Refugees' right of return to their former homes or agreed upon compensation is guaranteed on an individual basis under international law. This right is prohibited for Palestinian refugees. In contrast, Jews from around the world are granted immediate Israeli citizenship when they enter Israel.

- Two different sets of laws apply to the arrest of Jews and non-Jews living in the West Bank

The Israeli military arrests adolescent Palestinians in the night, coerces confessions by threats of indefinite imprisonment, and holds them without trial or access to a lawyer, a translator, or even a parent. Palestinians are often held in Israel where families cannot visit, which violates international law. Palestinians who allegedly pose a threat are often shot on sight. Despite some security cooperation with the Palestinian Authority, the Israeli military frequently conducts incursions into Palestinian areas and conducts constant drone surveillance of Gaza and other Palestinian areas.

- Two different sets of laws apply to access to water by Jews and non-Jews living in the West Bank

Israeli authorities tightly limit the access of Palestinians to water, while assuring that their own citizens and the settlers have full access 24-7. Per capita use of water in 2014 was 183 liters per day in Israel, compared to 73 for Palestinians in the West Bank and a minimum of 100 recommended by the World Health Organization. Palestinians must have permission to drill or deepen wells, which is rarely granted. Many Palestinian towns get water only a few times a week, while nearby Israeli settlements enjoy swimming pools and watered lawns and gardens. Some of the incursions of the wall into West Bank territory seize control of aquifers there. Israeli wells along Gaza's border substantially deplete the safely drinkable water available there.

- Two different sets of laws apply to economic development for Jews and non-Jews living in the West Bank

Economic development in West Bank settlements is encouraged through Israeli state incentives. Economic development for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza suffers from Israeli restrictions that hinder exports of their products, imports of raw material, construction of economic infrastructure, transportation within the West Bank and with other economies, access to internet and other communications, and access to financial services. In Jerusalem and elsewhere, Palestinians cannot enforce contracts and property rights vis a vis settlers. A World Bank study showed that removing such obvious restrictions would allow the West Bank GDP to expand by at least a third.

United Nations and World Court Definition of Apartheid

The 2016 report to the General Assembly assessing the facts on the ground in Israel-Palestine described a situation where there are two different sets of laws that apply to different ethnic groups living in the same geographical area. This is defined as a system of apartheid under international law.

The classification of apartheid as a crime against humanity under international criminal law was made most strongly in the 1973 International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid (U. N. Apartheid Convention), and the 1998 Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (Rome Statute).

The U.N. Apartheid Convention states that the term "crime of apartheid" applies to acts committed for the purpose of establishing and maintaining domination by one racial group over any other racial group and systematically oppressing them. For the purpose of the Apartheid Convention, the term "the crime of apartheid" includes similar policies and practices of racial segregation and discrimination as practiced in southern Africa and applies to the following inhuman acts committed for the purpose of establishing and maintaining domination by one racial group of persons over any other racial group of persons and systematically oppressing them:

- Denying a member or members of a racial group or groups of the right to life and liberty by murder, serious bodily or mental harm, the infringement of their freedom or dignity, or by subjecting them to torture or to cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment.
- Arbitrary arrest and illegal imprisonment of the members of a racial group or groups.

- Imposition on a racial group or groups of living conditions calculated to cause its or their physical destruction in whole or in part.
- Denying basic human rights and freedoms, including the right to work, the right to form recognized trade unions, the right to education, the right to leave and to return to their country, the right to a nationality, the right to freedom of movement and residence, the right to freedom of opinion and expression, and the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.
- Measures, including legislative measures, designed to divide the population along racial lines by the creation of separate reserves and ghettos for the members of a racial group or groups, the prohibition of mixed marriages among members of various racial groups, the expropriation of landed property belonging to a racial group or groups or to members thereof.
- Persecution of organizations and persons, by depriving them of fundamental rights and freedoms, because they oppose apartheid.

The U.N. defines “racial discrimination,” as “any distinction, exclusion, restriction, or preference based on race, color, descent, or national or ethnic origin that has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment, or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, or any other field of public life.” Israeli policies that establish and maintain Israeli domination over Palestinians meet this definition.

Government leaders can be accused of committing the crime of apartheid if they institute or administer laws, practices, and policies that establish apartheid conditions. It is up to the United Nations or the World Court to prosecute those guilty of apartheid. However, individuals, and churches can recognize apartheid and witness to that effect. This procedure is much like our criminal justice system. If a citizen witnesses a crime like a robbery or assault, they can recognize that a crime has been committed and witness to that effect even though only the court system can legally prosecute the crime.

How Israel’s Laws, Policies and Practices Constitute Apartheid Against the Palestinian People

Israel has created a system where one ethnic group, Israeli Jewish nationals, have a superior status and another ethnic group, non-Jewish Arabs living in Israel/Palestine, have an inferior status. Israeli laws, policies, and practices systematically prevent Palestinians from participating in the political, social, economic, and cultural life of their country. The expropriation of Palestinian land, restrictions on the freedom of movement and residence, confining Palestinians to ghettos, arbitrary arrest and imprisonment of Palestinians, the restriction or denial of Palestinian rights to work, education, peaceful assembly, and religious practices are all part of Israeli measures calculated to prevent Palestinians from full participation in the economic, environmental, and social life of their country. This discriminatory system benefits Israeli Jews and causes irreparable harm to non-Jews both in Israel itself and in the occupied Palestinian territories.

The 2016 General Assembly assessment of Israel-Palestine describes the facts on the ground in Israel-Palestine that show a system of apartheid. Highlighted below is an elaboration of seven areas in which the state of Israel’s laws, policies, and practices violate the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid ratified by the United Nations.

Expropriating Palestinian Property for Jewish-Only Settlements and Infrastructure

- In June 1967 East Jerusalem was occupied by the Israeli military. Twenty-seven square miles of East Jerusalem were annexed to Israel. More than 30 percent of the land in East Jerusalem has been expropriated to build new settlements where approximately 200,000 Israeli’s reside in 47,000 units of housing.
- Between 1967 and 2019, vast areas of West Bank land have been expropriated to allow more than 121 settlements and 100 outposts for Jewish residents. Nearly 650,000 settlers now live in the occupied West Bank, including 190,000 in East Jerusalem.
- Separation walls/barriers are constructed on land in the West bank and expropriate an additional 11.9 percent of Palestinian land in the West Bank.
- The agricultural Jordan Valley area, about 30 percent of the West Bank, is now off limits to most Palestinians.
- Inside Israel—confiscation of so-called “absentee property” seized from Palestinians who were displaced from their homes in the 1948 war. Through Israel’s passage of the Absentee Property law in 1950, Israel confiscated the land of Palestinians who had been expelled from or fled their homes, and transferred it to the state, thereby depriving Palestinians of their rights to their property.

Most recently, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu suggested he would annex further parts of the West Bank, continuing the long trajectory of Israeli confiscation of Palestinian lands. The net result is that the state of Israel systematically and continually expropriates the landed property of Palestinians in violation of the International conventions on apartheid.

Denying the Right to Freedom of Residence to Palestinians

- Israeli laws, policies, and practices systematically prevent Palestinians from freedom of residence through denial of building permits for the construction of Palestinian housing and the demolition of Palestinian housing. In those areas of the West Bank and East Jerusalem where Palestinian housing is destroyed or denied, homes for Jewish settlers are permitted and constructed and only Jewish people can live in the settlement colonies.
- In 1967 the population of East Jerusalem was almost entirely Palestinian. Today there are approximately 190,000 Jewish settlers. Palestinians now constitute one-third of East Jerusalem's population.
- From 1967 to 2019, more than 24,000 Palestinian homes have been demolished in the occupied territories.
- Israel's 1950 Law of Return and its 1952 Citizenship, while conferring automatic citizenship to Jews who immigrate to Israel, denies return and citizenship to those residing outside of Israel between 1948 and 1952, including millions of Palestinians refugees and exiles. Israel thus manipulates the demographics in favor of Jews, while denying the right of return for indigenous Palestinian refugees and their descendants.
- The Citizenship and Entry into Israel Law, enacted in 2003 as a Temporary Order and renewed on an annual basis ever since, prohibits residency or citizenship status to Palestinian spouses from the occupied Palestinian Territories who are married to Palestinians with Israeli citizenship. This law thus prevents family unification and undermines the rights of Palestinian citizens of Israel and of Palestinians from the occupied Palestinian Territories, including the right to family life, and the right to equality in marriage and choice of spouse.

The net result is that the state of Israel systematically and continually denies the freedom of residence to Palestinians in violation of the International conventions on apartheid.

Denying Palestinians the Right to Freedom of Movement

- Israeli laws, policies, and practices systematically deny Palestinians the right to movement. Israel uses a number of means to restrict Palestinian movement in the West Bank, which include: permanent and temporary checkpoints, physical obstructions, the Separation Wall, roads on which only Israelis can drive, and the movement-permit regime.
 - *Checkpoints*: In 2019 more than 600 checkpoints and roadblocks in the occupied West Bank restrict Palestinians' freedom of movement to their homes, businesses, schools, jobs, hospitals, and farms. Palestinians routinely suffer indeterminate waiting, humiliating treatment, uncertainty, and denial of access at checkpoints.
 - *Segregated roads*: Segregated roads, which Israel euphemistically calls "bypass roads," link settlement colonies with one another and with Israel. The 493 miles of bypass roads provide unrestricted access to Israeli vehicles but restrict or prohibit Palestinian travel. These roads cut off Palestinians from their agricultural land, schools, hospitals, markets, and extended families, and carve up the West Bank into isolated enclaves.
 - *Separation Wall*: In the West Bank much of the Separation Wall extends well beyond the internationally recognized border and separates Palestinian homes from their farmland, businesses, schools, hospitals, and the homes of family and friends. In East Jerusalem the Separation Wall is constructed through the middle of a once contiguous city, much like the Berlin Wall. The wall's main purpose is not security, but rather to separate Palestinians from Israeli settlement colonies on expropriated Palestinian land. The Separation Wall cuts deeply into the West Bank in several locations. There is creeping confiscation of land in the areas between the Green Line and the Wall, where severe movement restrictions continue to result in the inability of Palestinian landowners to farm their land. Along this zone between the Green Line and the Wall thousands of Palestinians on both sides of the barrier are being driven into poverty by restrictions on residency, lack of access to farmlands, inability to market their crops, and confiscation of land.
- By implementing these means, Israel has split the West Bank into six geographical areas: North, Center, South, the Jordan Valley, and northern Dead Sea. Movement between the sections and within each section has become, in recent years, hard, slow, and sometimes impossible. Israel almost completely forbids the movement of Palestinians between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and impedes Palestinians from entering Israel and going abroad.

- These restrictions significantly affect the daily lives of Palestinians in commerce, in access to medical treatment and educational institutions, and in conducting social activities. Simple actions such as going to work in a nearby town, marketing farm produce, obtaining medical treatment, and visiting relatives entail bureaucratic procedures and great uncertainty.
- Israel's restriction on freedom of movement for non-Jewish Palestinians is discrimination based on ethnic origin since these restrictions apply only to Palestinians. Jewish residents are permitted to enter and leave settlements without restriction.

The net result is that the state of Israel systematically and continually denies the freedom of movement to Palestinians in violation of the International conventions on apartheid.

Dividing the Population Along Racial Lines

Sections a, b, and c and maps 1, 2, and 3 show how Israeli laws, policies, and practices in the West Bank combined with the infrastructure of illegal settlements, bypass roads, checkpoints, and the separation wall/ barrier systematically create separate reserves or ghettos for Palestinians in the West Bank. Palestinians are forced to live in isolated enclaves, which in turn eviscerates the Palestinian economy, and prevent the creation of a viable, contiguous, sovereign, and independent Palestinian state.

Inside the Green Line, Israel has formalized sub-national divisions of the Palestinian people into sometimes overlapping categories such as Christians, Druze, Arabs, Muslims, and Bedouin, as if each were distinct from the Palestinian people. In addition, other sub-groups of Palestinians are variously categorized for special status and treatment, including “absentees,” “present absentees,” Arameans, Jerusalem residents (annexed, but rendered stateless) and “unrecognized village” residents. All these Israeli-constructed categories of the Palestinian people remain perpetually inferior in status and rights to “Jewish nationals” as a matter of law in Israel and are effectively accorded second-class citizenship.

The net result is that the state of Israel systematically and continually divides the population along racial lines in violation of the international conventions on apartheid.

Denying Palestinians the Right to a Nationality

- On November 29, 1947, the United Nations endorsed a Partition Plan for Palestine that divided the League of Nations’ British Mandate of Palestine. In this partition plan 44 percent of the land was allocated for an Arab state and 56 percent was allocated for the Jewish state. While Israel did become an independent state in 1948, the independent Arab state did not come into existence because the land designated as an independent Arab state was militarily occupied by Israel, Jordan, and Egypt.

- From 1948 to date the state of Israel has systematically occupied and/or annexed all of the land that had been designated by the United Nations for an independent Palestinian state.

- In 1967 Israel annexed East Jerusalem in violation of international law.

- From 1967 to date, Israel has controlled Area C in the Oslo Peace agreement. Through the construction of settlement colonies, bypass roads, the separation wall/barrier, buffer zones, and the creation of land reserves, Israel has left Palestinians in control less than 10 percent of the land area of the British mandate of Palestine.

- Israel has failed to implement the November 22, 1967, United Nations Resolution 242 requiring Israel to withdraw its forces from the West Bank and Gaza.

- As noted earlier, the recent (2018) passage by Israel of the Jewish Nation-State Law stated that “the exercise of the right to national self-determination in the State of Israel is unique to the Jewish people.” This law thus codifies the Jewish character of the state and further cements institutionalized racial discrimination against the Palestinian people, relegating them to a lower status within their own homeland.

The policy of the most recent Israeli governments has been to explicitly obstruct the creation of a Palestinian state. In the words of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, “A Palestinian state will not be created, not like the one people are talking about. It won’t happen.” The plan, rather, in Netanyahu’s words “is to apply Israeli law to the communities in Judea and Samaria [the West Bank], which we will do in the next term. I want to do it gradually. I want to do it if possible with American support” <https://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/Netanyahu-A-Palestinian-state-wont-be-created-586017>.

The net result is that the state of Israel systematically and continually denies Palestinians the right to a nationality in violation of the International conventions on apartheid.

Why Christians Cannot Be Silent about the Israeli System of Apartheid

The PC(USA) strongly supports Israel's right to exist as a sovereign nation within secure and internationally recognized borders in accordance with United Nations resolutions. We hope that Israel will live up to its potential to be a democracy with equal rights for all people living in security and prosperity. It is therefore with pain and sorrow that friends of Israel witness Israel's oppressive policies and actions in the West Bank. It is with great sadness and disappointment that we watch as the promise of human rights for all peoples in the Holy Land for which we hoped has been unrealized, and replaced instead by Israeli laws, practices, and policies that promote the interests and human rights of Israeli Jewish citizens while denying human rights and a nationality to Palestinians, both Christian and Muslim.

The Israeli policies in the West Bank and the infrastructure of the illegal Israeli settlements, bypass roads, checkpoints, and separation wall/barrier that constitute an apartheid regime are in plain view for all to see and have been denounced by PC(USA) at the last two General Assemblies. However, it is difficult for many Americans and Christians to recognize these Israeli actions as apartheid. One reason may be fear of disturbing our relationships with some of our Jewish or Christian brothers and sisters. It is difficult for many Christians to publicly criticize the policies of Israel's government for fear that even legitimate criticism may be seen as anti-Israel or anti-Semitic or characterized as "picking on Israel" among many countries in the Middle East with human rights violations. Some Christians believe they must silence their criticism of Israel's policies because of the history of the Nazi Holocaust and the failure of many Christians to speak out at the time. Some believe that using the word "apartheid" has a harsh or jarring effect that can hamper constructive dialog.

Our call as Christians means we must sometimes get out of our comfort zone and risk controversy and criticism from people or organizations with whom we are in relationship. It is because of this call that we must recognize what we witness in Israel/Palestine, which is that Israel's laws, practices, and policies constitute apartheid against the Palestinian people. The 2016 report approved by the General Assembly clearly described facts on the ground in Israel-Palestine that constitute a system of apartheid.

After World War II when the horror of the Nazi Holocaust was revealed, Jews around the world said "never again." Many Christians around the world were shamed by their silence during the 1930s as Jews in Germany were given special cards identifying their religion, had their businesses shut down, had their land expropriated, and were forced to live in ghettos. Christians too vowed that never again would they be silent if a government passed laws establishing and maintaining the domination by one ethnic group over another ethnic group through systematic separation, oppression, and denial of basic human rights. Silence in the face of evil was wrong then, and it is wrong now.

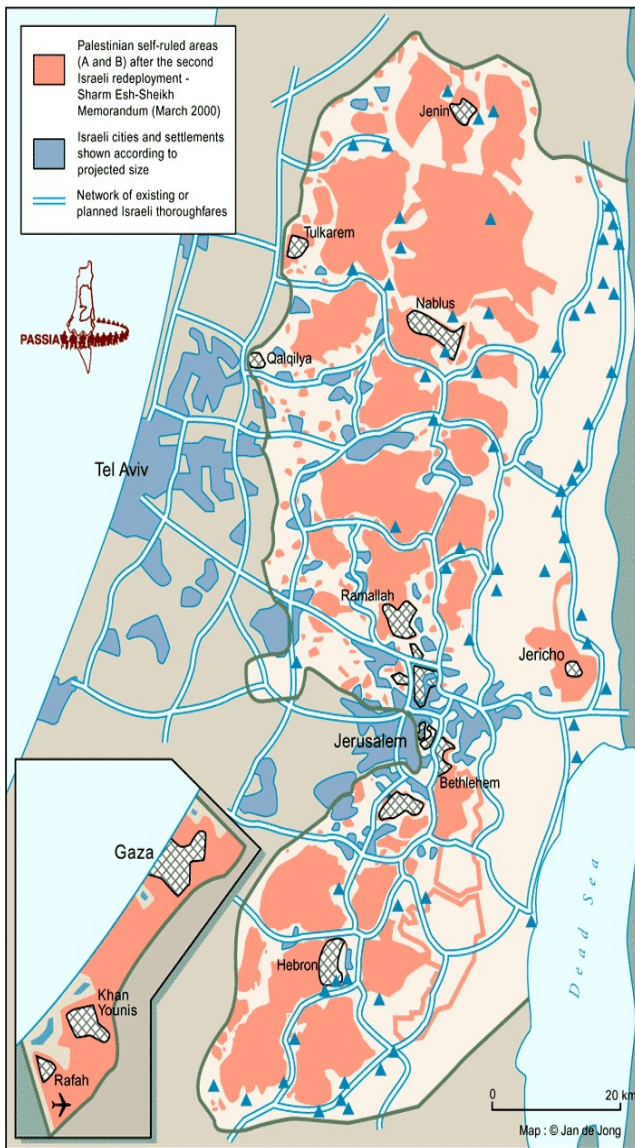
Each year the ordeals and injustices suffered by the Palestinian people in the West Bank, Gaza, and Israel continue. Land is expropriated, homes are demolished, and freedom of movement is restricted. The combination of Israeli settlement colonies on Palestinian land, the bypass roads connecting these settlements, and the Separation Wall creates a network of barriers that confine Palestinians to live in separate reserves and ghettos. The rights to work, education, freedom from arbitrary arrest, peaceful assembly, and freedom of expression granted under international law are restricted or denied.

Reference Maps

In order to visualize how the expropriation of Palestinian land and construction of Israeli settlements in the West Bank, Israeli only bypass roads, and the separation wall/barrier combine to restrict Palestinians into isolated and ever shrinking enclaves it is necessary to refer to the four reference maps that are included in this overture. It is helpful to refer to these maps when reading the PC(USA) statements below.

- *Map 1: Bypass roads* linking settlement colonies in the West Bank with Israel to allow unrestricted settler movement but allow limited or no access to Palestinians.
- *Map 2: The separation wall* is not on the internationally recognized Israel and Palestine boundary. Large swaths of Palestinian territory are on the "Israel side" of the wall.
- *Map 3: Encircled enclaves* (reserves or ghettos) confine Palestinians into sixty-four isolated and totally surrounded canton-like reserves in the West Bank.
- *Map 4: Palestinian Loss of Land 1946–2010.*

Reference Maps

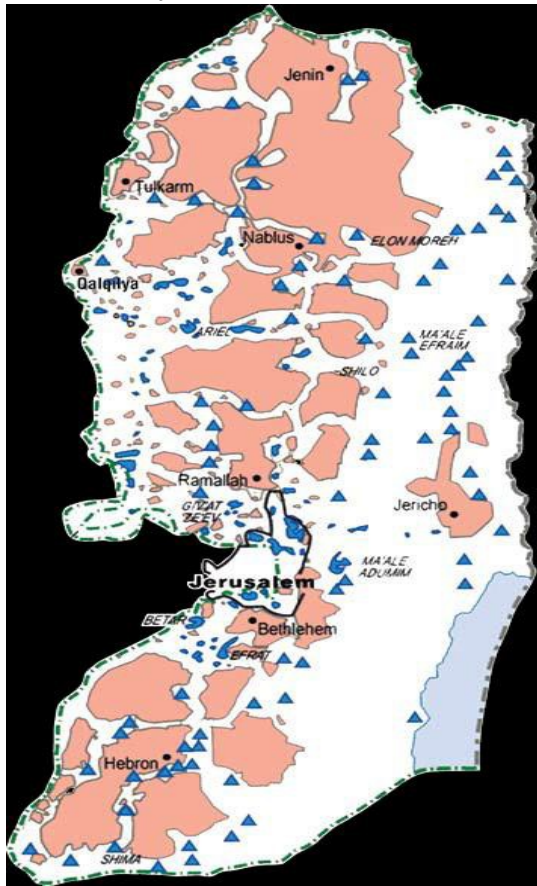


Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs (PASSIA)

Map 1: Bypass roads linking settlement colonies in the West Bank with Israel allow unrestricted settler movement but allow limited or no access to Palestinians. Triangles are major Israeli settlement colonies.



Map 2: The Separation Wall (blue line). None of the Palestinian West Bank is part of Israel under international law. However, the separation wall is not on the West Bank's border, but meanders deeply into Palestinian territory and puts large swaths of the West Bank on the "Israel side" of the Wall.



Map 3: Encircled enclaves (reserves or ghettos) confine Palestinians into 64 isolated and totally surrounded canton-like reserves in the West Bank. The triangles are major Israeli settlement colonies.



Concurrence to Item 02-022 from the Presbyteries of de Cristo, New Brunswick, and New Castle.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-022

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-022—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) to approve Item 02-022.

ACSWP acknowledges that approving this overture would mark a change in the current policy of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). In its most recent policy paper on the situation in Israel/Palestine, *Israel/Palestine: For Human Values in the Absence of a Just Peace*, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) acknowledged connections between apartheid as practiced historically in South Africa and the situation currently in Israel/Palestine, without stating that the policies of the State of Israel towards its Palestinian population were precisely the same. Some South Africans, like Nobel Laureate Desmond Tutu, argue they are a harsher separation.

At present, the most widely accepted definition of apartheid for the purposes of international law comes from the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, which states, in Article 7(1)(j) in conjunction with Article 7(2)(h):

Article 7(1)(j) in conjunction with Article 7(2)(h) Rome Statute defines the crime against humanity of apartheid as follows:

1. For the purpose of this Statute, ‘crime against humanity’ means any of the following acts when committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population, with knowledge of the attack:

(j) The crime of apartheid; ...

2. For the purpose of paragraph 1:

(h) “The crime of apartheid” means inhumane acts of a character similar to those referred to in paragraph 1, committed in the context of an institutionalized regime of systematic oppression and domination by one racial group over any other racial group or groups and committed with the intention of maintaining that regime. (<https://www.icc-cpi.int/resourcelibrary/official-journal/rome-statute.aspx>)

There has been some argument as to whether the Rome statute applies to the situation in Israel/Palestine, given its focus on race. In his 2014 report to the UN Human Rights Council, Special Rapporteur on Israel/Palestine Richard Falk acknowledged that the understanding of race would need to be broadened to embrace ethnicity and creed, but nonetheless his report concluded that the state of Israel engaged in “practices and policies which appear to constitute apartheid and segregation.” (<https://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/06AE69A80B959A3D85257C86006D89A7>)

As the rationale for this overture admirably documents, since *Israel/Palestine: For Human Values in the Absence of a Just Peace* was approved by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in 2016, the oppression of the Palestinian population of Israel/Palestine has significantly worsened. Indeed, the study paper *Jerusalem 3,2,1* prepared for this General Assembly by the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy documents many of these changes. As a Presbyterian pastor reported, after many olive trees recently planted had been ripped out by the Israeli military, this is a people that have been on lockdown long before Covid19.

And there seems to be little hope of improvement. With the recent political consolidation of the Israeli government with regards to the annexation of the West Bank, and with the tacit support of the current administration of the United States for such an endeavor, there seems little reason at this moment to avoid naming the *de jure* and *de facto* realities for what they are.

REAC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-022

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-022—From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee.

The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) to approve Item 02-022.

The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC) concurs with the Presbytery of Grace in our support of the Palestinian people. We cannot be a Matthew 25 church if we do not lift up and stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people who have no country to call their own, left in political limbo, considered refugees in their own land. They are unable to lead a full life due to the destruction of their farms, infrastructure, social life, and way of being human. There are several Israeli communities who support that Palestinians deserve a country of their own, many who have spoken at our General Assembly gatherings.

Item 02-023

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 307.]

On Updating the Video Resource, Who Are We Presbyterians, with Accompanying Study Guide—From the Presbytery of New Hope.

The Presbytery of New Hope overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) to do the following:

1. Direct the Office of General Assembly to update the video resource, *Who Are We Presbyterians*, with an accompanying study guide.
2. Direct the Office of General Assembly to create a plan to update and finance this denominational video and study guide every five years.

Rationale

In 2001 the denomination produced a seventeen-minute video called, *Who Are We Presbyterians*, with an accompanying study guide written by Freda Gardner, Moderator of the 211th General Assembly (1999). The video packaging describes the video as, “an excellent tool for church school, officer training, new members class, confirmation class, retreats, midweek gatherings and much more.” For many years this video resource was a relevant, concise introduction to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

This resource is almost nineteen years old and needs to be updated. The new video resource needs to:

- Communicate how the good news of Jesus Christ proclaimed by ministries of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) continues to be life changing and relevant in this time and place.
- Communicate who we are as a denomination as we enter the 2020s.
- Move from DVD format to an online resource that can be pulled up on the denominational website or other video platforms to easily be shown to groups or viewed individually.
- “Provoke our questions and encourage us to share our experiences as one part of the whole people of God” (As stated in the 2001 study guide).

Furthermore, the Office of General Assembly needs a plan for financing and creating future introductory videos so that ministries do not face using “out-of-date” denominational resources. It is essential for outreach and engagement that the diverse ministries of the PC(USA) have a dynamic resource that concisely describes our history, who we are today, where we are headed, and the beauty of our connectional nature.

Concurrences to Item 02-023 from the Presbyteries of Coastal Carolina and de Cristo.

COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 02-023

COGA has recommended that this item be referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). However, should the assembly determine that this item of business is core and critical to our governance and sustainability, and needs to be considered by 224th General Assembly (2020), COGA provides this comment.

The COGA appreciates the request to update the materials regarding “Who Are We Presbyterians.” COGA is asking the OGA to collaborate with the other agencies of the PC(USA) to develop these materials and share in the financial implications.

Item 02-024

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 306.]

On Support of the Democratic Republic of the Congo—From the Presbytery of Chicago.

As the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo are, for the first time in many years, expressing hope that their government will work for the benefit of its people, the Presbytery of Chicago respectfully overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to:

1. Affirm its support for the United States providing humanitarian assistance to Sub-Saharan African countries that are struggling to provide for people (a) displaced by war and violence whether internally or externally; (b) suffering from epidemics and/or diseases that have the potential to become deadly pandemics; and (c) suffering from natural disasters.

2. Affirm the critical role that the United States can play in supporting the Democratic Republic of the Congo's (DRC) efforts to establish peace and security in Eastern Congo by disarming militias such as the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), a terrorist militia that has allied itself with ISIS and Islamic Movements, and other militias that terrorize the Congolese people.

3. Affirm the work of the United Nations World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) in combatting Ebola, measles, and other public health threats and urge increased U.S. support of these efforts.

4 Strongly affirm its support for the United States to fully pay its UN dues in order for the latter's agencies to carry out their missions within the DRC.

5. Affirm its support for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) in its partnership with the African Union Commission (AUC) to implement the various goals for development within and among its member states and the U.S.

6. Strongly affirm its support for the United States to fully fund the U.S. State Department so it will have the personnel and funds to implement the critically important goals of promoting the sustainable social and economic development of the DRC.

7. Direct the Stated Clerk to communicate to the president of the United States, the U.S. State Department, and relevant congressional leaders, the General Assembly's particular concern for the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and to call upon the U.S. government to fully fund the U.S. State Department so it can effectively work for the goals listed above, and to pay its dues to the UN, and to help fund the UN agencies whose programs are also in support of the above goals.

8. Encourage presbyteries, congregations, and individual members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to:

a. Pray with the people of the Congo and other sub-Saharan countries for peace, justice, and the impartial rule of law;

b. Participate in the advocacy initiatives of the Office of Public Witness and the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations;

c. Support the work of PC(USA) mission co-workers in the region and the ministries of our Congolese partner churches;

d. Join the Congo Mission Network as it accompanies partners in the DRC and involves U.S. Presbyterians in the PC(USA)'s ministry of advocacy; and

e. Support financially the training organized in collaboration with the World Council of Churches (WCC), All Africa Council of Churches (AACC), coalition of protestant churches in Congo (ECC), Presbyterian Church of Congo (CPC), Presbyterian Church of Kinshasa (CPK), for election observers, and civic educators to explain the electoral process.

Rationale

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has a long history of involvement in the Congo and other sub-Saharan countries and a deep concern for their peoples. The ministry of U.S. Presbyterians, notably the Reverend William Sheppard, Lucy Gantt Sheppard, and the Reverend Samuel Lapsley, helped to lay the foundation for strong and vibrant Presbyterian communities in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) today. From the outset, Presbyterian involvement in the region has been marked by a profound commitment to promoting justice, peace, and respect for the dignity and human rights of all of the Congolese people. Recent General Assembly actions specific to the DRC include:

- On Support for the People of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, approved by the 220th General Assembly (2012) (*Minutes*, 2012, Part I, pp. 1304ff);

- On Helping to Remedy the Tragic Conditions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, approved by the 221st General Assembly (2014) (*Minutes*, 2014, Part I, pp. 887ff);

- On Support for the Democratic Republic of the Congo to hold free and fair elections and to abide by the rule of law impartially applied to all citizens, Item 12-04 approved by the 222nd General Assembly (2016).

Since the inauguration of President Tshisekedi in the Spring of 2019, the people of the DRC are more hopeful about their government than they have been for more than ten years. However, the corruption of the previous regimes up and until the transfer of power, the destruction of infrastructure, and the tax base by the war, and the kleptocratic practices of previous rulers have left the government of the DRC ill-equipped to take effective measures to restore its sovereignty or the rule of law in Eastern Congo. Medical intervention to stop the current Ebola outbreak has been hampered by attacks on clinics, by the spreading of rumors about the cause of the disease, and rumors and attacks against doctors, nurses, and other aid workers. Due to people either not allowing themselves to be treated or to fleeing violence, there is a great danger that Ebola will become endemic to the country. While the DRC Security forces have had some success pursuing some of the militias around Goma, they have not been effective in the Northeast around Beni. In fact, it has seemed in the past that the government has allowed the ADF free rein in the North Kivu and Ituri provinces. During the past few years the ADF has become more Islamist and has started burning churches and killing non-Muslims, and capturing and enslaving children and women. (See November 8, 9, 10, and 16, Associated Press, DRC News Bulletin.) On November 24, 2019, the ADF openly raided within the city of Beni, killing eight and injuring others. (See November 24, 2019, Associated Press, DRC News Bulletin). The situation has become so dire that mobs are forming, attacking the UN compound in Beni, North Kivu Province, and killing others they suspect might be rebels. (See report of the lynching of a man and his wife on December 1, 2019, Associated Press, DRC News Bulletin.)

Without people being secure in their persons, homes, and at work, no amount of other help can be effective in the long run. For President Tshisekedi's government to establish control, it desperately needs the support of the U.S. and other countries. In addition, the United Nations Peace Keeping Force (MONUSCO) needs to be authorized to take military action against the militias.

The PC(USA) is called to continue to accompany its Congolese partners and others in the region as they strive for justice, peace, and security during this time of transition. Building on the actions of the 220th, the 221st, and the 222nd General Assemblies (2012, 2014, and 2016), which aimed to reduce the incentives for indiscriminate and wholesale violence in the DRC and to implement educational and governance policies that can begin to rebuild the shattered lives of the people, this overture identifies the essential precondition necessary for the DRC to regain control of its future. Without the government establishing its control over its territory, the country may descend into absolute lawlessness. The government of the DRC needs the moral and financial support the people and government of the U.S. can provide.

Concurrence to Item 02-024 from the Presbyteries of de Cristo, Boston, and Sacramento.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-024

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-024—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP)

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 02-024.

ACSWP strongly endorses this overture, which the coronavirus makes more urgent and relevant.

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, is warning that the latest rounds of violence in eastern parts of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) displacing thousands of people could unleash terrible consequences for the country as it grapples to initiate a new fight against the deadly coronavirus (<https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/briefing/2020/4/5e995dad4/ongoing-insecurity-eastern-drc-derail-coronavirus-containment.html>).

The situation in DRC is a good example of why the U.S. needs to continue supporting the World Health Organization (WHO) and upgrade its support of the UN, including the High Commission for Refugees.

Besides being, at the least, a decent and Christian thing to do, supporting health and economic development in low-income countries will reduce the risk to the U.S. of recurrent pandemics. Not the U.S. or any other country can isolate and insulate itself from health problems in the rest of the world. But even physical quarantine should not imply that more dangerous quarantine of moral distancing.

Item 02-025

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 306.]

Regarding Our Commitment to Gun Violence Prevention—From the Presbytery of Chicago.

The Presbytery of Chicago overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to endorse the following affirmation and actions:

Affirmation:

We remember that the disciples ask Jesus when he saw them in faithful ministry and he answered, “As you did it to one of the least of these, you did it to me” (Matthew 25:40). In our country 40,000 people are losing their lives each year to gun violence. Each one of these represents to us the crucified Christ, as do their orphans, their grieving parents and families, as do the nearly 100,000 who are injured and the countless others who are traumatized by gun violence through suicides, murders, family violence, and accidents; In faithfulness to the Prince of Peace, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) stands with, grieves with, and calls for change alongside the victims of our uniquely-American epidemic of gun violence.

Recommendations:

1. Commend and give thanks for those who have stood with “the least of these” and taken action:

a. Every local congregation that has held a study group or conversation, reached out to the community and their elected officials, or taken other actions; specifically, we celebrate the Lincoln Park Presbyterian Church and First United Church of Oak Park, congregations in Chicago that have jointly received the 2019 Peaceseeker Award of the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship for pioneering work to prevent gun violence.

b. Every part of the Presbyterian family that has taken action on gun violence prevention, including: our General Assembly Moderators; the Office of the Stated Clerk; Presbyterian Disaster Assistance with its film and book resources and its pastoral presence with communities that experience gun violence; the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program & Presbyterian Peace Fellowship, for the co-sponsored webinar series, *Standing Our Holy Ground*; the Office of Public Witness, the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, Presbyterian News Service, the Presbyterian Writers Guild, *The Presbyterian Outlook*; the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship with its *Gun Violence Prevention Congregational Toolkit* and other resources; Presbytery of Grace in Dallas, Texas, for recognizing God’s call to the Reverend Deanna Hollas, ordained as the first minister of Gun Violence Prevention; and all other entities, staff, officers, and individuals in the PC(USA) that have taken action to save lives from gun violence.

c. The students of America who demand change; the businesses such as Walmart, Dicks’ Sporting Goods, and 130 other corporations that have called for commonsense laws to prevent gun violence; the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms for banning the sale of bump stocks to convert guns into automatic weapons; action of the U.S. House and Senate to update the National Background Check System; the U.S. House in passing legislation for universal background checks, greater protection of women from domestic gun violence, and for restoration of federal funding for research into the causes and best solutions to gun violence—and for all the organizations and individuals across America who call upon the U.S. Senate and all elected officials and candidates to support these actions and turn them into real change.

2. Call upon every congregation in the PC(USA) to prayerfully consider their role in helping to prevent gun violence. As Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. reminded us, “Everyone can do something.”

3. Direct the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, in partnership with others, including, but not limited to the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program, the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns, the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee, and the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship, to update the historic 2010 policy of the 219th General Assembly, *Gun Violence, Gospel Values: Mobilizing in Response to God’s Call* and to present this update for a vote at the 225th General Assembly (2022) which includes:

a. An update of the 2010-era statistics and sources to current statistics and sources about gun violence; and an update on current legislative actions and efforts to seek common ground for saving lives.

b. The sinful, historical intersection between guns and race. Issues to pursue:

(1) The history of gun ownership being too often a means for white people to “protect” themselves and their families from perceived threats from black, brown, and native people, creating a culture of entitlement to gun ownership that is born out of racism, white supremacy, and violence.

(2) The beneficiaries versus the populations most at risk of becoming victims due to guns without safety technology, and distribution systems at risk of theft or illegal sale.

(3) The acknowledgement that structural racism has perpetuated trauma in communities of color that has resulted in the gun violence that we see, and that the systematic disinvestment in these communities is a root cause that needs to be repaired.

(4) The sources of and solutions to gun violence in predominately black and brown communities, seeking effective solutions that do not further contribute to mass incarceration.

(5) The need for changes in police use-of-force training, police culture, and fair prosecution of cases of police gun violence, so that all citizens feel safe in relation to those whose calling is to protect them.

c. The impact of gun violence on women and children: such as domestic gun violence, murder-suicides of entire families, school shootings, and accidents; including review of the legal responsibility of adults whose guns are used by children and others to commit violence or accidental shootings.

d. The affirmation, inclusion, and referral to actions of the General Assembly subsequent to 2010 on gun violence prevention (2014, 2018) and of resources to help every congregation with education, pastoral care, and action as they seek God's plan for their role in helping to prevent gun violence.

Rationale

The 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) *unanimously* passed a major and comprehensive policy, *Gun Violence, Gospel Values: Mobilizing in Response to God's Call*. Based on prior General Assembly actions against gun violence since 1968, the 2010 document placed the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) at the forefront of spiritual communities calling for commonsense changes in gun regulations and for an affirmation that the uniquely American obsession with guns is not consistent with the love, healing, and nonviolent witness of Jesus Christ. Rooted in biblical values and reform theology, this historic and excellent ten-year-old document deserves to be updated and reissued as a contemporary policy to help our congregations and our nation heal from the escalating epidemic and tragedy of gun violence.

The 2020 overture notes the work of prior General Assemblies on this issue and commends those who have led the way in faithful witness to prevent gun violence.

The overture calls on every congregation in the PC(USA) to ask for God's guidance to them on how their congregation can faithfully respond to the challenge and reality of gun violence.

The overture proposes that the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP), coordinate an update to the 2010 policy to be presented for a vote to the 225th General Assembly (2022). The overture does not call for a complete revision of the 2010 policy, which is excellent, but rather for an update based on changes in American culture and policy over the last ten years. There are now many outdated statistics and sources in the document, including, most unfortunately, the increase in annual gun deaths from 30,000 to 40,000.

The 2010 document does address the relation between guns and race and the impact of gun violence on women and children. However, there has been a great deal of new light shed on issues such as the historical connection between racism and gun "entitlement." A new generation of activists, elected officials, and candidates have offered new approaches to protecting women from domestic gun violence and to preventing gun violence in black and brown communities beyond the failed approach of mass incarceration. Over the last ten years, we have seen an increase in mass shootings, school shootings, and police shootings. All of these difficult topics deserve review in light of current events and proposals.

Concurrences to Item 02-025 from the Presbyteries of de Cristo, Hudson River, New Covenant, Northern Waters, Philadelphia, Santa Fe, and Southeastern Illinois.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-025

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-025—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP)

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 02-025.

The Presbyterian Peace Fellowship, Heeding God's Call, the various CeaseFire organizations, and other groups all deserve commendation as they "keep their hands to the Gospel plow" and stay faithful on this ever-grim struggle. ACSWP has been honored to play a part and finds Recommendation 3 particularly relevant. The policy approved by the 219th General Assembly (2010), *Gun Violence, Gospel Values: Mobilizing in Response to God's Call*, remains a valuable resource and its commitments will only be strengthened by a timely update.

In the decade since its approval, important data has been collected shedding light on areas of study not addressed in the current policy of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). And tragically, the epidemic of gun violence in this country has continued

unabated, making the updating of strategy as well as statistics a necessity if the policy of the denomination is to carry the necessary relevance and prophetic power.

We also concur with the comment from the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board on this overture.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-025

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-025—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 02-025.

As gun violence is increasing at a disturbing rate, it is critical that Presbyterians are fully aware of the impact gun violence has on women, especially trans and queer women and women of color. In 2015, there were nearly 3,519 women and girls that died by homicide, 53 percent of those cases were intimate partner violence related. Of these statistics, Non-Hispanic Black and American Indian/Alaska Native women had the highest rates.¹ We recognize the deep and urgent need to lift up the voices of the Indigenous women, girls, and two spirits that have been lost in the flawed legal system that fails to protect women and children from firearm violence. The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns is called to stand as advocates for our siblings who have suffered from the unjust ways guns perpetrate violence against women.

The fight for stricter gun control is not meant to strip people of their constitutional rights, but to protect those most vulnerable in our communities from the violence that is heightened by the lack of gun control. As God calls us to “do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly,” we find ourselves being called to advocate for guns laws that would protect women through legislative matters. Until all women are protected under PC(USA) and federal policy, marginalized communities will continue to suffer from this epidemic. As our Brief Statement of Faith professes, we must “hear the voices of peoples long silenced, and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace.”

As approved by the 223rd General Assembly (2018), in Item 11-14, “In love, may our churches help our country and enact sensible steps to prevent gun violence from murders, suicides, family disputes, and mass shootings.”² The ACWC strongly encourages the approval of Item 02-25 to advocate for stricter gun laws, so our policies may fully reflect the justice and kindness that is required of us.

Endnotes

1. <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/66/wr/mm6628a1.htm>
2. <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000314>

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 02-025

Presbyterian Mission Agency Comment on Item 02-025. Regarding Our Commitment to Gun Violence Prevention.

This overture requests an updating of the social witness policy, *Gun Violence, Gospel Values*, developed by a study team of the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) for the 219th General Assembly (2010). See: <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/1-gun-violence-policy-2010.pdf>. That policy has been reprinted two times, totaling 16,000 hard copies, plus a large number downloaded free from the Presbyterian Mission Agency website.

The changed elements in the United States context over the past ten years include more mass shootings more linked to racism and anti-immigrant sentiment. These shootings cannot be dismissed as matters of individual mental illness to be addressed only by “red flag” laws. They reflect factors identified by the Presbytery of Chicago in its overture, as well as other dynamics arguably linked to cultural “diseases of despair,” expressed in different ways in rural and urban areas. This suggests that any update might look not only at the items correctly identified by Item 0-25, but other factors identified by the range of Compassion, Peace, and Justice ministries, academic organizations such as the Johns Hopkins Center on Gun Policy and Research, and activist groups such as Black Lives Matter.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy can do the update requested and involve the partners listed. In the 2008–2010 study process, ACSWP held a public consultation at Stony Point that contributed to the work of a small study team.

Commissioners may also consider the timeliness of such an update in relation to changing political and spiritual currents in the culture and the church itself.

Item 02-026

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 306.]

On Creating a Task Force Regarding the Creation of a Korean-Language Nongeographic Presbytery (NGP) on the West Coast—From the Presbytery of the Northwest Coast.

The Presbytery of the Northwest Coast overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) to establish a task force in order to implement the action of the 222nd General Assembly (2016) regarding the creation of a Korean-language nongeographic presbytery (NGP) on the west coast, with responsibilities to:

1. Determine (a) which synod such a presbytery would best be a part of, recognizing it will likely cross any existing synod geographic boundaries, and (b) the organizational structure and mission design that would best accomplish the mission and ministry of the identified collective Korean congregations.
2. Identify congregations who are interested in and have demonstrated a significant level of commitment to join the NGP.
3. If warranted after Recommendations 1 and 2 above, submit a detailed plan creating and organizing a new NGP, along with a mission design in consultation with the prospective members and congregations, to the 225th General Assembly (2022).

The task force will consist of seven members familiar with cultural diversity, who represent (1) the synods that are likely be affected by the NGP and (2) a synod currently ministering with a Korean-language NGP in its bounds.

Rationale

Upon receiving a report of the Assembly Committee on Mid Councils that the General Assembly “strongly advises that the western synods consider forming a nongeographic Korean presbytery” (*Minutes*, 2016, Part I, p. 194), the 216th General Assembly (2016) approved a resolution to:

Ask synods of the west (Alaska-Northwest, the Pacific, Southern California and Hawaii, the Southwest, the Rocky Mountains, and the Sun) to intentionally consider the viability of creating a new Korean, nongeographic presbytery in the western United States, consistent with the concerns addressed in this report regarding healthy relationships between Korean-language and geographic presbyteries and the constitutional protection of full representation of men and women in the leadership of such a presbytery and the congregations therein. (*Minutes*, 2016, Part I, p. 194)

The Presbytery of the Northwest Coast, which has been blessed with rich cultural diversity, has a long healthy history of ministering, learning from, and working together with eight Korean-language congregations. The membership of the Korean-language congregations accounts for 30 percent of the total congregational membership of the presbytery, and is supported by a full-time associate executive presbyter. The presbytery, at its stated meeting in October 2019, adopted a resolution to agree in principle to expand its commitment to Korean American ministry, “inviting other west coast Korean-language congregations,” by providing them “greater self-governance” and continued and strengthened support in areas of polity and judicial process.

The presbytery has also established a committee to explore the feasibility of a NGP. The committee, in consultation with the office of manager for Korean-speaking councils support of OGA (and stated clerk of the Synod of Alaska-Northwest), has evaluated practical models that are not only readily adoptable but also mutually beneficial to both Korean and non-Korean ministries, such as a shared ministry model between the new NGP and the host presbytery and a “hybrid” model in which the NGP is transitionally placed under the umbrella of the host.

There are about 100 Korean-speaking congregations in the west coast synods, and many of them have expressed interest in joining the NGP.

The Task Force for Korean-Speaking Congregations, created by the 221st General Assembly (2014) reaffirmed “the continuing need for Korean-language, nongeographic presbyteries,” particularly “in the western United States, where a large number of Korean-language congregations are located.” Despite the 2014 demise of the former Hanmi Presbytery in Southern California, the task force “urges consideration of whether a new beginning is possible, one in which a healthy presbytery can be created that fully respects and is committed to doing in its work in a manner that respects our polity and commitment to full participation by all who God calls into ordered ministry.”

Based on experience gained from its Korean-language ministry, the Presbytery of the Northwest Coast affirms that the “new beginning” can and should happen in the west coast of the United States, and urges the 224th General Assembly (2020) to initiate the new beginning by creating a task force.

Concurrence to Item 02-026 from the Presbyteries of Atlantic Korean, de Cristo, Eastern Korean American, Glacier, Midwest Korean American, the Inland Northwest.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 02-026

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to disapprove Item 02-026.

This overture requests the appointment of a General Assembly task force for the purpose of “implementing the action of the 222nd General Assembly (2016) regarding the creation of a Korean-language nongeographic presbytery (NGP) on the west coast ...”

That General Assembly’s action, however, as the overture notes, was to “ask synods of the west ... to intentionally consider the viability of creating a new Korean, nongeographic presbytery in the western United States ...” (*Minutes*, 2016, Part I, p. 194).

And the same 222nd General Assembly (2016) approved the current authoritative interpretation of G-3.0301a and G-3.0403c, which states:

A presbytery may transfer an organized racial ethnic or immigrant congregation to a nongeographic presbytery that can meet the congregation’s particular mission needs. Ordinarily, this nongeographic presbytery would be within the bounds of the same synod. Such transfers require approval of both the sending and receiving presbyteries, as well as the synods and the General Assembly (2016, 34, 288, Item 05-08).

General Assemblies have considered overtures related to the bond between congregations and the geography in which they are located on a number of occasions. In 2012, the ACC advised the assembly on Item 05-05,

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution notes that the Constitution defines a presbytery as “the council serving as a corporate expression of the church within a certain district and is composed of all the congregations and teaching elders within that district” (G-3.0301). The geographic nature of a presbytery, as it corporately expresses the mission and ministry of at least ten duly constituted sessions and ten teaching elders (G-3.0301), facilitates and significantly informs its capacity for participating in its mandated relationships of accountability and review with its member congregations and its teaching elders, as well as with its synod. The geographic nature of a presbytery is not solely related to the G-3.0403c restriction on synod creation and General Assembly approval of non-geographic presbyteries. (*Minutes*, 2012, Part I, p. 264)

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution also advised the 218th General Assembly (2008) on Item 03-07:

When a congregation that is located within the bounds of one synod joins a presbytery that is within the bounds of another synod, there are serious implications for each synod and for the geographic presbytery involved. Such a transfer would enlarge the district of the nongeographic presbytery, increasing the overlap with the districts of the geographic presbyteries. Because presbyteries are responsible for the mission and government of the church throughout their geographical districts, the overlapping of districts raises the potential for conflict. ...The Advisory Committee on the Constitution has concerns about the potential for conflicts across multiple boundaries ... (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 148)

And in advising the 222nd General Assembly (2016) on the approval of Item 05-08 (the current authoritative interpretation), it noted that “widening the distances increases that potential” (for conflicts across multiple boundaries). The Advisory Committee on the Constitution went on to advise that:

The word “ordinarily” used in the proposed authoritative interpretation expresses normative practice, but does not effectively limit such transfers to any particular circumstances, such as when there are no nongeographic presbyteries within the boundaries of the current synod. Wider distances between congregations and the presbyteries of which they are members increase the potential for isolation of the congregation. It makes more difficult development and maintenance of relationships of accountability and nurture.

One of the core commitments of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is to find unity in diversity. “The unity of believers in Christ is reflected in the rich diversity of the Church’s membership. In Christ, by the power of the Spirit, God unites persons through baptism regardless of race, ethnicity, age, sex, disability, geography, or theological conviction” (F-1.0403). The goal of all councils is to include believers of all backgrounds in worship and ministry. When it is necessary for racial ethnic or immigrant congregations to find their relationships of nurture and accountability in nongeographic presbyteries, there should always be a plan for education and preparation that will lead to participation and membership in the geographic presbytery in which they are located. Likewise, those geographic presbyteries should be preparing to welcome racial ethnic and immigrant congregations back into their membership and fellowship in the fullness of time.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution again raises these concerns with respect to a task force that would begin its work “recognizing” that the nongeographic presbytery whose creation it would be facilitating “will likely cross any existing synod geographic boundaries.”

ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-026

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-026—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) disapprove Item 02-026.

The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC) strongly advises against this overture as nongeographic presbyteries continue to refuse to ordain women. These actions have been harmful within the Korean American community as second and third generations of called women have not been affirmed. This begs the questions, “How many talented women have we lost?” and “What kind of damage has this caused to these women?” We cannot let these questions come to the surface again and risk the harming Korean American women.

At the 219th General Assembly (2010), a similar question came to the floor of General Assembly from the Synod of the South Atlantic. This was defeated in part due to the testimony of three Korean American clergywomen who testified to the oppression of women’s voices and leadership within the Korean American churches. Forming a nongeographic presbytery would only continue to perpetuate this practice.

There has not been significant movement forward concerning women’s ordination within the Korean American churches. Creating a nongeographic presbytery would only exacerbate this issue. If the presbytery is allowed to form, then the PC(USA) would be complicit in this ongoing oppression.

GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 02-026

General Assembly Committee on Representation Comment on Item 02-026. On Creating a Task Force Regarding the Creation of a Korean-Language Nongeographic Presbytery (NGP) on the West Coast

This item has been recommended to be referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). However, should the assembly determine that this item of business needs to be considered by the 224th General Assembly (2020), GACOR provides this comment.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation recognizes the challenges that churches of color experience in the denomination. Often access to leadership is hindered by ecclesial process, communities have limited resources, staff are often part-time, and must face racism in many aspects of their work. Unfortunately, non-geographic presbyteries are a result of the denomination’s inability to be inclusive and equitable with all churches and fellowships. At the 222nd General Assembly (2016), Item 05-11 explored the needs of Korean speaking congregations. We uphold the tension between resourcing Korean speaking congregations and the challenges for communities of color within a 92 percent white denomination.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation is made up of sixteen persons, elected by the General Assembly, who are drawn from members and elders, ruling and teaching, from across the church in accordance with F-1.0403. Its constitutional mandate and central functions are described in G-3.0103 of the Book of Order (Form of Government).

REAC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-026

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-026—From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee

The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) disapprove Item 02-026.

The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC) strongly advises against this overture as nongeographic presbyteries continue to refuse to ordain women. These actions have been harmful within the Korean American community as second and third generations of called women have not been affirmed. This begs the questions, “How many talented women have we lost?” and “What kind of damage has this caused to these women?” We cannot let these questions come to the surface again and risk the harming Korean American women.

At the 219th General Assembly (2010), a similar question came to the floor of General Assembly from the Synod of the South Atlantic. This was defeated in part due to the testimony of three Korean American clergywomen who testified to the oppression of women’s voices and leadership within the Korean American churches. Forming a nongeographic presbytery would only continue to perpetuate this practice.

There has not been significant movement forward concerning women’s ordination within the Korean American churches. Creating a nongeographic presbytery would only exacerbate this issue. If the presbytery is allowed to form, then the PC(USA) would be complicit in this ongoing oppression.

Item 02-027

[The assembly referred Item 02-27 to the 224th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10, 306.]

On Recognizing Non-Chartered Fellowships as Churches to Promote Representation and Participation on National and Regional Committees and Councils—From the Presbytery of Nevada.

02 RECOMMENDED REFERRALS TO THE 225TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2022)

The Presbytery of Nevada overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) to develop means by which non-chartered fellowships can be counted as “churches” for the purpose of national reports and statistical data presentations.

The National Asian Presbyterian Council, being on the fringes of denominational gatherings and leadership, find it hard for their voices to be heard and counted. They find themselves to be on the forefront of ministries relating to immigration, justice, and gospel work among peoples of diverse backgrounds yet unable to participate in discussions with presbyteries, synods, and other groups that are involved in the policy development and official recognition of churches within the denomination.

Rationale

The National Filipino Presbyterian Council has identified an inconsistency between the biblical mandate of inclusion and being counted with the effect of reporting statistics only on chartered congregations, which limits voice and vote in church councils for representatives of those ministries most directly involved in immigration and justice issues among peoples of diverse backgrounds.

Concurrence to Item 02-027 from the Presbytery of de Cristo.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 02-027

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) that Item 02-027 raises constitutional issues.

While the action requested in Item 02-22 anticipates an administrative action only, it has the effect of creating a context in which a constitutional concept (“congregation,” previously referred to as “particular church”) may be used in a formal sense contrary to the Constitution. G-1.0103 states, “A ‘congregation,’ as used in this Form of Government, refers to a formally organized community chartered and recognized by a presbytery as provided in this Constitution ”

It is not within the purview of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution to advise the Office of the General Assembly in regard to a purely administrative matter. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution would, however, urge the Office of the General Assembly to use terms such as “church,” “congregation,” and “fellowship” in ways that do not introduce ambiguity or create confusion regarding terms and concepts as they are used in the Constitution.

COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 02-027

COGA has recommended that this item be referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). However, should the assembly determine that this item of business is core and critical to our governance and sustainability, and needs to be considered by the 224th General Assembly (2020), COGA provides this comment.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recognizes that this overture raises a number of questions related to the church’s understanding of membership, ordered ministry, and organization. Each of our 170 presbyteries has developed ways to nurture and organize new congregations and develop leaders for the church that fit their particular context. At the same time, the emerging context of 2020 and beyond requires that we as a broader denomination reexamine the assumptions that lie beneath these structures that were developed for a church at work in a different time and place.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly has identified this area as a place where we hope to foster conversation across the church, with a focus not on particular sticking points but rather the underlying challenges that keep coming up in questions of membership, ordered ministry, and organization. We advise that this item be referred to COGA to help seed this conversation, first with mid council leaders and later with the broader church, with a report on these broader issues to be submitted to the 225th General Assembly (2022).

GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 02-027

General Assembly Committee on Representation Comment on Item 02-027. On Recognizing Non-Chartered Fellowships as Churches to Promote Representation and Participation on National and Regional Committees and Councils

This item has been recommended to be referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). However, should the assembly determine that this item of business needs to be considered by the 224th General Assembly (2020), GACOR provides this comment.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation believes the voices of those long marginalized are to be included at the table. A non-chartered community cannot be involved in church councils due to their ecclesial status. Should they be included in the statistical reporting as “churches,” it would not reflect a fair representation of those that have voice and vote. It would also cover over this ecclesial difference and claim status justice when it was not being given. The polity concern needs to be addressed before data is joined. Reporting data separately, maintains a record of the clear differences in power (and access to power and participation) of these groups.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation is made up of sixteen persons, elected by the General Assembly, who are drawn from members and elders, ruling and teaching, from across the church in accordance with F-1.0403. Its constitutional mandate and central functions are described in G-3.0103 of the Book of Order (Form of Government).

OGA COMMENT ON ITEM 02-027

OGA affirms the COGA recommendation that this item be referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). However, should the assembly determine that this item of business is core and critical to our governance and sustainability, and needs to be considered by the 224th General Assembly (2020), OGA provides this comment.

The Office of the General Assembly is grateful to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) in recognizing that this overture is raising broader questions related to membership, ordered ministry, and organization. These are extremely important issues for the church to be discussing. The Office of the General Assembly advises that the item be referred to OGA, COGA, and PMA to help seed this conversation, first with mid council leaders and later with the broader church, with a report on these broader issues to be submitted to the 225th General Assembly (2022).

This particular business asks that the 224th General Assembly (2020) develop means by which non-chartered fellowships can be counted as “churches” for reports and statistical data presentations. “Church,” “church,” “congregation,” “council,” “presbytery,” “synod,” and “General Assembly” each has a specific definition within the *Book of Order* of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Entities that are not organized as a congregation or council but are officially a part of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) are required to either be an entity of a congregation, a presbytery, a synod, or the General Assembly. The presbyteries often (through an administrative commission) have entities affiliated with them that have responsibility for mission and ministry within a geographic region but which are not organized as a congregation and thus not counted as congregations as defined within the *Book of Order* for statistical data and reports. These entities do not have official definitions within the *Book of Order* but are often identified with terms such as immigrant fellowships, new church developments, or new worshipping communities. Additionally, many congregations have entities affiliated with them through administrative commissions that engage in ministry and mission. It is important to count all persons active in mission and ministry within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and for that reason it is important to count individuals active in entities affiliated with congregations and with presbyteries. The ACC advises adding definitions for these entities within the *Book of Order* to count the participants in statistics. However, it is also important to discuss why so many mission and ministry communities are not organized as congregations or do not have plans to organize as congregations in the future. Simply aggregating nonorganized mission and ministry communities with organized congregations in statistical data counting will not be helpful to any ongoing deeper conversations regarding membership, ordered ministry, equity and inclusion, decision-making and church structure.

REAC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-027

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-027—From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee.

The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 02-027.

REAC concurs with the Presbytery of Nevada in our support of recognizing non-chartered fellowships as churches. These fellowships are left out of participating fully in the presbyteries to which they belong.

This is racially motivated, because these churches are looked upon with suspicion by the dominant white culture as not being Presbyterian because their style of worship is not aligned with Eurocentric Presbyterian worship in their manner of speech and customs. However, these fellowships perform all the functions of a church—preaching the word, studying scripture, observing the sacraments, and serving their communities.

All the rights accorded Presbyterian churches are denied them; therefore, they are sidelined and considered inconsequential and are not entitled nor are allowed participation enjoyed by churches who partake of the presbytery and the church at large.

Paul reminded the people who stated that they follow Paul or Apollos or Peter that they serve one God with these words “Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord.”

Item 02-028

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 306.]

Amending Standing Rule B.2.b. Regarding Ratio of Advisory Delegates to Commissioners—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) amend Standing Rule B.2.b. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

~~“b. There shall be four categories of advisory delegates: young adult, theological student; missionary, and ecumenical. When the ratio of advisory delegates to commissioners exceeds one to three, the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall be authorized to make changes to the Standing Rules to create a ratio of less than one to three. The expenses of each advisory delegate shall be paid by the General Assembly (see Standing Rule I.3.) on the same basis as the expenses of commissioners (see Standing Rule B.2.f.(2) below for exception).”~~

Rationale

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly has worked to manage the ratio of commissioners to advisory delegates over the last several assemblies. The task has become more difficult with the continuing reduction of commissioners due to the formulas contained in the *Book of Order* and with the reluctance of past assemblies to reduce the number of advisory delegates. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly has enforced strict reporting deadlines to manage the numbers to some extent, but the ratio is still higher than three to one. Without increasing the number of commissioners, and thus increasing costs of the assembly, or reducing the number of advisory delegates, the assembly will be out of compliance with this Standing Rule. Therefore, we are recommending eliminating the provision and believe that the integrity of the assembly will not be impacted.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 02-028

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) to disapprove Item 02-028.

The proposed amendment to Standing Rule B.2.b of the *Manual of the General Assembly* would remove limits on the ratio of advisory delegates to commissioners in the seating of assembly participants. Advisory delegates participate with voice and vote in the standing committees of the assembly.

The purpose of the limit on advisory delegates was in part to preserve the integrity of the actions of standing committees regarding two important principles of Presbyterian polity:

F-3.0202, which states, “This church shall be governed by presbyters, that is, ruling elders and teaching elders (also called ministers of the Word and Sacrament)”

F-3.0203, which states, “These presbyters shall come together in councils in regular gradation”

Advisory delegates may be neither ruling elders nor ministers of the Word and Sacrament, and were not elected by councils of the church within the regular gradations of councils to be commissioners. Advisory delegates are elected or appointed for a specific role. When the proportion of persons deliberating matters before the whole church includes an inordinately large number of advisory delegates, the process by which a recommendation is made becomes less consistent with the intention of our polity. This is especially true when matters acquiring a specified percentage of the vote in a standing committee are moved automatically to a consent agenda.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution believes the current standard is sufficient to provide for diversity of perspectives while preserving the intention of these foundational principles of our polity.

Item 02-029

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 307.]

Jerusalem 3, 2, 1: Three Faiths, Two Peoples, and One Human Family—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy requests that the 224th General Assembly (2020) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) do the following:

1. Approve the following statement of concern and recommendations regarding Jerusalem and receive the background paper and documentation for study, submitted in fulfillment of the 223rd General Assembly (2018)'s directive:

Summary Statement of Concern: For the Peace of Jerusalem

The face of Jerusalem has been changing rapidly in the direction of a heightened Zionist-Jewish identity, with intensified restrictions on the movement, residency, and human rights of Muslim and Christian Palestinians. In addition to the ongoing violation of international law entailed by its claims of annexation over East Jerusalem and parts of the West Bank, the State of Israel's policies steadily increase interreligious tension with their disregard for the historic claims and freedom of worship of Muslims and Christians. Two factors are alienating moderate Jews, Christians, and secular citizens in most Western countries: the suffocation of hopes of a two-state solution by subsidized settlement growth and the increasingly apartheid-like control over Palestinians by the Israeli military.

In the view of many observers, the release of the Trump Administration's "Deal of the Century" peace plan was an effort to cement these trends in place, while also boosting the reelection chances of a Benjamin Netanyahu under multiple indictments.¹ But the systematic exclusion of Palestinians from historic worship spaces and the enforced neglect or abandonment of religious and cultural sites both poisons interfaith relations and increases disrespect of all religious faiths, ultimately devaluing the holy city.

The holiness of Jerusalem to Reformed Christians is shown in the degree to which it can be shared peacefully and with mutual respect, trying to heal rather than deny or perpetuate the history of tragedy and contention. Exclusivism and fundamentalism make empathy and coexistence impossible; arguably, they make for morally stunted human beings who care only for people "like us." The background paper accompanying this resolution identifies such strands of exclusivism and even absolutism in all three Abrahamic traditions, while clearly lifting up the more tolerant strands within our faiths. This resolution is not a challenge to the truth claims of other religious traditions, nor an attempt at false harmony among different understandings of God's will, but it is an open-hearted Christian embrace of equal human rights and religious liberty for all.

Certainly, religious freedom and equality are convictions shared by most U.S. citizens, emerging from many sources including Protestant Christian and Enlightenment traditions, and championed in the 19th and 20th centuries by Jewish ethical teaching and example. We cannot expect primarily or officially Muslim countries and Israel, if it reserves full citizenship rights only for Jews, to follow the Western democratic separation of religion (or "church") and state. But at this time in history, and not only in Israel and occupied Palestine, ethno-nationalism, racism, and denial of rights to less powerful minorities must be challenged, and not accepted or subsidized by U.S. tax dollars. Again, not only in Israel and occupied Palestine, barriers and sophisticated surveillance confine disenfranchised groups in ghettos and bantustans while their lands and cultures are colonized. But why should we accept Jerusalem becoming a paradigm of exclusion rather than a symbol of God's justice and a community of humans at peace?

In response to the assignment of the 223rd General Assembly (2018), the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) and the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC) appointed a small team to conduct a focused update of the 2016 policy statement, *Israel-Palestine: For Human Values in the Absence of a Just Peace* (<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/israel-palestine-human-values-absence-just-peace/>). That 2016 statement, while still respecting the aspirations of genuine peace processes, holds then-current realities against the seven areas of concern named in the Oslo peace accords, finding deterioration of relations and deprivation of rights in practically every aspect. It contains a comprehensive social policy review and substantiates the church's reasons for engaging in nonviolent economic witness against those who profit from the occupation and assist its enforcement.

Just two years later, however, noting the unilateral move of the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem and the State of Israel's intensified efforts to reshape the city to the exclusive benefit of its Jewish residents and identity, the General Assembly called for "a report to the 224th General Assembly (2020) that reviews and describes comprehensively ... on the status of Jerusalem (using UN, WCC, other research)" and makes policy recommendations informed by the original 1947 "United Nations guidelines for the Status of Jerusalem as described in the UN General Assembly resolution 181," which called for "administration of the cities of Jerusalem and Bethlehem independent from Israeli or Palestinian control." <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/committee/3000014/business>.

By invoking the original UN idea, or ideal, we acknowledge the reality that between 1948 and 1967, the Jordanian occupiers of East Jerusalem prevented most Jews from worshipping at the Western (Wailing) Wall and other sites, while the Israelis let no Arabs back into their properties and many areas of West Jerusalem. Since 1967 Israel has claimed the whole city, operating initially with some restraint, but increasingly using an eighteen-foot concrete wall of separation (*apartheid* in Afrikaans) and checkpoints to strangle the Palestinian economy and divide their land into decreasingly viable mini-Gaza's. Given the

predictable excesses of unaccountable power, perhaps the early UN idea of not allowing any single group to control Jerusalem was actually pretty realistic after all.

With U.S. acquiescence and, since the Trump administration, full-fledged support, the UN's ability to protect and provide for Palestinians trapped inside or outside their land has been blocked and the U.S. has now ended most of its humanitarian aid through UN agencies. This unbalanced support for Israel's domination of the Palestinians has helped animate widespread and deep hostility to the United States in Arab and Muslim countries, often costing Christians associated with the United States and Israel dearly, even though Christian Palestinians suffer the same fate generally as their Muslim peers.

Yet all Christians are called to pray for the "peace of Jerusalem," and the city, as the site of Jesus' earthly ministry, has inspired countless pilgrims. In 1994, the Patriarchs of Jerusalem (bishops and other historic leaders of Christian churches) wrote an eloquent statement insisting on the rights of their communities to help determine the city's future. They recognized the interplay of past and present with that future hope, which has helped them remain steadfast against the steady pressure to emigrate. There is a deep loyalty in their piety from which we have much to learn, an understanding that traditions need embodiment, not in idols, but in holy places of communal memory. For the world Christian community to allow Christianity to be extinguished in Jerusalem would be a form of Docetism, a disembodied spirituality.

Thus, our recommendations below begin with practical concerns for human rights but then look at the meaning of the Jerusalem for Reformed Christians today, opposing the views of Christian Zionism, repudiating anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, and commending new theological work and acts of solidarity. That solidarity, particularly in response to communications from the Palestinian Christian community also affirmed by the 2018 assembly, means standing with and speaking out, "in season and out of season" (2 Timothy 4:2).

2. Approve that the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.):

a. Affirms the right of all people to live and worship peacefully in the city of Jerusalem, and hence opposes the frequent exclusion of categories of visiting Muslim and Christian worshipers from entry to the city, even on holy days. More basically, systematic official and subsidized efforts by municipal and other government authorities to disadvantage and restrict the presence and growth of Arab families, to condemn and appropriate Arab communal and private land (sometimes declared "vacant" because owners are prevented from returning), to change boundaries to exclude from city benefits and access, to enforce a "matrix of control" involving the wall and effectively Jews-only roads, and to otherwise to deprive Palestinians of their homes and rights, are to be resisted as immoral, oppressive, and unworthy of a holy city.

b. Affirms the historic respect shown places of worship and public worship practices going back to the British and the Ottomans and well before, the "status quo" that prevented tension within as well as among religious communities (as at shared shrines and sites) and allowed for mutual tolerance even when one community was dominant in the city's governance. This honoring of traditional areas holy to particular communities is particularly needed with regard to the Al-Aqsa compound, held in trust by representatives of the international Muslim community, which has been a place of massive nonviolent resistance when metal detectors were installed at its gates by Israeli authorities. For each faith community, infringement of sacred space is a challenge to God's sovereignty.

c. Commends all those who seek objectively to document the boundaries, histories, architectural characteristics, and practices engaged in at all sacred sites in the city, including those outside (and in some cases prior to) the three main Abrahamic traditions.

d. Directs all agencies and representatives of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to be mindful of the disputed status of Jerusalem, to include encounters with the stories and concerns of Palestinians in any travel itinerary to the Holy Land, and to make use of Palestinian providers of services whenever possible, given the obstacles they face.

e. Entreats all congregations and members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and pilgrims and visitors of all faiths and none, to be mindful of the disputed status of Jerusalem, to include encounters with the stories and concerns of Palestinians in any travel itinerary to the Holy Land, and to make use of Palestinian providers of services whenever possible, given the obstacles they face.

f. Rejects the doctrines of Christian Zionism that tend toward idolatry and heresy by binding God to speculative human timelines, portraying a wrathful and arbitrary God, dividing and ignoring parts of the Christian community, and making of the land an idol to be possessed, exclusive of moral conditions.

g. Repudiates all forms of anti-Semitism and Islamophobia.

h. Repudiates the move of the United States Embassy to Jerusalem as an act damaging to long-term prospects for peace in the region and contrary to the UN Security Council's 1980 resolution that Israel's annexation of East Jerusalem was illegal under international law (which is why most nations will not move their embassies out of Tel Aviv).

i. Endorses the direct application of the provisions of the *Foreign Assistance Act* known as the "Leahy Laws" to any and all United States aid to the state of Israel.

j. Endorses the immediate passage of H.R. 2407, *Promoting Human Rights for Palestinian Children Living Under Israeli Military Occupation Act*.

k. Affirms the contents of the paper *Jerusalem 3, 2, 1: Three Faiths, Two Peoples, One Human Family*, which includes documentation of the steady and now intensified decline of the Christian population of Jerusalem, suggested in the use of countdown-style numerals.

l. Directs agencies and representatives of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to utilize *Jerusalem 3, 2, 1: Three Faiths, Two Peoples, One Human Family* in their advocacy and policy work surrounding Jerusalem. IN

Rationale

In the original partition plan for Israel/Palestine in 1947, the status of the city of Jerusalem was considered a special case by the United Nations. Recognizing the religious and cultural significance of Jerusalem to Jews, Christians, and Muslims, the United Nations determined that Jerusalem was a *corpus separatum*, neither Arab nor Jewish, and was to be governed by an international regime. According to UN resolution 181, the objectives of the governing authorities in Jerusalem would be:

(a) To protect and to preserve the unique spiritual and religious interests located in the city of the three great monotheistic faiths throughout the world, Christian, Jewish and Moslem; to this end to ensure that order and peace, and especially religious peace, reign in Jerusalem;

(b) To foster co-operation among all the inhabitants of the city in their own interests as well as in order to encourage and support the peaceful development of the mutual relations between the two Palestinian peoples throughout the Holy Land; to promote the security, well-being and any constructive measures of development of the residents, having regard to the special circumstances and customs of the various peoples and communities.²

Such a vision never came to pass. The Civil War of 1947–48 precluded the UN partition plan and Jerusalem ended up divided, an Israeli city with a small Palestinian population (West Jerusalem, today) and an Arab city, including the "Old City" occupied and administered by the state of Jordan (East Jerusalem, today). The situation remained in place until the 1967 war when Israeli forces occupied East Jerusalem, along with the rest of the West Bank, an occupation which remains in place, in violation of international law, until this day.

And so, the Arab population of Jerusalem has been a population under military occupation since 1967. The level of legal restrictions and denial of freedom to the Arab population has varied depending upon the Israeli government in place, but military occupation has been the reality for several generations of Arab Jerusalemites.

In recent years, the situation on the ground for Arab inhabitants of Jerusalem has rapidly deteriorated. Among the most notable developments are:

a. *Home seizure and demolition*: In 2019, Israeli authorities have seized and demolished at least 140 Palestinian homes, with no end expected. These seizures and demolitions, occurring in illegally occupied territory, are justified by a building code that systematically discriminates against Palestinians, rendering many of their residences in violation.

b. *Expansion of Israeli settlement in the West Bank and East Jerusalem*: Emerging after the Six Day War in 1967, the settler movement has created Jewish-only "settlements" in the strategic areas in the occupied West Bank, with a stated goal of creating a Jewish presence in those areas. In Jerusalem, the strategy has been to envelop Arab neighborhoods with settler neighborhoods, limiting the land available for the creation of any Arab community, much less an Arab state. These settler activities, illegal under international law, have seen the tacit, and sometimes explicit, support of the Israeli government. The current Israeli administration has signaled that it plans to annex all settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, making them formally part of the state of Israel.

c. *Creation of a Jewish tourism infrastructure in occupied East Jerusalem*: East Jerusalem contains the "Old City" that is home to sites considered holy by Jews, Muslims, and Christians. Access to these sites has been an issue of contention at least since 1967. In recent years, Israeli authorities have made a concerted effort to expand religious tourism to Jewish sites, including the opening of a tunnel underneath the Old City from the archaeological site called "City of David" to the Western Wall, and a proposed cable car above the Old City, going directly to the Western Wall. The entrance to the tunnel and the archaeological site are located in the Arab neighborhood of Silwan, and houses in that neighborhood have been structurally damaged by the creation of the tunnel. If the plans for the cable car come to fruition, it will be possible for visitors to go to

Jewish religious sites by tunneling under or riding over traditional Arab neighborhoods without ever having to see or interact with the majority Arab population of East Jerusalem, rendering their lives and their presence invisible.

d. *Actions by the current United States administration:* Until the unveiling of the purported peace plan in early February 2020, the most dramatic actions by the current United States administration have been the relocation of the United States embassy to Jerusalem and the closing of the United States consulate in East Jerusalem. The mission of the consulate was to the Palestinian people, while the embassy will deal directly with the Israeli government, meaning that an important line of communication between Palestinian leadership and Washington has been closed. In the larger picture, the move of the embassy is a tacit endorsement of Israeli claims that an undivided Jerusalem is the capital of Israel, and that the land of East Jerusalem, under illegal occupation since 1967, is actually Israeli land.

The situation in Jerusalem is likely to get worse, not better, for its Arab population. Current trends suggest a move away from a multicultural city to an Israeli one. The preservation of Jerusalem as a religious center for three faiths is a likely casualty. Immediately building on the green lights from the U.S. Administration, the current government of Israel seeks cultural as well as physical hegemony over the Palestinian residents who have not yet been moved to the other side of its separation wall or sent even further away.³ Israeli politicians have also been quick to suggest plans to annex the Jordan Valley and other areas slated for Palestinians under the Oslo agreement—but the focus of this report is Jerusalem.

The support of the international status of Jerusalem, and the protection of its identity as Jewish, Christian, and Muslim is the stated position of the PC(USA). The report *Israel-Palestine: For Human Values in the Absence of a Just Peace*, approved by the 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (2016):

in keeping with the initial intention of the United Nations that Jerusalem be an international city to honor and provide access to the holy places of three faiths, the General Assembly emphasizes the importance of having vital communities of all three faiths present. In practice, this means (i) calling on the Israeli government to be transparent and accountable in dealing with Muslim and Christian sacred sites, affording them the same protections as Jewish sites, allowing freedom of worship and all necessary permits for properly designated religious personnel, and allowing internationally authorized archeologists to review claims that affect traditional Muslim and Christian areas of living and worship (as World Heritage sites are reviewed); and (ii) inviting Christian, Jewish, and Muslim dialogue groups, congregations and communities, here and in Israel-Palestine, to discuss questions of religious liberty vis-a-vis those practices which highlight Jewish objects and customs in Jerusalem and other locations to the actual and potential detriment of other religious communities.⁴

The resolution before the 224th General Assembly (2020) affirms this position, while noting the deteriorating and increasingly dangerous situation in Jerusalem. We are called in our policies and in our actions to be peacemakers, even where the hope for peace may seem ephemeral.

Endnotes

1. https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/28/world/middleeast/peace-plan.html?campaign_id=60&instance_id=0&segment_id=20730&user_id=8e1354dae77ac423c448606d44ebf3a7®i_id=26025810.
2. <https://unispa1.un.org/DPA/DPR/unispa1.nsf/0/7F0AF2BD897689B785256C330061D253>.
3. https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle-east/israel-aims-to-unite-jerusalem-with-better-city-services-arabs-want-political-change/2020/02/15/e85b4b3a-4da7-11ea-967b-e074d302c7d4_story.html?utm_campaign=wp_post_most&utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&wpsrc=nl_most.
4. https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/news/pfjp_two_state_final_w_map.pdf.

Item 02-030

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 307.]

Proposed Revisions to the General Assembly Organization for Mission—From the Committee on Theological Education.

The Committee on Theological Education (COTE) recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve the following actions:

1. Amend the *Organization for Mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)* as follows:

- a. Amend the third paragraph of Section V.F.1 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

~~“The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board ensures the continuation of a committee that includes representatives of each Presbyterian theological institution, and that will review the effectiveness and stewardship of the schools on behalf of the church, will exercise the governance responsibilities of the church to the schools, and will encourage and enhance~~

cooperation among the church's theological schools. The committee will be provided direct access to the Presbyterian—Mission Agency Board and the General Assembly.

“The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board ensures the continuation of the Committee on Theological Education (COTE) as a committee that includes representatives of each theological institution identified as in institutional or covenant relationships with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The purpose of the Committee on Theological Education is to attend to the relationship between the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) [PC(USA)] and those theological institutions that are formally related to the PC(USA) either by historic relationship and governance commitments (‘Institutional’ relationships), or by covenant commitments and shared concern for the training of ministry leaders and members of this denomination (‘Covenant’ relationships). COTE has direct access to the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.”

- b. Amend Section VI.2 by deleting the present text and replacing it with the following:

“2. Committee on Theological Education

~~“The Committee on Theological Education has direct access to the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, and their work is coordinated through the Theology, Formation, and Evangelism Ministry with staff accountability to the director of the Theology, Formation, and Evangelism Ministry. The purpose of the Committee on Theological Education is to provide an effective linkage between the General Assembly and the theological seminaries of the PC(USA) by: providing a forum through which the church at large can express its concerns to the seminaries; interpreting the mission of the denomination’s theological seminaries to the whole church; overseeing the interpretation and administration of the Theological Education Fund (1% Plan); serving as a means for cooperation among the church’s theological seminaries; implementing suggestions made by the Special Committee to Study Theological Institutions as approved by the 205th General Assembly (1993); serving as an agency of the denomination for relating to theological seminaries other than those of the PC(USA); and working in partnership with mid councils and agencies of the General Assembly to provide for leadership in local congregations, the denomination, and the world.~~

“The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB) ensures the continuation of the Committee on Theological Education (COTE) as a committee that includes representatives of each theological institution identified as in institutional or covenant relationships with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) as set forth below. COTE has direct access to the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. Its work is coordinated through the Theology, Formation, and Evangelism ministry area, with staff accountability to the director of the Theology, Formation, and Evangelism ministry area. Access shall be in the form of resolutions, a biennial narrative report, comments on issues before the assembly, and other appropriate correspondence. The biennial narrative report shall be forwarded to the PMAB for possible comment.

“The purpose of the Committee on Theological Education is to attend to the relationship between the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) [PC(USA)] and those theological institutions that are formally related to the PC(USA) either by historic relationship and governance commitments (‘Institutional’ relationships), or by covenant commitments and shared concern for the training of ministry leaders and members of this denomination (‘Covenant’ relationships).

“ ‘ Institutional’ relationships require that the theological institution meet the following criteria: (1) The institution must have a historic relationship to the PC(USA), seen in its having been founded with the purpose of training pastoral leaders for the PC(USA) and its predecessor denominations, and in a history of significant financial support from Presbyterian denominations that have merged into the PC(USA); (2) The institution must have a continuing relationship to the PC(USA), which is articulated in its governing documents (as used herein, governing documents shall mean charter, articles of incorporation, or constitution required by its state of incorporation); (3) The institution must agree to abide by the reporting and confirmation policies prescribed by COTE for those in institutional relationship with the PC(USA).

“These include the following provisions approved by the General Assembly: (a) The institution shall report to the General Assembly through the Committee on Theological Education; (b) Presidents/executive officers and trustees/directors elected under the various charter provisions shall be presented to the General Assembly for confirmation [Note: This confirmation vote, while recognizing the autonomy of each institution’s governing board, allows the denomination to note and affirm the leadership of its theological institutions]; and (c) Material changes in governing documents shall be reported to the General Assembly; (4) Where degrees are offered, the degree programs offered by the institution shall be accredited through the accreditation procedures of the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada.

“Providers of theological education who have significant and long-lasting relationship to the PC(USA) may enter into a formal covenant relationship with the PC(USA). ‘Covenant’ relationships require that the theological institution meet the following criteria, and will be elaborated in the covenant document, which may include additional commitments between the parties: (1) Its mission in relation to the Presbyterian theological education enterprise is evident and substantive.

It shall provide clear evidence that it intends to partner in mission with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); (2) It shall report the names of its president/executive officer and board to the General Assembly as part of COTE's biennial report to General Assembly; (3) It demonstrably supports the teaching of Presbyterian and Reformed ecclesiastical and theological material.

“The Standing Rules of the General Assembly provide for the presidents/executive officers (or their designee) of the theological institutions in institutional or covenant relationship with the PC(USA) to be corresponding members of the General Assembly.”

2. Approve the following clarification:

The prior action supersedes all previous actions regarding the Committee on Theological Education, including the actions of 198th (1986) and 205th (1993) General Assemblies.

3. Approve the following:

The Institutional members of COTE are Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Columbia Theological Seminary, Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary, Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, McCormick Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, Princeton Theological Seminary, Union Presbyterian Seminary, University of Dubuque Theological Seminary.

COTE is in conversation with the Omaha Presbyterian Seminary Foundation and San Francisco Theological Seminary, the University of Redlands, and its Graduate School of Theology, regarding the relationship between these institutions and the categories of membership in COTE.

The Covenant Members of COTE are Auburn Theological Seminary and the Seminario Evangélico de Puerto Rico.

Rationale

Confronting the Need to Restructure

Both the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and theological institutions have changed significantly since the Committee on Theological Education (COTE) was established in 1986. These changes have created a disconnection between the purpose, functions, structure, and expectations laid out for COTE in 1986 and the present realities in the denomination and theological institutions.

Among those realities are the following:

- The functions assigned to COTE in 1986 envisioned it having a regulatory role that does not connect with the independence and autonomy of the theological institutions.
- The theological institutions must balance their commitment to the denomination with their need (and commitment) to attract and train students from (and for) a broad ecumenical range of church bodies.
- There has been a steady shrinking of the membership of the PC(USA), reducing the number of students it sends to PC(USA) theological institutions.
- The traditional pattern of theological education as residential preparation for ordained ministry now stands alongside other educational patterns—on-line education, part-time study, students preparing for work other than ordained ministry.
- Theological institutions across the United States face significant financial challenges, propelling exploration of other ways for these institutions to carry forward their mission.
- Theological institutions of all kinds are undergoing significant change. The Association of Theological Schools (ATS) report approximately 10 percent of its member institutions have undergone major structural change such as mergers in the last decade.

Steps Leading to COTE's Proposed Revisions to Its Structure and Manual of Operations

Enabling COTE to connect the denomination and theological institutions effectively amidst present realities has called for rethinking COTE's structure and functions. COTE has been engaged in this rethinking over the last few years.

- 2014. About five years ago COTE began conversations about disconnection between its assigned purpose, functions, and structure, and the realities and needs of both the theological institutions and the denomination. Lingering assumptions that the denomination has a regulatory role over the theological institutions were (and are) particularly problematic. Conversation in COTE reflected on the need to find clarity about a non-regulatory relationship between the denomination and the theological institutions that will allow both to flourish together.

- 2015–16. Over these years a significant portion of COTE’s meetings was devoted to discussion of the role COTE might play, consistent with the charge it was given at its formation while also reflecting the current needs and realities of the PC(USA) and the theological institutions.

- 2017. COTE created a task force to envision how COTE might be designed if the 1986 proposal founding COTE were written today. The task force offered ideas about a dramatically different COTE. COTE discussed the proposal extensively, deciding to accept elements of it, while continuing discussion of concerns about the proposal that also arose.

- 2017 Fall–Spring 2018. Work envisioning a new structure for COTE based on the task force report led to proposals made to the 223rd General Assembly (2018). COTE proposed a downsized structure, with a smaller number of members. COTE also requested that the General Assembly suspend for a two-year period the existing requirements regarding its membership, meeting pattern, and its listed functions, allowing COTE to test a new structure and continue rethinking its functions.

- Fall 2018–Fall 2019. COTE has used the permission granted by the 223rd General Assembly (2018) by:
 - trying out the effectiveness of a smaller membership structure,
 - educating itself on the changing nature of theological education and its future,
 - piloting its revised functions such as advocacy and communication regarding theological education,
 - exploring with San Francisco Theological Seminary, and now the University of Redlands and its Graduate School of Theology to determine its relationship to the PC(USA) in light of its significantly different organizational structure,
 - utilizing the insights gained from this year’s work to finalize this proposal to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMA) and to the 224th General Assembly (2020).

COTE’s Proposed Revisions to Its Manual of Operations

COTE’s proposed revisions to its Manual of Operations include revisions to the following, some of which affect the *Organization for Mission*, as reflected in the proposed amendments to the *Organization for Mission* above. These proposals embody its vision for a renewed COTE.

- Purpose: Highlighting COTE’s commitment to serve as a bridge between the denomination and those theological institutions that are in institutional and covenant relationship with the PC(USA), that are providing theological education that will nourish its ministry and that of its pastoral leaders, congregations, and councils;
- Remembering: proposing the addition to its Manual of Operations of a brief section telling the history of COTE;
- Focus: COTE’s previous Manual of Operations included at least five purposes and fifteen functions for the committee—the proposal will reduce their number (to one summary purpose statement and six functions) and increase their focus;
- Structure: COTE is seeking a structure that best matches the work to be done, one small enough that each member has a clear role to play, and large enough that the concerns and insights of both the theological institutions and the denomination can be fully expressed;
- Membership: The proposed revisions to the Manual of Operations will clarify and revise categories of membership and the criteria for those categories.

COTE’s Agenda for the Future

COTE is grateful for the time it has been given for deep reflection on its work, and on the relationship between the PC(USA) and the PC(USA)-related theological institutions. It believes that the proposed revisions will provide a solid basis for taking on significant work over the next years. That work includes the following:

- Identify a process for communication between a theological institution and the PC(USA)/COTE when major structural changes are pending in one of the theological institutions or in the denomination;
- Initiate a conversation among key parties on what it means to be a PC(USA) theological institution and why it is important to the denomination to have PC(USA) theological institutions;
- Continue to explore the changing landscape of the PC(USA)'s life and the changing environment of theological education, thinking carefully about the needs and opportunities open and opening in the relationship between the PC(USA) and the theological institutions that stand in relationship with it.

Item 02-031

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 307.]

Recognize Persons for Outstanding Lifetime Contributions to Theological Education—From the Committee on Theological Education.

The Committee on Theological Education recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) do the following:

1. Recognize the Reverend Elizabeth Francis Caldwell, Ph.D., Harold Blake Walker Professor of Pastoral Theology Emerita at McCormick Theological Seminary, and the Reverend Darrell Likens Guder, Ph.D., Henry Winters Luce Professor Emeritus of Missional and Ecumenical Theology at Princeton Theological Seminary, for outstanding lifetime contributions to theological education in and for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and present them with the Award for Excellence in Theological Education.
2. Schedule docket time in plenary session to celebrate with each awardee.

Rationale

Elizabeth Francis Caldwell

Lib Caldwell served on the faculty of McCormick Theological Seminary from 1984 to 2014, where she was named Professor of Educational Ministry in 1991 and the Harold Blake Walker Professor of Pastoral Theology in 1996. In 1991, she was ordained to the ministry of Word and Sacrament by the Presbytery of Chicago with a call to teaching at McCormick.

Prior to her appointment at McCormick, Dr. Caldwell served as an educational consultant with three Presbyterian churches in northwest Alabama, 1973–1984. She is a member of the Association of Professors and Researchers in Religious Education and the Association of Presbyterian Church Educators. In 2004, APCE selected Dr. Caldwell as its Educator of the Year. In 2008, she was elected by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to serve as a member of the Presbyterian Publishing Board. She serves on the Editorial Board of the *Journal of Childhood and Religion* and was a member of the Editorial Board of the *Common English Bible*.

Dr. Caldwell received her Bachelor of Arts degree from Rhodes College, studied at the Presbyterian School of Christian Education (now Union Presbyterian Seminary), and received her master's degree in education at Vanderbilt University. She received her Ph.D. from Northwestern University, which was a Joint Program with Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary. Additionally, she received an Honorary Doctor of Divinity from Rhodes College in 1997.

Dr. Caldwell has published in the area of faith and families. Her most recent book is *God's Big Plan* (Flyaway Books, 2019), a children's book written with Theodore Hiebert. After retiring from McCormick in 2014, she is enjoying adjunct teaching at Vanderbilt University Divinity School, writing and consulting on a new companion curriculum for *Growing in God's Love, A Story Bible*. Her book, *I Wonder, Engaging a Child's Curiosity About the Bible* (Abingdon Press, 2016, 2020) focuses on the ways we can engage children and parents in reading the Bible in new ways.

In nominating Rev. Dr. Caldwell for the Excellence in Theological Education Award, David Crawford, president of McCormick Seminary, wrote:

For many in the church and theological education, Lib is perhaps best known for her work with children and the teaching of the Bible to children—and deservedly so. But, Lib Caldwell's work as teacher and scholar transcend age and classroom. She is one of the very few people in theological education whose teaching and writing has reached and touched not only children, their parents, and Sunday School teachers, but pastors, church leaders, scholars, theologians, and more than one seminary president.

Darrell Likens Guder

Darrell Guder, Henry Winters Luce Professor Emeritus of Missional and Ecumenical Theology at Princeton Theological Seminary. He has taught and served in administration at three PC(USA)-related seminaries, one related university, and ecumenically at two other schools. His teaching and publications have been central to the missional church movement, helping thousands of congregations and pastoral leaders understand that the church is called to join God in God's mission in the world.

After three years of study at the University of California at Los Angeles, Dr. Guder transferred to the University of Hamburg, Germany, where he completed his Ph.D. He was ordained to a Lutheran call in Germany by the Presbytery of Los Angeles of the United Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). He holds two honorary degrees: a Doctor of Divinity from Jamestown College and a Doctor of Divinity from Whitworth University.

A former chair of the General Assembly's Committee on Theological Education, Dr. Guder has served in administration and teaching in schools within the PC(USA) and ecumenically. His ministry has included service at the Karlshöhe Ludwigsburg, Fuller Theological Seminary, Whitworth University, Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Columbia Theological Seminary, and Princeton Theological Seminary where he also served as the academic dean.

He is the author of *Be My Witnesses: The Church's Mission, Message, and Messengers* (1985), *The Incarnation and the Church's Witness* (1999), *The Continuing Conversion of the Church* (2000), and *Called to Witness; Doing Missional Theology* (2015); translator of several German academic works; and coordinator and editor of the Gospel and Our Culture Network's research project, *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* (1998).

Craig Barnes, President of Princeton Theological Seminary, nominated Guder for the honor, and credits Guder pioneering missional theology. His nomination letter reads:

"Missional theology" is now a commonplace term in the church and academy, and Dr. Guder is the pioneer of this body of work. His fundamental conviction that the church does not exist for its own sake but rather to equip disciples of Jesus to go forth in faithful service to God's mission in the world is at the heart of all his work. Hand-in-glove with his insistence on doing theology "missionally" is his critique of western Christendom, which he understood as the complacency of the church within societies that stems from having cultural power and privilege. With great urgency, Dr. Guder wanted to rouse the North American church from its comfortable slumber and enliven it to recapture the "apostolic" message of the New Testament—that Jesus calls disciples in order to "send" them into the world in his service. As a result of his influence, the attempt to be "missional" is a priority for congregations throughout North America. The impact of his work goes beyond the academy into the actual practices of congregations, which is the greatest testament that can be offered to the significance of someone's theological achievement.

Item 02-032

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 303.]

Moving Forward Implementation Commission Recommendations and Report.

The Moving Forward Implementation Commission recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020):

1. Amend the *Organization for Mission*, Section VII to clarify the requirements for services that the Administrative Services Group provides to agencies and entities as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

"VII. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation

"The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation is a corporate entity of the General Assembly. It holds funds and title to property in accordance with the 1986 Deliverance of the General Assembly, its Articles of Incorporation, and its Bylaws. Among other things, it provides accounting, reporting, and financial services for the General Assembly and its entities, and employs the staff assigned to the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency. It is funded, subject to overall budget approval by the General Assembly, from unrestricted funds held by it; from restricted funds designated to it; from the portion of the various budgets of the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly needed for employees, facilities, and services provided by it; from management fees; and from other fees with respect to its activities and services. ~~Pending revision of the budgeting process in Appendix A to reflect the new governance structure of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, in 2018, its expenditures for the fiscal years 2018 through 2020 are limited to no more than the amount expended by the corporation in fiscal years 2016 through 2018.~~

"No agency of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), unless otherwise directed by the General Assembly, *and with exception of the Presbyterian Mission Agency and Office of the General Assembly*, is obligated to purchase or use any facilities or services provided by or through the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, ~~other than those for which they have~~

~~contracted or, with respect to the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency for a transition period through 2022, those that as of December 31, 2017, had been provided to such agencies, including but not limited to office space and facilities services. The Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, shall work together and with the other agencies/entities of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to help determine what facilities and services the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, may best offer or cease to offer to the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Office of General Assembly, and other agencies of the church and its entities in the future. If the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, is not able to provide services that are desired/required by entities requiring service, they may procure services from another vendor.~~

“The officers of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, their terms, and their election are defined in its Bylaws. The Treasurer of the corporation shall commission the preparation of an audit report or reports by an independent public accountant of the financial position and operations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, and, to the extent not otherwise separately commissioned and prepared, the financial position and operations of the General Assembly and its other entities.”

2 Move the Mission Engagement and Support Department from the Presbyterian Mission Agency to the Administrative Services Group (ASG) within PC(USA), A Corporation (A Corp). Once moved to ASG, all funds development, interpretation, and education for per capita, and funding relevant to the Presbyterian Historical Society will be included in the Mission Engagement and Support Department’s scope of work. Funding for the department does not change and will continue as follows:

- Special Offerings will continue to be self-funded per currently approved funding formula;
- All other expenses will be covered by unrestricted funds received by A Corp.

3. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB) to eliminate the Legal and Property Committee of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and direct all agencies (as applicable) to revise the board manuals, bylaws, *Organization for Mission*, and all other governing documents and/or policies to reflect that change.

The PMAB is empowered to utilize existing ministerial committees or subcommittees to make mission and policy decisions that may have property or legal implications and call on the staff of A Corp to implement those decisions.

4. Amend the General Assembly Manual of Operations and the *Organization for Mission* to Revise Agency/Entity Review process, schedule, and committee membership.

a. Manual of the General Assembly, section “TIMING OF THE PROCESS AND FORMATION OF REVIEW COMMITTEES”, paragraph one, as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“The review process for General Assembly agencies occurs over the cycle of three General Assemblies. In the first assembly of the cycle, a committee will report its review of the work of the Board of Pensions, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation, and the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc. In the second assembly of the cycle, a committee will report its review of the work of the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, the Office of the General Assembly, and the Presbyterian Mission Agency. *The A Corporation/Administrative Services Group shall be reviewed together with the All Agency Review.* In the third assembly of the cycle, a committee will report its review of the effectiveness of the six agencies, *the A Corporation/Administrative Services Group*, and other governing bodies in working collaboratively to implement the General Assembly’s mission directives.”

b. *Organization for Mission*, Chapter IV, Section D, Item 1 as follows.

“Based on a six-year schedule, the agencies of the General Assembly will be reviewed to evaluate the relationship of their individual ministry with the mission of the whole Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). On nomination of the General Assembly Nominating Committee, the General Assembly will elect ~~two~~ *three* committees in the first year of the rotation, *three* committees in the second year of the rotation, and *one* committee in the third year of the rotation, each to review the work of ~~one of the agencies~~ *an assigned agency/entity* of the General Assembly. Each review committee *of the individual agencies* will be composed of ~~twelve members: four commissioners from the previous three General Assemblies, four who have served on the board of a General Assembly entity other than the one being reviewed, and four at large. The at large members may include ecumenical partners.~~ *eight at-large members. The All Agency/ASG review will be composed of 10 at large members. Special consideration should be given to include commissioners of the last three assemblies and individuals who understand the work of the six agencies.* The committee(s) will use the Standards for Review of General Assembly Agencies in the Guidelines and Policies of the General Assembly. *The committees shall be granted access to all relevant information regarding their work including, but not limited to, policies, financials, and race and equity audits.* The committee will report to the Stated Clerk who will present the report, along with any additional recommendations

from the Stated Clerk, to the next General Assembly following its election the results of the review and make recommendations based on its findings.”

5. Create an Unrestricted Receipts Distribution Policy that provides for the distribution of unrestricted funds received by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation.

All unrestricted bequests and unrestricted gifts over \$50,000 received by Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, shall be allocated to both the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) and the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) at a distribution rate equal to the Administrative Services Group (ASG) cost allocation percentage for the current fiscal year as agreed to by PMA, OGA, and ASG. Agencies and boards shall amend all policies and procedures to accommodate this change.

6. Direct the Stated Clerk, the President/Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and the President of A Corporation to create a coordination table that is comprised of the entities and leadership boards and/or committees under the A Corp.

a. Specific topics for collaboration and coordination shall include but not be limited to: Responses to General Assembly mandates/actions, ongoing and/or emerging mission and ministry, vision, discernment, and the development and assessment of a unified budget.

This table should foster unity and purpose, provide direction and focus, establish a basis for trust, undergird strategic decision-making processes, offer a path for alignment of staffing and programmatic choices; and inspire people to get involved in the work of the church.

Membership shall include: executive leadership, senior staff, committee/board leadership, other staff, board/committee leadership, outside consultants, support as agreed-upon by the table and relevant to a particular item of business.

b. The 224th General Assembly (2020) shall suspend Appendix A for the period between the 224th General Assembly (2020) and 225th General Assembly (2022), replacing it with a continuation of the unified budget process implemented by the MFIC in December 2019. This suspension shall continue until such time as the three boards create and approve language that formalizes this process. The three entities would utilize that process until the 225th General Assembly (2022) ratifies the new process language.

The unified budget should provide a mutuality of focus, efficiencies in processes, and movement towards a shared vision, as well as a sharing of all resources to meet the financial needs of all A Corp entities. It will be presented and approved as a single budget with multiple revenue streams.

7. Direct the Office of the General Assembly to add the Way Forward Commission’s Action on Trust and Transparency as an appendix to the General Assembly Manual. [See Appendix 1 for the full text of this Way Forward Commission action.]

8. Affirm and ratify the administrative action taken by the Moving Forward Implementation Commission clarifying the A Corp Board's responsibility over litigation. [See Appendix 2 & 3 for full text of the Stated Clerk’s memo and the commission action to make amendments to PMAB Manual and the *Organization for Mission*.]

9. Direct the executives or presidents of the agencies and entities to continue the work of the Diverse Voices Table.

- Direct the executives or presidents of the agencies and entities to appoint two members each to the Diverse Voices Table, which will report its activities to each General Assembly through the appropriate body, and regularly communicate with the boards and executives of its constituent entities. The Diverse Voices Table shall live out the goal (and “Approach,” and “Purposes & Product,”) for coordination and collaboration articulated in the administrative action of the Way Forward Commission “that this important work of inclusion and equity is not relegated to one office or group, but instead would become a unified effort that permeates the entire denominational structure and potentially beyond.”

- Direct the Diverse Voices Table to be the organizing body and connection point for consultants to conduct Equity and Inclusion Assessments every six years, including selecting the external auditor for the next Equity and Inclusion Assessment in collaboration with the chairs and executives of the agencies and entities involved. The equity and inclusion implementation plans and progress on the goals shall be a part of the agency and entity reviews in the regular review cycle as delineated in the Manual of the General Assembly and the *Organization for Mission*, Chapter IV, Section D, Item 1.

Rationale

Rationale for Recommendation 1

Revise Requirements for ASG-Provided Services to Agencies/Entities

After a review of services provided and conversation with staff from the Presbyterian Mission Agency and Office of the General Assembly, the Moving Forward Implementation Commission (MFIC) determined that the Presbyterian Church

(U.S.A.), A Corporation (A Corp) and Administrative Services Group (ASG) has been effectively providing the services both desired and required by the agencies currently receiving services. In addition, ASG has committed to a service-delivery model that is designed to continually improve and expand service delivery going forward. As such, the commission believes the last two years has allowed sufficient transition time and believes, one, that the agencies under the A Corp corporate umbrella should be required to maintain administrative services from the A Corp and, two, agencies contracting services from the A Corp can be relieved of the requirement to maintain services through 2022.

The commission calls on the A Corp and ASG leadership and staff to continue their efforts to expand their service offerings to all agencies and entities of the denomination in addition to streamlining and finding cost and process efficiencies where possible.

See also Recommendation 4, which adds a review of A Corp and ASG in the regular agency review cycle

Rationale Regarding Recommendation 2

Move Mission Engagement and Support from the Presbyterian Mission Agency to the Administrative Services Group within the A Corp.

Part of the MFIC mandate was to review and identify additional services that could be included with the Administrative Services Group. The ability to provide a cohesive, consistent, and theologically sound process for interpreting the missional and ecclesial work of the church emerged as critically important. Both the work of the MFIC and the Special Committee on Per Capita and Financial Sustainability found that, while the Presbyterian Mission Agency has proper infrastructure in place to adequately interpret, educate, and raise funds, the Office of the General Assembly has no such infrastructure in place. This has both missional and ecclesial implications as per capita funding declines. The recommendation for a Unified Budget where revenue and expenses of both PMA and OGA are considered together is essential to delivering a well-supported and better-coordinated approach to ministry. This budget coordination requires that there be a unified funds development approach that would yield financial resources to support both PMA and OGA. This would be a meaningful first step in centralizing all funds-development operations across all agencies and entities of the denomination.

Rationale Regarding Recommendation 3

Revise the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Manual of Operations.

This change is a follow-up to the changes made that separated the corporate functions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, from the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. With the corporate legal/property functions now housed within A Corp, there is no need for there to be an advisory committee in this capacity within the Presbyterian Mission Agency's governing body. Should legal or property actions be required, the proper process would be as follows: (1) ministry area and/or ministerial committee makes a mission decision, (2) mission decision is communicated to the A Corp, (3) A Corp advises and takes action to implement mission decision as required. In addition to this process, the Legal/Property A Corp staff and committee shall advise and consult as necessary or required by the Presbyterian Mission Agency's governing body.

The MFIC believes it is critically important for the assembly, the A Corp, the Office of the General Assembly, and the Presbyterian Mission Agency to continue to find ways to increase parity across the agencies.

Rationale Regarding Recommendation 4

Revise Agency/Entity Review Guidelines.

It is important for all agencies and their corporate expressions (A Corp/ASG) to be reviewed regularly. Because the work of A Corp and the ASG supports several of the agencies, it makes most sense to review that work as the collaboration and openness of the agencies working together is reviewed. ASG should be reviewed as a part of the All-Agency Review every six years. It is anticipated that some portions of ASG/A Corp will be reviewed as a portion of the review of entities that directly relate to or contract with it. The commission believes that these reviews would recommend changes to the *Organization for Mission* and other documents and policies to reflect necessary changes to the governance structure in the future.

The recommended change to membership numbers and qualifications come as a reflection of the challenge and difficulty of nominating three review committees in each cycle instead of two with the given requirements. After consulting with the General Assembly Nominating Committee, the MFIC believes that by making all seats at-large seats they will be able to bring more qualified names to the assembly for election.

Rationale for Recommendation 5

Share unrestricted revenue received by A Corp.

Currently, all unrestricted bequests go solely to the Presbyterian Mission Agency. It is the belief of the MFIC that this unfairly limits potential revenue that should be shared with the Office of the General Assembly. In order to keep allocations simple, the commission recommends that the allocation of these gifts follow the percentages used for the Administrative Services Group cost allocation.

Rationale for Recommendation 6

Create a coordination table between the entities and leadership boards/committees under the A Corporation.

The national agencies, particularly the ecclesial and missional bodies, are at their best when they work well together. The commission believes a close and intimate relationship between OGA, PMA, and ASG is critical to the mission and programmatic delivery. While some staff and offices currently work exceptionally well together, there are many more examples of a lack of coordination and effort to work together to complete the important work of the agencies.

This recommendation seeks to bring together the key stakeholders of the ecclesial, missional, and administrative services group to coordinate, collaborate, and innovate as they work to fulfill their efforts for mission delivery and the work to fulfill assembly mandates. The recommended group of leaders and staff are well-positioned to use their collective resources in the best way possible. There is significant evidence that this group of people are both capable and interested in doing this work. One example was the “Budget Summit” that the commission convened in December 2019. While this has been done successfully when convened by the commission, there is no ongoing mechanism or requirement for these bodies to work together regularly and strategically.

People across the church do not understand the financial system of budgets, revenues, and expenses that make up the entities within the A Corp. By empowering this body to take seriously the work of seeing the budgets as one and eliminating the “us” and “them” language that divides the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly, they have the opportunity to broaden the understanding and mission interpretation of the denomination.

Rationale for Recommendation 7

Way Forward Commission Action on Trust & Transparency.

The Moving Forward Implementation Commission affirms the work of the Way Forward Commission in adopting the Administrative Action on Trust and Transparency and recommends that it be added as an appendix to the General Assembly Manual (see Appendix 1 for the original recommendation). The Way Forward Implementation Commission’s Action on Trust and Transparency stands as a governing document for all agencies, but is not codified alongside other such actions of commissions and assemblies that preceded it. In this time of transition for the PC(USA), this action will help ensure that information and collaboration across agencies and throughout the councils of the church continues to be a priority and takes on greater importance.

Rationale for Recommendation 8

Ratify MFIC Action on PMAB’s role in legal action.

In June 2019, responding to a request of the Stated Clerk, the MFIC suspended certain sections of the Presbyterian Mission Agency *Organization for Mission* and the General Assembly Manual of Operations. This reflected the mandate of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) that allowed the MFIC to “take any and all administrative action necessary to accomplish the Moving Forward Implementation Commission vision with respect to the Way Forward Commission initiatives and the June 5, 2018, Administrative Supplement.”

These actions removed the authority of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board to retain outside legal counsel, pursue litigation, or otherwise make legal decisions that bind the Presbyterian Church, A Corporation (A Corp), except through the legal staff of A Corp and with the decision of the A Corp Board of Directors. Since the 223rd General Assembly (2018) acted to restructure the board of directors of A Corp, there is no longer a need, nor is it appropriate, for PMAB to address legal matters. To that end, MFIC recommends that the temporary suspensions initiated by the commission be approved by the 224th General Assembly (2020).

Rationale for Recommendation 9

Diverse Voices Table.

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) mandated that the MFIC support the establishment of the Diverse Voices Table. The MFIC has worked closely with the members of the table as they organized and began their work, especially with the Equity and Inclusion Assessments [which were referred to as “Race Audits” in the 223rd General Assembly (2018)’s mandates]. The report of the Diverse Voices Table on their significant work in carrying out the General Assembly’s instructions is attached as Appendix 4 of this report. The MFIC commends the Diverse Voices Table for gathering and working together around their charge to move forward the “vital and complicated work of justice, inclusion, and equity.” The MFIC also commends the executives of the agencies and entities who appointed and supported the work of the Diverse Voices Table.

Appendices

1. WFC Action on Trust and Transparency
2. Stated Clerk Memo re: Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Co-Chairs
3. Memo from MFIC Re: Special Called Meeting of the Moving Forward Implementation Commission
4. Diverse Voices Table Report to the Moving Forward Implementation Commission

COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 02-032

COGA has recommended that this item be referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). However, should the assembly determine that this item of business is core and critical to our governance and sustainability, and needs to be considered by the 224th General Assembly (2020), COGA provides this comment.

Comment on Recommendation 2

We think the concerns expressed by Item 02-032 are best addressed by recommendations in the COGA comments on Item 02-80, Recommendation 4. However, if that is not the will of the body, COGA affirms the commission’s recommendation in moving the Mission Engagement and Support Department to the ASG within A Corp as we believe this will assist the Office of General Assembly in interpreting and developing a better understanding around financial support for the office and its work.

Comment on Recommendation 5

COGA welcomes the opportunity to receive unrestricted funds to further its work and recommends lowering the bequest and gift amount to \$25,000, considering the new financial reality the church is experiencing and that gifts in the larger amount may be quite few and far between. Further, we advise consideration be given to distributing the gift amount equally between OGA and PMA.

Presbyterian Mission Agency Comment on Item 02-032

PMA Comment on Item 02-032, Recommendations 2., 3., and 5. “Moving Forward Implementation Commission Recommendations and Report.”

PMA Comment on Recommendation 2 of Item 02-032 (COM-075)

The Presbyterian Mission Agency believes that mission engagement isn’t corporate work, but rather mission work, and that Mission Engagement & Support should not be moved to the church corporation.

Mission Engagement & Support is integral to the work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. The primary work of MES is to interpret the mission of the church in a way that increases engagement and leads to funds development and support for ministry.

MES is already interpreting per capita-funded ministries as part of its engagement with mid councils. Over the past two years, there has been extensive collaboration with the Office of the General Assembly, including:

- Development of per capita promotional materials in 2017 and key advice in finding an external consultant who works annually with OGA to refine the messaging of per capita.
- Participation in an annual review of mid council relationship, health, and giving trends with OGA leaders.

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- Inclusion of per capita giving in an annual “lookbook” produced for sessions and designed to make a formal ask for financial support.
- Solicitation of sponsors for General Assembly Hearts & Hands special event in 2018 and 2020.
- Involvement in national conferences working with mid council leaders to apprise them of how Presbyterian Mission is funded, as well as the importance of per capita giving.

Rather than move MES to the corporate operations of ASG, we believe that it would be better to strengthen the collaboration with OGA in the current structure.

The recommendation asserts that “funding for the department does not change ...,” however, using the 2021 budget proposal as an indicator, funding would change. MES has the current funding structure:

General Assembly Mission Budget—Restricted Funds (Special Offerings)	\$2.3M
General Assembly Mission Budget – Restricted Funds (Mission Support)	\$0.8M
General Assembly Mission Budget – Unrestricted Funds	\$2.3M
Total	\$5.4M

As stated in the recommendation, Special Offerings are self-funded (meaning the expenses of the offering are deducted prior to recipients receiving their share).

If MES moves to ASG, the remaining 3.1M (\$0.8M plus \$2.3M) would become an ASG expense, to be covered by unrestricted funds. Since PMA and OGA split ASG costs on an 80%/20% basis, PMA would be responsible for \$2.5M (80% of \$3.1M) and OGA would be responsible for \$620K (20% of \$3.1M). Both figures are higher than either agency currently invests in MES from unrestricted funds.

If the intent the intent is for PMA to continue to cover all MES costs, even after the move to ASG, using only unrestricted funds. This move would require PMA to supply \$3.1M in unrestricted funds, \$800,000 more than is currently used.

Rather than suffer the negative financial implications, PMA would rather continue the current funding of MES, with the understanding that collaboration with OGA is necessary in order to fully incorporate OGA’s needs into the work of MES. In this way the critical mission interpretation work of MES can remain central to the work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

PMA Comment on Recommendation 3 of Item 02-032 (COM-075)

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board is unsure of the intent of this recommendation and has not had any consultation with the Moving Forward Implementation Commission about what the commission is concerned about regarding the Property and Legal Committee of the board. It appears from the second paragraph of the recommendation itself that the commission recognizes that the work of the committee is necessary and should be done by the board. If the commission is concerned about the name of the committee, PMAB will be glad to change the name.

Standing Rule A.2.b. states: “An entity, commission, or committee submitting a report with a recommendation that affects the work or budget of another entity(ies) shall submit evidence that a consultation has been held with the affected entity(ies).” Despite efforts by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board to have a conversation with the Moving Forward Implementation Commission on this matter, no consultation occurred.

Again and again, the Moving Forward Implementation Commission assured the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board that it was not the intent of the commission to eliminate any of the committee of the board, in fact, the board was told that the number and nature of its committees was a matter for the board’s discretion.

To be clear, there were differences of opinion on the function of the Property/Legal Committee following the last assembly. However, the Moving Forward Implementation Commission took an administrative action that made clear that PMAB and its committees had no corporate or legal responsibility for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). PMAB does not dispute the outcome of this action and has been in compliance with its mandate.

Nonetheless, PMAB does have need for the functions of a Property & Legal Committee as part of its elected oversight for General Assembly mission and the Presbyterian Mission Agency. Without this elected oversight, matters of substance do not receive counsel from a missional body prior to being forwarded to a corporate body by staff. PMAB believes that the mission input is important. Here are a few examples:

1. *International Properties*

Many properties are held by PMA/A Corp for the benefit of mission partners around the world. Understanding the mission impact/benefit of transferring or selling those properties is a PMAB responsibility. While A Corp is the entity to transfer title, transactions should be reviewed by Property and Legal to ensure that the transfers are being done appropriately for the mission they benefit.

2. *Revisioning and Reconstruction of Stony Point Conference Center*

PMA, under the leadership of President Diane Moffett, is expanding its commitment to Stony Point as the centerpiece of Matthew 25 ministry within the church. We will need the legal ability to process major financial gifts and supervise a large, multiyear construction project.

3. *Repurposing Restricted PMA Gifts Held by the Presbyterian Foundation When the Original Charitable Purpose No Longer Exists*

Legal approval is needed to use old, restricted funds for a new but related purpose. The Property and Legal committee can help identify new mission areas that qualify for funding. This is a detailed legal process that will benefit from board involvement and oversight.

4. *Review of PMA Policies*

Policies are developed and implemented by the PMA Board, the A Corp Board, and staff that affect the mission arm of the national church. Property and Legal, working with A Corp and OGA, is the best place to systematically review policies to ensure that they are reasonable, consistent with the mission of General Assembly, and up-to-date.

In addition, the PMAB needs to have an ability to oversee the implementation of the General Assembly's Ethics Policy within PMA and PMAB. The Ethics Policy is actively used to set ethical standards and ensure compliance among staff and board members. Under the board's restructure to reform itself, it cannot be handled by the coordinating committee since the executive committee model was specifically rejected by the board in part because of problems identified by the Moving Forward Implementation Commission. The administration of the Ethics Policy should be overseen by the Property and Legal Committee, as well as any changes that are made to the policy.

PMAB believes that its Property and Legal Committee is essential as part of its elected oversight of the Presbyterian Mission Agency and believes that this function does not interfere with the duly assigned responsibilities of the Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation.

PMA Comment on Recommendation 5 of Item 02-032 (COM-075)

The Presbyterian Mission Agency requests careful precision in the language of this recommendation. The Presbyterian Mission Agency has already agreed to share future unrestricted bequests with the Office of the General Assembly on the same basis as which the expenses of the Administrative Services Group are shared.

The phrase "unrestricted gifts over \$50,000," however, is not precise. For example, currently, both Shared Mission Giving and General Assembly Per Capita are considered "unrestricted gifts." It is not uncommon for these forms of giving to be received by mid councils throughout the year, and then sent in a single gift to the General Assembly at yearend. When that occurs, these gifts may exceed \$50,000.

We don't believe that the Moving Forward Implementation Commission intended future shared mission or per capita giving (if larger than \$50,000) to be divided between PMA and OGA in this manner. Instead, we believe the intent was for large, unexpected unrestricted gifts from living donors to be included, so that future unexpected unrestricted gifts, whether from bequests or living donors, would be divided by this method. Clarity now will help all three entities in the future.

With this distinction, PMA believes the distribution is possible without harming existing ministries. If other forms of unrestricted giving are impacted, then current ministries will be negatively impacted.

REAC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-032

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-032—From the Moving Forward Implementation Commission Recommendations and Report.

The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 02-032.

The Racial Equity and Advocacy Committee (REAC) supports the recommendations in the report with a request that DVT be in consultation with REAC as they continue the work of inclusion and racial equity.

REAC, formerly the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC), since 2004 has advocated for assessments of the six agencies, including gathering employment data and monitoring of cultural proficiency progress. In 2010, ACREC advocated for a six-year plan for the implementation of cultural proficiency by all six agencies. This work of advocacy continued with repeated calls for assessment of the six agencies. Our recommendations were implemented into the Way Forward Commission Report in 2018, which mandated race audits using an external auditor.

Given REAC's historical work and involvement, we ask that we be directly involved with the process of bringing the work of racial equity to fruition.

Item 02-033

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 303.]

Approval of Guiding Statement—From the 2020 Vision Team.

The 2020 Vision Team recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) do the following:

1. Approve the 2020 Guiding Statement to the church in its entirety for use by and for the church until a time in which the church deems it prudent to form a new guiding statement.

The Guiding Statement

Our Reformed heritage understands the power of words and we humbly offer this Guiding Statement as speaking truth and declaring life.

The 2020 Vision Team was mandated by the 222nd General Assembly (2016) and charged with developing a guiding statement for the denomination as it moves into the future.

In the faithful desire to discern the will of God we listened throughout the denomination and beyond, hearing hope and frustration, expectation and anxiety. Along our journey even when it is hard to see the way forward, God has spoken and continues to speak to us in these times and places.

Therefore, God calls the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to be:

Prayerful

- Confessing our sin to God and those we have wronged, we accept our responsibility for the brokenness in the world and in ourselves. In Christ we are assured of forgiveness and freed to forgive others.
- We ask the Holy Spirit to direct and guide us as we actively listen to Scripture and fully engage in the joys and challenges of life in this present world.
- By grace Christ binds us together, cleanses us in the waters of baptism, nourishes us at the Lord's table, and sends us out to share the Good News.

Courageous

- Reformed and always being reformed, we follow the Holy Spirit in new and imaginative ways to places we have not yet been.
- We foster the hope of reconciliation in Christ who transforms the world through healing individuals and communities.
- We work for God's justice and peace for all people in every land, walking with the vulnerable, the marginalized, and the abused.

United

- As members of the Church universal, we are Christ's disciples, called by God and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

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- Against forces that seek to divide, Christ compels us to bear witness to a love that connects communities across great differences.
- We approach others in a spirit of openness and trust as we follow Jesus Christ in respecting the freedom of other religions, worldviews, and traditions.

Serving

- Gratefully following the One who washed his disciples' feet, we listen to our neighbors, working to meet their practical needs.
- We partner with others to become the hands and feet of God in the world, showing compassion and generosity to all creation.
- The Holy Spirit pushes us beyond the familiar, meeting people where they are as we share Christ' transformative love.

Alive

- We are people of the resurrection: though death surrounds us, we are not afraid because we follow the One who was raised from the tomb.
- The Holy Spirit gives us courage to build a community that reflects the fullness of God's image in humanity: beautifully diverse in age, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender identity, sexuality, physical and mental ability, geography, and theological conviction.
- In the sure and certain hope of resurrection, we joyfully testify that the Church and its members are called to follow Christ's model by risking all, even life itself, for the sake of the Gospel.

And so, God calls the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to be: Prayerful, Courageous, United, Serving, Alive. Thanks be to God.

2. Commend this Guiding Statement and attached resources to the agencies of the PC(USA) (Board of Pensions, Office of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Foundation, Presbyterian Investment & Loan Program, Inc., Presbyterian Mission Agency, Presbyterian Publishing Corporation), its mid councils, seminaries, congregations, and individuals, to study, engage in conversation, and reflection using this 2020 Guiding Statement for the purpose of vision, spiritual growth, and formation of the PC(USA). Mandate the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation develop resources with a focus on this Guiding Statement.

3. Commend that the Moderator(s) of 224th General Assembly (2020) appoint an Implementation Team to introduce this Guiding Statement and to integrate it into the life of the denomination. This Implementation Team shall also seek to proclaim and celebrate the transformative stories of those who engage intentionally with this Guiding Statement. In reflecting the spirit of the mandate given to the vision team by the 222nd General Assembly (2016), the assembly shall allocate sufficient resources for the Implementation Team to effectively accomplish its work.

4. Commend that the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) and the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) recommend to the 227th General Assembly (2026) to consider forming a 2030 Vision Team to explore a new guiding statement for the denomination that will help us name and claim our denominational identity as we seek to follow the Spirit into the future decade.

Rationale

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) created the 2020 Vision Team "to develop a guiding statement for the denomination and make a plan for its implementation with all deliberate speed." The 2020 Vision Team listened to congregations, mid councils, and individuals throughout the nation and presented to the 223rd General Assembly (2018) a draft Guiding Statement with the intention of presenting the final statement to the 224th General Assembly (2020) accompanied by implementation tools.

Throughout the last two years, it has become evident that this Guiding Statement is an active engagement tool to be used rather than a stagnant document. While listening around the denomination, we learned about the good work that churches and presbyteries are doing. We heard several common themes:

1. they were listening to their communities and hearing their needs,
2. they were helping where they could,
3. they realized there were needs that still needed to be addressed.

Since communities have many differences across the church, we believe that this Guiding Statement can help to guide the PC(USA) without restricting the good work that God is already doing. Just like people used the North Star to guide them to their destination, this Guiding Statement is the North Star that helps you navigate your way to your final destination be that a vision statement, a strategic plan, or simply a clearer sense of mission.

We have tested this Guiding Statement at several levels of the denomination. We created resources including an engagement tool (Appendix B), “This Is Who We Are” song (Appendix C & D), and others available online at pcusa2020.org that can be used to engage with this Guiding Statement and begin to discern how it can work for your context. The continuation of this journey is important for the success of this Guiding Statement through curriculum at all levels of the denomination. This, in conjunction with an Implementation Team, will successfully roll out this Guiding Statement to the denomination. It is the recommendation of the 2020 Vision Team for this Guiding Statement to be used at the individual, congregation, seminary, mid council, and agency level. A combination of introducing as well as educating the denomination of this new Guiding Statement is imperative to its success.

The Implementation Team serving a two-year term shall be made up of the following:

1. At least three teaching elders and at least three ruling elders or members at large.
2. The following demographic traits should be considered when naming members of the committee: gender identity; geographic location; inclusion of people under the age of forty; racial ethnic minorities; those engaged in both parish and validated ministries; theological diversity.
3. The following skill sets should be considered when naming members of the committee: creativity, communication, technology, marketing.
4. The Co-Moderators of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall serve as additional, ex officio, members of this committee.
5. Select members of the 2020 Vision Team would be willing to consult and advise.

This Guiding Statement is a living document. It is not intended to be static. The 2020 Vision Team heard from the denomination an urgent longing for vision and direction. To anticipate this desire in the future, we recommend the development of a new vision team to usher in the next decade and reevaluate this Guiding Statement in relation to the needs of the denomination.

It is the honor of the 2020 Vision Team to present our work to the 224th General Assembly (2020) in the hope that it will continue to guide the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for years to come. Together, we can be Prayerful, Courageous, United, Serving, and Alive!

GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 02-033

General Assembly Committee on Representation Comment on Item 02-033. Approval of Guiding Statement—From the 2020 Vision Team.

This item has been recommended to be referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). However, should the assembly determine that this item of business needs to be considered by the 224th General Assembly (2020), GACOR provides this comment.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation commends to the assembly Standing Rule K.1.c, which lists GACOR with the General Assembly Nominating Committee (GANC) as consulting partners to the General Assembly Moderator(s) in appointing special committees and bodies created by General Assembly action.

The GACOR stands ready to advise new bodies and advocate to ensure the widest participation, diversity, and representation so that God’s diversity is seen throughout the process and within the resulting nominating pools and finalized slates. The GACOR reminds the assembly that the GANC and the GACOR work together to fulfill F-1.0403 and that relationship is reflected in the Standing Rules and the Organization for Mission.

The GACOR stands ready to partner with and assist the Moderator(s), PMA, and OGA. GACOR evaluates the impact of inclusion practices and advises and consults with bodies and agencies to ensure the widest participation of all persons in our denomination.

02 RECOMMENDED REFERRALS TO THE 225TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2022)

If the 2020 Guiding Statement is approved to the church in its entirety for use by and for the church, concerted efforts must be made so that its content can be translated into the languages used in all our congregations for its effective and widespread use.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation is made up of sixteen persons, elected by the General Assembly, who are drawn from members and elders, ruling and teaching, from across the church in accordance with F-1.0403. Its constitutional mandate and central functions are described in G-3.0103 of the Book of Order (Form of Government).

PPC COMMENT ON ITEM 02-033

PPC congratulates the special 2020 Vision committee for their good efforts. Item 2 of their recommendation says the following: “Mandate the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation develop resources with a focus on this Guiding Statement.” PPC was created by the General Assembly to be a financially, self-supporting agency with editorial autonomy. It is our understanding from the leadership of the committee that by “resources” they intend Christian education resources, as opposed to public relations, advertising, or similar resources. PPC would be glad to participate in the publication of Christian education resources around the 2020 Vision Statement, provided that adequate financial resources were identified for this work and guidance was given by the committee as to the purpose and content of these Christian education resources.

REAC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-033

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-033—From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee.

The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 02-33.

REAC supports the guiding statement.

Item 02-034

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 306.]

Special Committee on Racism, Truth, and Reconciliation Progress Report with Recommendation.

The Special Committee on Racism, Truth, and Reconciliation recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve (and/or support) the strategies contained in the Special Committee on Racism, Truth, and Reconciliation progress report.

Rationale

“[God] has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” [Micah 6:8 (NRSV)]

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) action approved as amended:

2. Establish and convene a “Racism Truth and Reconciliation Commission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)” that is charged with conducting a churchwide listening campaign to hear the voices of peoples long silenced regarding the state of institutional racism and oppression within our church.

a. This commission shall report the result of its listening campaign to the General Assembly meeting in Baltimore in 2020. The report shall include a statement of findings and recommendations to be voted upon by the General Assembly. Approved actions shall begin implementation within the following year.

b. The commission shall consist of twenty persons (ten ruling elders and ten teaching elders); fifteen of these persons shall identify as people of color. In addition, every effort should be made to achieve geographic representation from every synod. The commission shall be appointed by the Moderator and shall be constituted no later than December 31, 2016. It shall be chaired by a former Moderator or Vice-Moderator of the General Assembly who will serve as a member of the commission. The commission shall be resourced and funded through the Office of the Stated Clerk.

c. The commission shall meet twice annually beginning in 2017 and shall conduct the work of the listening campaigns on a regional basis. The commission shall determine strategies to carry out its work and present these strategies in a report to the 223rd General Assembly (2018) for their approval. (*Minutes*, 2016, Part I, p. 719)

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) approved reconstituting the Racism Truth and Reconciliation Commission as the Special Committee on Racism, Truth, and Reconciliation, and

- that the Special Committee on Racism Truth and Reconciliation be composed of fourteen members;

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- that no less than four members of the special committee be persons of color; and
- that the special committee hold its first meeting no later than September 30, 2018, bring a progress report to the 224th General Assembly (2020), and a final report and recommendations to the 225th General Assembly (2022). (Minutes, 2018, Part I, p. 1105)

Background

The Racism, Truth, and Reconciliation Commission was approved as amended by the 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in response to an overture from the Presbytery of Baltimore and approved for recommendation from the Assembly Committee on Social Justice Issues. At the 223rd General Assembly (2018), the Racism, Truth, and Reconciliation Commission was reconstituted as the Special Committee on Racism, Truth, and Reconciliation (“special committee” or “SCRTR”) from a recommendation of the Co-Moderators of the 222nd General Assembly (2016) and Vice-Moderator of the 218th General Assembly (2008). This reconstituted recommendation was approved for consideration by the Assembly Committee on Social Justice Issues and subsequently approved by the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

Byron Wade, Vice-Moderator of the 218th General Assembly (2008), was appointed moderator of the special committee. He convened the first meeting of the SCRTR via video conference on September 28, 2018. The special committee met for their first face-to-face meeting on March 24–26, 2019, in Atlanta, Georgia. The purpose of this meeting was to introduce ourselves and become familiar with the approved mandate of “... conducting a churchwide listening campaign to hear the voices of peoples long silenced regarding the state of institutional racism and oppression within our church.” (*Minutes*, 2016, Part I, p. 719)

Getting Started

Commencing the work, the SCRTR was given a presentation on exploring the intersection between personal and institutional racism as well as the implications of these on our work from Crossroads Anti-Racism Training. The special committee engaged in conversation with the Office of Research Services for possible assistance. Much of the following time was spent in developing a process going forward in forming four work sub-teams, listing upcoming denominational events, and assigning teams to conduct listening sessions. At the request of the special committee’s moderator, Marta Pumroy was appointed co-moderator by the Co-Moderators of the 223rd General Assembly (2018), Ruling Elder Vilmarie Cintron-Olivieri and the Reverend Cindy Kohlmann.

Members of the Special Committee are Marta Pumroy (co-moderator), Cedar Rapids, Iowa; Byron Wade (co-moderator), Raleigh, N.C; Stanley Bhasker, Bath, N.Y.; Amy Busse Stoker, Spring Hill, Tenn.; Carlton Johnson, Atlanta, Ga. (resigned July 2019); Kate Jones Calone, Setauket, N.Y.; Ryan Landino, Geneseo, Ill.; Fran Lane-Lawrence, Portage, Mich.; Hiram Pérez-Cordero, Atlanta, Ga.; Miguel Rosa-Morales, Trujillo Alto, Puerto Rico; Pam Tajima Praeger, Spokane, Wash.; Angela Ryo, Bloomfield Hills, Mich.; Joe Scrivner, Tuscaloosa, Ala.; and Stella Webster Farmington, N.M. Denise Anderson and Valerie Izumi provided staff services to the special committee.

Planning Our Listening Sessions

To fulfill the mandate, the SCRTR set out to conduct our listening sessions. After much discussion of questions and procedure, we ended with a set of questions designed to get at the larger, more institutional presence of racism, not limited to personal attacks, so we could also identify the operative systems at play. The resources that the Office of Research Services provided did not seem to fit what we were looking for, as stories and insight are not necessarily “data.” We sought to humanize our mandate as much as possible, being sensitive to avoid objectifying personal stories and narratives.

In our effort to be efficient with our resources, instead of us going out to regions, we went to events where people from a variety of regions would be attending. The process team had a list of evolving questions. Sometimes we would ask these questions using Powerpoint presentations and at other times by distributing paper handouts. Here are the questions that were asked:

POWER + RACE PREJUDICE = RACISM

- When you’ve experienced or witnessed acts of racism and/or microaggressions within your church or presbytery, how did you or others respond?
- What training or resources on anti-racism and/or cultural competency does your congregation and/or presbytery offer? How have you and others taken advantage of them? How have they been effective?

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH STRIVES FOR REPRESENTATION OF ALL OF GOD’S PEOPLE.

- Have you been invited to serve in leadership roles with your congregation, presbytery, synod, or national level of the church? Please share experiences you have had in leadership roles at your church, presbytery, synod, or General Assembly level.

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- How does your church practice mutual respect, genuine fellowship, and meaningful representation and inclusion?

A FOCUSED GOAL OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IS TO DISMANTLE STRUCTURAL RACISM.

- Please share ways in which racism exists within the institutional church.
- Please share ways you have witnessed the impact of the church's policies, actions, and commitments in dismantling racism?
- If the Special Committee could take away one important idea or concept back in regards to reconciliation to our General Assembly on your behalf, what would it be?

Our Listening Sessions in Action

June 27–30, 2019, Atlanta, Georgia | *National Black Presbyterian Caucus*

Committee members in attendance: Carlton Johnson, Marta Pumroy, and Joe Scivner

We experienced pushback just by introducing the mandate and topic of our sessions. We received questions of “What is different?” “What will be done?” “How long will this committee be listening?” No one wanted to share stories and the first session was empty. After some more promotion, our second session was full of participants. There were stories of personal experiences and some with themes on a systematic level, i.e.: the difference between having a seat at the table and being able to participate at the table. We noticed feelings of weariness from participants, hearing such things as, “We tell you these stories but what is getting done?” and “Not again. ...” It was expressed that intersectionality was not being addressed.

July 12–14, 2019, Seattle, Washington | *Native American Women's Gathering*

Committee members in attendance: Marta Pumroy and Stella Webster

The women who were attending were thankful we, and other members from the PC(USA) including the Presbyterian Women Moderator JyungIn “Jenny” Lee were in attendance. It sent a message PC(USA) knows the value of these amazing women. There appeared a reluctance to tell their stories as well. People did not want to bring up negative experiences when they were at a place of gathering for fellowship. All of the women at the listening sessions expressed comfort at their own churches, but negative experiences in participation with the larger church happened for a few. The verbal asking or body language expressed to them, “why are *you* here?” It is evident that indigenous women have life stories interwoven with racism. The PC(USA) continues to work to make things right with our indigenous siblings in Christ. The work that has gone into the Doctrine of Discovery report by the 223rd General Assembly (2018) is enlightening.

July 16–20, 2019, Purdue University | *Youth Triennium*

Committee members in attendance: Carlton Johnson, Hiram Pérez-Cordero, Marta Pumroy, and Miguel Rosa-Morales.

It again was a challenge to get people interested in sharing their stories, not wanting to take away time from an event, or bring bad feelings into a place of good feelings, especially with youth. We were thrilled the antiracism theme was prevalent throughout the week. This was the committee's first experience with white people wanting to listen in on the sessions. Because racism affects ALL people, we determined prior to the session we would listen to their voices, but keep white people separate from people of color. We do not want to make trauma on view for others. The white people who attended exhibited they were thrilled the PC(USA) was addressing racism. At the same time, people of color were thinking “this is not the time or place.” The white people expressed they were impressed with the diversity of Triennium, while the people of color were wondering “where the diversity was?” or giving suggestions on bringing in more. The committee underestimated the desire for white people to listen to experiences of racism of people of color. The white people in attendance were wanting to take action against racism to “do better” and expressed wanting more training, information, and discussion. However, the structure of our listening sessions did not make space for those goals. Although, our presence did provide an outlet to express outrage, and the noticing of racism, from people with less exposure to people of color in their area.

August 1–3, 2019, Baltimore, Maryland | *Big Tent*

Committee members in attendance: Stanley Bhasker, Fran Lane-Lawrence, Marta Pumroy, Miguel Rosa-Morales, and Angela Ryo.

Our listening experiences at Big Tent continued to show similar partners as we noticed at Triennium: people of color not wanting to share, or being already weary of stories with no action such as mandates with wording, but not much action

in the pews. Again, we had a lot of interest from white people wanting to be a part of the listening groups. As before, we separated out people of color from white people. As discussion occurred, our committee observed that some who would self-label as an “ally” demonstrated a need for more antiracism training, while at the same time those who were well-versed in antiracism concepts expressed wanting more implementation.

Checking In

In late spring and early summer, we had all-committee Zoom meetings to check in and give progress reports from the listening sessions. The listening sessions were helpful and the responses received were transcribed with the assistance of the Office of the General Assembly. Feedback from these initial listening sessions informed preparation for conducting future listening sessions and developing strategies for connecting with communities whose voices still yearn to be heard.

Inspired by the conversations with Presbyterians who shared during the listening groups, the SCRTR also engaged in a book study of *Dear White Christians: For Those Still Longing for Racial Reconciliation* by Jennifer Harvey.

Black and White Responses: Course Corrections Along the Way

It was important to us as a special committee that we gave ourselves permission to absorb, reflect, and make course corrections in our work, even as we were guided by the Spirit in directions we may not have anticipated from the start. It became apparent in the course of our listening campaign that different approaches were necessary, particularly depending on whether we were listening to people of color or white people.

In engaging people of color, we were struck by the reports of participants of color having a sense of déjà vu upon engaging our listening spaces. A clear pattern emerged of hearing “we did this before; why are we doing this again?” We interpreted a sense of caution and cynicism of what work our listening sessions could achieve that similar past efforts by the denomination have not.

At the same time, we have noticed when white people engaged our listening spaces, white people often exhibited a kind of excited fascination for the stories of people of color, as if by listening, there may be revealed “the answer” to solving racism. It was often the case that stories white people told about race represented misinformed or problematic interpretations of the phenomenon of race that changed the dynamic of the listening space, which took time and focus away from the stories of people of color and the very voices long-silenced mentioned at the heart of our mandate. It became more and more evident that a specific kind of conversation space needed to happen independent from the other: an undisrupted space provided for people of color, and a group space among white people that could share accountability for what is spoken. Ultimately, what has evolved is a shift from being *passive* listeners who only take notes, to *active* listeners who help manage the space in ways to empower the group hold itself accountable for misinformation and derailments. It is possible that one of the systemic factors at play in sustaining racism in our institutions is the way white people have been socialized to engage spaces that attempt to center voices of people of color; this is a challenge that the committee is navigating.

A “CoInspired” Turning Point

Committee members in attendance: Stanley Bhasker, Amy Busse Stoker, Kate Jones Calone, Ryan Landino, Fran Lane-Lawrence, Pam Tajima Praeger, and Stella Webster.

The emerging realization for differing kinds of listening work with white people (offering direction and deconstruction) and people of color (offering solidarity and healing), found footing at the CoInspire Conference held in Montreat, October 7–10, 2019, where members and staff of our committee were invited to present Digging Deeper Conversations as a part of the conference program. Fran Lane-Lawrence and Ryan Landino co-facilitated a session entitled “Sharing White Experiences of Racism: Listening to oOur Participation in White Supremacy Culture—A Session for White People,” while Denise Anderson led “Reframing the Conversation: A Session for People of Color.” Creating independent spaces for white people and people of color revealed itself as an effective approach for engaging white people in listening to a shared need to dismantle racism and their participation in it, while at the same time lifting up voices and power of people of color in the midst of oppression. This approach has affirmed our understanding of how to approach our sessions engaging the topic of race and challenged us to reconsider different ways of listening to the larger experience of racism.

Old Patterns and New Questions: Have We Been Here Before?

Another illuminating moment from the CoInspire Conference came at the end of a session in which members of the special committee were able to engage Dr. Jennifer Harvey, author of our group book assignment *Dear White Christians: For Those Still Longing for Racial Reconciliation*. In research for this book, Dr. Harvey interfaced with many of those who were at the heart of past PC(USA) efforts on truth, reconciliation, and reparation around race. She challenged us directly to consider what

we were offering as a committee that previous efforts have not. This led to a number of questions about the implications of our mandate.

A first question had to do with how our special committee functions in relation to the past racism truth, reconciliation, and reparation efforts of our denomination. For example, are racial justice truth-speaking efforts mandated by the General Assembly building upon each other constructively, or is there a cycle of creating action, with recommendations, but with little follow-through and short-term institutional memory of the work that has gone before? Is there a cycle to be named? Might we have an opportunity to name the larger scope of the story of truth, reconciliation, and reparation work of the PC(USA)?

Second, Dr. Harvey’s challenge to us led to some thinking about who are “the voices of those long silenced” in our denomination? Are they those who have never had access to a platform to speak their truth, or may it also include those who have been a part of formal efforts to be heard by the General Assembly in the form of committees, task forces, and resolutions, but after their approval at the General Assembly, they were promptly forgotten and ignored?

These questions have opened up new areas of exploration for the special committee, which led to the constitution of new subcommittees in January 2020. One of them is to survey the presbyteries to see what responses have been made to the past actions of the General Assembly around antiracism truth, reconciliation, and reparation, and to document if any such responses manifested in the form of structural change.

Getting (Re)grounded in Montgomery, Alabama and Next Steps

The second in-person meeting of the SCRTR was January 9–11, 2020, in Montgomery, Alabama. The SCRTR met there because of the historic role this city played in the Civil Rights Movement in addition to the influence and legacy of the Rev Dr. Martin Luther King. Visits were made to the Legacy Museum: From Enslavement to Mass Incarceration, the National Museum for Peace and Justice, and the Equal Justice Institute. That evening the SCRTR had the opportunity to have dinner with members of the Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley’s Anti-Racism Task Force, and viewed the Montgomery film premiere of *Just Mercy*, followed by theological reflection and dialogue.

Conclusion

Members have committed significant time refining the work of the special committee, including reconfiguring sub-teams and making preparations for submitting a progress report to the 224th General Assembly (2020) in Baltimore, Maryland.

Faced anew with the racial injustices of the past as well as the present, including the church’s complicity in these injustices, the importance of the work ahead is to:

- dismantle and disrupt “institutional racism and oppression within the church,”
- to call the church to do the hard work of repair necessary for reconciliation,
- identify where that work is happening and where we have fallen short,
- commit in action to previous statements and recommendations approved by past General Assemblies regarding racism and God’s call to live in a just and equitable community—an environment of equality and justice for all people in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

The SCRTR has done considerable work building relationships among its members and fulfilling the commitment to the work of fighting racism in the denomination. The plans going forward include furthering and honoring the work of listening to the “voices of those long silenced,” in addition to reexamining our process to fulfill the General Assembly mandate with recommendations to the 225th General Assembly (2022) in Columbus, Ohio.

Item 02-035

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 306.]

Investing in a Green Future: A Vision for a Renewed Creation—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) do the following:

1. Approve the study and recommendations entitled “Investing in a Green Future: A Vision for a Renewed Creation,” including the list of resources on environmental justice, environmental racism, and eco-stewardship, to fulfill the direction of the 223rd General Assembly (2018), which requested a comprehensive updating of energy policy. “Investing in a Green Future: A Vision for a Renewed Creation” commemorates the thirtieth anniversary of *Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice*, approved by the 202nd General Assembly (1990) and provides a discussion on the intersections of environmental justice, environmental racism, and economic justice

2. Give thanks to God for the historic witness of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) thirty years ago when the 202nd General Assembly (1990) approved *Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice*, providing vision and guidance for Presbyterians and all people to participate in God’s redemption of the creation. The policy called the church to make the 1990s a “turn-around decade” for ecological restoration. Additionally, it defined eco-justice as “The well-being of all humankind on thriving earth.” It provided the church a vision that all is interconnected and inclusive so that our concept of justice is comprehensive, and cannot be complete when one element, be it economic, racial, social, or environmental, is missing.

3. Confess that we have not sufficiently “responded to the cry of creation” and hereby recommit to a “turnaround decade” for restoring creation. We have failed to place the intrinsic value of God’s creation above the idols of the world, such as wealth, power, acquisition, and status. We have failed to embrace fully the principles of stewardship and sustainability, of God’s concern for the poor and their participation in processes and policies, of accepting for our own lives that which is sufficient (rather than the constant accumulation of more), and of solidarity with all creation. We recommit our energy, our treasure, and our vision to a future in which God’s creation is restored, the human family lives together in balance and justice with each other, and the social and ecological destruction that our society inflicts on the world is reversed and repaired.

4. Work towards a goal of 100 percent renewable energy in congregations, mid councils, and agencies in the PC(USA) by 2030 by practicing energy efficiency, purchasing our power from renewable energy sources, and investing in the development of renewable energy.

5. Affirm that the work of restoring creation not only includes establishing a right relationship between humans and nature, but also promoting economic justice for the human family and racial justice for our society. In our culture, this means dismantling the white supremacy that permeates our lives and institutions, and making reparations for centuries of harm. That harm has often combined environmental, racial, and economic injustice.

6. Urge individuals, congregations, mid councils, and other governing bodies of the PC(USA) to make use of the extensive resources about eco-justice available from the Presbyterian Hunger Program, Creation Justice Ministries, and other partners. A list with links can be found in the attached appendix. In particular, the 224th General Assembly (2020) commends for use, *The Power to Change: U.S. Energy Policy and Global Warming*, approved by the 218th General Assembly (2008), which provides a comprehensive treatment of global climate change and the steps that must be taken to address this looming human-caused catastrophe and which must necessarily be part of the response to the issues raised here.

7. Affirm the Presbyterian Mission Agency commitment to make restoring creation, including environmental justice, racial justice, and economic justice, a key priority in its programming and in its advocacy.

8. Concerning the church’s public witness with respect to policies that will affect these goals:

a. Affirm our belief in the human right to clean water and air.

b. Support policies and regulations that rigorously reduce air pollution, not only carbon pollution, but also particulate matter and other carcinogenic air pollutants that disproportionately affect low-income, vulnerable communities of color living near regulated facilities and power plants.

c. Express our conviction that a just solution ought to address environmental racism.

(1) Ensure that communities affected by environmental racism are included at the table and have the opportunity to provide leadership in the movement to find solutions to the current ecological crisis.

(2) Acknowledge seriousness of local pollution in specific communities as a systemic problem.

(3) Affirm that those who suffer most have the strongest moral claim in shaping restorative policy and practice.

d. Support policies that improve water quality and that stop the ongoing pollution of U.S. waterways, ground water, etc.

(1) Preemptively stop or suspend fracking and other fossil fuel extraction that endangers local communities with dangerous, toxic wastewater that is frequently dumped in streams or other water supply sources.

(2) Halt the construction of fossil fuel pipelines. Not only must we transition our energy infrastructure away from fossil fuels, but these pipelines are also hazardous to the communities in which they are built.

(3) Protect and increase investment in public lands that not only preserve pristine wilderness for posterity, but also provide natural filters, carbon sinks, and ecosystems that clean and restore water systems and soils.

(4) Ensure that toxic waste sites and other environmental hazards are not located near people's homes, nor new housing built near such sites; in particular, the low-income communities of color that are regularly targeted for these sites because they lack the wealth and political power to oppose them effectively.

(5) Ensure that existing toxic waste sites, wherever they are, receive proper maintenance and lining to prevent seepage and protect against the contamination of the water supply.

(6) Support comprehensive infrastructure replacement programs that replace lead pipes, retrofit sewer systems, and repair or replace other sources of toxicity in water. The water crisis in Flint, Michigan, is dire and must be addressed comprehensively, but it is not the only community afflicted with poisonous water contamination from aging and outdated infrastructure.

e. Affirm the "polluter pays" principle. Ensure that the economic burden of conversion to a new economy rests on those who have the ability to pay, including corporations, private investors, and the government. Further, ensure that local, state, and federal governments raise new revenue to address these challenges using progressive taxation, rather than through flat, regressive taxes that will disproportionately burden lower-income taxpayers.

(1) Require polluters to pay for their own mitigation and cleanup without passing costs on to consumers.

(2) Support capping executive compensation, stock buybacks, and shareholder profits in order to ensure that polluters bear the social and environmental costs of their own businesses.

(3) "Green taxes" must serve to internalize the social and environmental costs of doing business, so that the true costs, including safety and environmental regulatory compliance, industry and building retrofitting, research and development, mitigation of past pollution, are incorporated into the price for all items, from energy to food, transportation, building/housing, and health care.

(4) "Green taxes" should be used to raise revenue to invest in a variety of priorities, including aforementioned investments in a new economy, pollution mitigation and cleanup, adaptation efforts, protection of land and species from degradation and extinction, and cost offsets for persons who are unable to bear the increased prices for goods and energy.

f. Reiterate that the goal of a "green economy" cannot be limited strictly to ecological concerns or environmental policy, but must address concerns of racial and economic justice in the marketplace, including a living wage; access to safe, affordable housing, health care, and food; rigorous regulation of high-polluting sectors and industries; programs to replace and retrofit aging buildings and infrastructure; access to jobs and job training in sustainable industries; and workforce development programs for workers who will transition from the fossil fuel industry to sectors with renewable and sustainable practices.

g. Affirm the economic principle of "sufficiency" as a guiding factor in our economic decisions, as opposed to "excess," which currently guides the U.S. economy. We believe that people are more important than profits and that God has provided abundance in creation. Whatever the mixture of market and government protection or provision, no person should live in abject poverty while others enjoy heedless excess. God has provided resources sufficient for all people and creatures to have what we need.

h. Urge the U.S. state and local governments to:

(1) Prioritize investment in low- and zero-emissions industries and products.

(2) Provide incentives/disincentives (tax, subsidy, and regulatory) for all sectors of the economy, including private citizens, to switch to low- and zero-emission products, transportation, buildings, food, etc.

(3) Invest in appropriate-scale renewable energy production, ramping up large-scale renewable technologies that are already available, such as solar and wind, while avoiding displacement by large-scale hydroelectric projects.

(4) Avoid commitments to energy production and technologies that continue to produce toxic waste, such as nuclear energy, or that provide only short-term or provisional solutions to long-term problems.

- (5) Support programs that provide training for workers in all sectors, and in particular those who will necessarily leave the fossil fuel industry. Provide or support economic development for the regions and communities that depend on fossil fuel for jobs and livelihoods.
- (6) Invest in housing and building retrofitting, especially in communities affected by environmental racism, in order to reduce and clean up unhealthy environments, improve efficiency, reduce emissions, and conform to the best practices available.
- (7) Incentivize a shift away from fossil-fuel and chemical intensive industrial agriculture and invest in regenerative and agroecological farming, which have the added benefit of sequestering from the atmosphere large amounts of carbon into the soil.
- (8) Invest in food system conversion to help communities form thriving local food systems, which make healthy food more accessible and reduce the use of fossil fuels in the fields and in the transportation of food from farm to table.
- (9) Partner with states, providing adequate funding for the conversion of the transportation sector to renewable energy sources, including expanding current and building new mass transit and investing in the infrastructure necessary to make low-carbon or non-carbon vehicles practical, such as electric charging stations.
 - i. Encourage congregations, mid councils, and agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to invest in the renewable energy industry.
 - j. Direct the Mission Responsibility Through Investment Committee to engage with insurance companies and banks to cease insuring or lending to new fossil fuel projects.
 - k. Recognize that those who are most affected by climate change, both in the U.S. and around the globe, are the least equipped to handle its effects. The U.S. must allocate significant resources to mitigate cost increases for historically underserved communities in the U.S. and for international adaptation for the most vulnerable communities in the world.
 - l. Recognize that Indigenous people carry the traditional knowledge and practices that protect and sustain the majority of the planet's biodiversity, including the essential needs for human life. By supporting Indigenous peoples in their efforts, we attempt to honor the broken and unenforced treaties that ultimately led to the environment's neglect.
 - m. Affirm the need for well-funded research agencies and regulatory agencies.
 - (1) While most of the climate research was first sponsored by private companies, those companies were not obligated to share findings with governmental agencies or the public. Corporations that give their investors information on the climate effects of their operations that differs from the conclusions of their internal research should be fined or otherwise punished. We need to invest in the work of independent scientists who will guide the development of regulation, regardless of profit.
 - (2) It is not sufficient or realistic to expect the market to correct itself without government regulation. In order to protect vulnerable communities, in particular communities of color who have consistently been on the receiving end of environmental pollution, toxic waste disposal, and failing infrastructure, any method of assessing the cost of carbon, through a tax or market-based approach, must be coupled with rigorous regulation in order to protect these communities specifically.
 - (3) Regulatory agencies need to be well-funded and staffed so as to have the capacity to enforce needed, rigorous regulation independent of political appointee and industry conflicts of interest. A revitalized Environmental Protection Agency needs to restore the Office of Environmental Justice and its advisory committee.
 - (4) Further, neither the White House nor Congress should be permitted, based on partisan politics or ideologies, to meddle in the work of science-based regulation. The system of checks and balances must ensure that no elected leader is allowed to subvert science to serve a political end.
 - n. Affirm the scientific consensus, stated in the Fourth National Climate Assessment and Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Reports, that global climate change is real, is human-caused, and has already caused significant harm to humans, wildlife, and natural ecosystems. The U.S. must take immediate, swift, and effective action to reduce carbon emissions to prevent catastrophic climate change, mass species extinction, hazardous sea level rise, mounting risks to human health, and increasingly erratic and dangerous weather patterns. All U.S. policy remedies must set climate goals and emissions reductions targets based on the best available climate science and commensurate with international agreements and goals.

o. Denounce the failure of the United States to engage in good faith with the international community as it seeks to craft a global response to climate change. Urge the U.S. to return to the community of nations that is working together to restore a sustainable future. In particular, the U.S. must engage in international negotiations pursuant to the Paris Agreement and the Silesia Declaration, making and meeting commitments to our global partners.

9. Recognize that transitioning to a more just, restored, and sustainable world will be difficult, but possible. While it is hard for us to imagine a low-carbon/zero-carbon economy without fossil fuels, where environmental care comes before profit, in which racism and poverty are functionally eliminated, we must do all of these things. Instead of focusing on the difficulties or expense, we must lift up our vision and actions to create a revived environment, better health outcomes, employment opportunities that provide a living wage, clean air and water, wilderness preserved for its own sake, universal access to healthy food, and the reconciliation of broken relationships.

10. As the church celebrates that earlier theological and ethical work, the assembly encourages every pastor, every congregation, and all the teachers and professors in the church to contribute to the work of creation care theology, to understand God's presence and purposes in nature and the cosmos of which we are part, and to defend the tree of life in all its forms, from the cross of Jesus Christ to the tree of nation-healing leaves.

11. Affirm the contents of the study paper, *Investing in a Green Future: A Vision for a Renewed Creation*. Direct agencies and representatives of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to utilize the affirmed paper in their advocacy and policy work surrounding caring for God's creation.

Rationale

The 202nd General Assembly (1990) approved *Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice*, which included a “Call to Restore Creation:”

Therefore, God calls the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to
—Respond to the cry of creation, human and nonhuman;

—Engage in the effort to make the 1990s the “turnaround decade,” not only for reasons of prudence or survival, but because the endangered planet is God's creation; and

—Draw upon all the resources of biblical faith and the Reformed tradition for empowerment and guidance in this adventure. (*Minutes*, 1990, Part I, pp. 646–47)

Giving thanks to God for the historic witness of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) thirty years ago, we confess that we have not “responded to the cry of creation.” We have failed to place the intrinsic value of God's creation above the idols of the world, such as wealth, power, acquisition, and status. We realize that, despite the church's comprehensive report on ecological crisis thirty years ago, we have not done enough to heed the call and avert catastrophe. The 1990s were not a “turnaround decade” for God's creation, so the 224th General Assembly (2020) joins with previous assemblies (1971, 1981, 1990, 1998, 1999, 2003, 2006, 2008, and 2018) in recommitting our energy, our treasure, and our vision to a future in which God's creation is restored, the human family lives together in balance and justice with each other and the rest of the creation, and the social and ecological destruction that our society inflicts on the world is reversed and repaired.

This sin that we confess is not limited to environmental degradation, but rather encompasses the full spectrum of environmental injustice, racial injustice, and economic injustice. The forces of greed, indifference, and white supremacy have combined to paint a picture of our environmental, economic, and communal future that is more dire than we could have predicted thirty years ago. This call to renewal and investment in our future must be centered on ecojustice, including antiracism and an ethic of economic sufficiency.

Environmental Racism—Starting Where the Need Is Greatest

In today's political and social climate, environmental advocacy is varied and diverse, but specific to the church's witness is a special concern for the intersection of ecological degradation and racism—environmental justice (EJ). Church statements since the 1970s have recognized the need for participation of vulnerable and poor communities in solutions, but the ongoing intractability of the current situation in the U.S. requires extra intentionality. These recommendations seek to bring together the multiple strains of ecological concern, to fill in gaps in social witness policy, and to view these issues through the lens of environmental injustice, as called for by the previous General Assembly.

Today's environmental activism can be characterized by two separate groups. The first is a largely white activist community whose concern is the “big picture” and whose strategies will embrace any and all public policy solutions that begin to address the very real ecological disaster that humans have created on earth. The other is the Environmental Justice (EJ) community, which is largely disadvantaged communities—black, Latinx, and Native American communities whose priorities are more local, though no less urgent.

EJ communities feel that “big picture” climate advocacy fails to address their concerns. The New Jersey Environmental Justice Alliance, one EJ voice, argues that regulation is better than market mechanisms for reducing greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) because regulating polluting facilities “would ensure that climate change mitigation policy would not only combat climate change but also help to reduce the disproportionate amount of pollution that is frequently present in EJ communities, i.e. communities of color and low-income communities, including those located in New Jersey.”¹

As we recommit to God’s call to restore creation, we must ensure that EJ’s and low-income communities’ needs are included in the discussion and that members of these disadvantaged groups not only benefit from new policies, but also help to lead the movement to find solutions that are comprehensive, effective, and just. It is important that we, as the church, stand in solidarity with and behind those communities that have been systemically and historically subjected to pollution and poison in their very homes, schools, workplaces, and recreation spaces.

Society Bears the Burdens, Rather Than the Polluters

In today’s market economy, the true environmental and social costs of goods and services are not included in the price that consumers pay. Just as the federal government subsidizes large, wealthy retailers by allowing them to pay their employees poverty wages, making full-time workers eligible for public services, such as SNAP and Medicaid,² multinational energy corporations obtain permits to pollute air and water, emitting greenhouse gases and other pollutants with impunity, while society bears the burden of the impacts and the cleanup.

In contrast, ethical regulations should require corporations to bear the cost of their business and its cleanup. It is unacceptable that our society permits unfettered profit at the expense of workers in poverty-wage jobs, communities whose water and air are poisoned, and the bare minimum of pollution mitigation and prevention. These costs—living wages, pollution mitigation and cleanup, retrofitting, clean technology development, etc.—must be borne by corporations as a cost of doing business.

In keeping with the principle of sufficiency, confident in the belief that God has provided enough for everyone, company executives and shareholders must accept a more reasonable profit so that some of the market-based earnings can pay the true cost of doing business. Taxpayers should not be required to bear the burden of corporate cleanup when corporation profits are more than ample to provide the necessary funds.

Green Taxes

The 221st General Assembly (2014) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) approved an extensive report, *Tax Justice: A Christian Response to a New Gilded Age*. In addressing the question of green taxes, the assembly approved the following public policy recommendation: “Work to adopt taxes and tax expenditures that encourage responsible stewardship and protection of God’s creation. ‘Green’ taxes, generally speaking, incorporate a product’s social and environmental costs (often called ‘externalities’) into the costs of consumption, paying for remediation or innovation in some cases and reducing consumption or use that carries undesirable consequences” (*Minutes*, 2014, Part I, p. 669). It is notable that green taxes can serve three purposes. The first is to provide necessary revenue needed to invest in the economic conversion to a sustainable economy. The second is to incentivize certain behaviors, whether at the personal or corporate level, and the third is to disincentivize other behaviors.

Should the federal government pursue the mechanism of placing a price on carbon, which might entail a carbon tax, a cap-and-trade system, or some other market mechanism to price carbon, it must be designed in such a way that ensures the carbon price is high enough to be effective at lowering carbon emissions, while also generating the revenue that will be required to invest in jobs, infrastructure, industry conversion, building retrofit, and most importantly to mitigate the increased costs to those who are economically vulnerable.

In particular, low-income communities must be held harmless from the increased costs. Communities that are affected by systemic, environmental racism are rightly skeptical of any price on carbon that relies on the market to correct polluting behavior. These communities know from experience that the market fails them with shocking regularity. Without significant government intervention and oversight, any market-based “solution” will lead to the exacerbation of already harsh economic situations.³ Any price on carbon must be paired with rigorous regulations that curb the pollution that affects these communities most severely and be crafted so as to cause the least economic hardship.

Affirming the Need for Regulation and Research

It is clear that the market alone will not regulate itself. It is further evident that for-profit corporations will not regulate themselves at the expense of their profit margins. Because corporations have not made decisions for the good of the whole at the expense of shareholder profits, we need strong regulatory and research bodies at the federal level that will not only perform their own research, but also enforce regulations and ensure that profits do not come before people.

Precautionary Principle

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) approved a statement on the precautionary principle, which states that “when an activity raises threats of harm to human health or the environment, precautionary measures should be taken even if some cause-and-effect relationships are not yet fully established scientifically. In this context the proponent of an activity, rather than the public, should bear the burden of proof.”⁴

In light of this call for caution, activities such as fracking and the construction of pipelines should immediately be halted. The industry has failed to prove that fracking is a safe procedure by which to extract natural gas from the earth or that pipelines provide a safe, spill-proof conveyance through which to transport fossil fuel. In fact, there is significant evidence to the contrary—that these procedures are indeed not safe.⁵ Therefore, federal and state agencies must cease issuing permits for pipeline construction and fracking and require affirmative evidence that these activities can be done safely, without contaminating ground water or otherwise degrading the environment, before allowing these processes to continue.

Addressing Global Climate Change and Investing in Our Future

The 218th General Assembly (2008) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) powerfully addressed the need to address global climate change through its policy recommendations in *The Power to Change: U.S. Energy Policy and Global Warming*. This and many assemblies since have spoken eloquently on the need to address climate change,⁶ so it only needs to be added that the situation of carbon pollution has grown significantly more dire in the twelve years since the statement. Global climate change requires immediate, swift, and effective action to reduce carbon emissions in order to prevent catastrophic climate change, mass species extinction, mounting risk to human health, and increasingly erratic and dangerous weather patterns.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) also needs to consider its investments regarding climate change. *Power to Change* urged individuals and families to “Invest personal funds in the renewable energy industry and also in companies that demonstrate concern for the well-being of their workers, their communities, and the environment” (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 934). It is time for all levels of the church to discern their call regarding investments in caring for creation. Additionally, the Mission Responsibility Through Investment Committee should use its seat at the table to engage with banks and insurance companies to cease from lending to or insuring new fossil-fuel development projects.

International Cooperation

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) also urges the United States to engage in good faith with the international community in the negotiations to address global climate change. For decades, the community of nations has been meeting and slowly negotiating benchmarks for salvaging a sustainable future. The most recent Paris Agreement set forward global benchmarks that nations must meet in order to avert catastrophic climate change. Unfortunately, in 2017, President Trump announced that the United States would withdraw from the Paris Agreement and our national commitments to our global partners.⁷ This decision effectively put a stop to U.S. participation and cooperation in the process of addressing global climate change.

Further, the U.S. has not signed the recent “Solidarity and Just Transition Silesia Declaration,” which was developed at the COP24 United Nations Climate Change Conference (2018) in Katowice, Poland.⁸ This document outlines the social and political ramifications of addressing climate change and commits to a climate transition that invests in “decent work and quality jobs,” and emphasizes the ongoing need for sustainable development and the eradication of poverty, with a special concern for the most vulnerable and economically poor people in the world.⁹

It is time for the U.S. to stop playing partisan games with the future of our global community. The U.S. government must reengage with our international partners to ensure the future safety of the planet we share.

Conclusion

This vision for a renewed and restored creation is daunting in its scope, but we know that God’s abundance makes this transition possible. There is no doubt that transition to a low carbon/zero emissions economy will be difficult. Indeed, most people living today cannot imagine a society in which we have left behind fossil fuels, the internal combustion engine, degradation of the environment for profit, poverty, and racism, but we believe that such a vision is possible. Environmental degradation and climate change cannot be addressed without also tackling the underpinning sins of racism, white supremacy, and economic injustice, and so we must engage in the hard work dismantling white supremacy, starting within our own institutions. The work of antiracism is the necessary foundation to the ongoing work of restoring creation to a right relationship.

We believe that God is calling the church to the trifold work of environmental justice, racial justice, and economic justice. To those who would worry about how difficult this transformation will be or how expensive to achieve, we must lift up our vision—an environment renewed, better health outcomes, living wage jobs, clean air and water, wilderness preserved for its own sake, access to healthy food, and the reparation of broken relationships.

Endnotes

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Item 02-036

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 307.]

Recommendation to Direct GACEIR, in Partnership with the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency, to Explore a Global Covenant Agreement (GCA) to Use as a Formula for Establishing Unique Relationships with Other Denominations—From the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations.

The General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) receive the report from the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations and direct GACEIR, in partnership with the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency, to explore a global covenant agreement (GCA) to use as a formula for establishing unique relationships with other denominations, such as GMIM, seeking Memorandum of Understandings (MOU) and covenant agreements with the PC(USA). The formula will provide degrees of flexibility that allow for customization with each denomination. The GCA will be developed in consultation with presbyteries having significant relationships with said denominations. A report is to be presented to the 225th General Assembly (2022).

Rationale

This recommendation is in response to *2018 Referral: Item 07-07. Commissioners' Resolution. On Covenant Agreement Between the Gereja Masehi Injili di Minahasa (GMIM) and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)* (*Minutes*, 2018, Part I, p. 668).

This recommendation stated:

That the 223rd General Assembly (2018) ask that the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations, in partnership with the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency, explore the possibility of developing a covenant relationship with GMIM. This covenant relationship will be developed in consultation with presbyteries having significant Indonesian and Minahasan-speaking members. A report is to be presented to the 224th General Assembly (2020). (*Minutes*, 2018, Part I, p. 668)

Recognizing that the conversation that seemed to be focused on GMIM was actually one that was taking place with ecumenical partners around the world, an inter-staff team was gathered to begin conversations about how we might work together to begin to address the topic with a global scope: what would be the key groups to identify for this—including ecumenical partners around the world as well as their diaspora communities within the United States; what are some essential components or topics of consideration for us to include; where should these critical conversations be taking place; who are the stakeholders—which ones are different and which ones are the same; how will we take on the task of educating PC(USA) constituents; what questions are we overlooking or forgetting to ask?

As we discussed the matter before us regarding the GMIM from Indonesia, there was a strong note that other global/ecumenical partners have begun to express similar desires. Rather than piecemeal our approach and hold hundreds of bilateral conversations, it makes sense for us to think together creatively about ways we might enter into partner agreements as we seek to be in ministry together with Diaspora communities in the United States and their home churches. We would like to develop a policy/proposal that speaks to a vision for partnership with migrant/diaspora communities. It is our plan to create a template that provides degrees of flexibility that allow for customization for the uniqueness of partner relationships.

Item 02-037

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 307.]

Recommendation That the Administrative Services Group (ASG) and PC(USA), A Corporation (A Corp) Be Subject to the Same Reviews as All Employing Entities of the General Assembly—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation.

The GACOR recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) direct that Administrative Services Group (ASG) and PC(USA), A Corporation (A Corp), be subjected to the same reviews as all employing entities of the General Assembly, including the Board of Pensions (BOP), Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA), Office of General Assembly (OGA), Presbyterian Foundation (FND), Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc. (PILP), and Presbyterian Publishing Corporation (PPC), which shall be held accountable for implementing both affirmative action employment and supplier diversity purchasing goals:

1. Include the Administrative Services Group (ASG) and A Corp with employing agencies of the General Assembly that will be reviewed by the assembly and the GACOR.
2. Amend the *Organization for Mission* (IV.D.1.) to include the Administrative Services Group and A Corp in the agencies reviewed by the assembly and the GACOR.
3. Administrative Services and A Corp will be reviewed on the same cycle as PMA and OGA.¹

Rationale

The 220th General Assembly (2012), in its report “Privilege, Power, and Policy: The Church as an Employer” (Item 11-17), directed GACOR to review and recommend revision to the affirmative action goals for employment and purchasing (Supplier Diversity Program) to the General Assembly on a regular and recurring basis, in accordance with their responsibilities in the Churchwide Affirmative Action Plan (AAP) and the *Book of Order*, G-3.0103. The result of the action in 2012 is that the church as an employer assumed moral responsibility in employment and contracting standards and assigned to GACOR the task to review and recommend benchmarks for employee and supplier diversity inclusive of all employing agencies. The Administrative Services Group was previously housed in PMA and their benchmarks evaluated by the 222nd General Assembly (2016). The benchmark of whole workforce: 50 percent women, 40 percent people of color, and exempt workforce: 50 percent women and 33 percent people of color, and 10 percent for diverse suppliers was adopted by the 222nd General Assembly (2016) for PMA still stands for the Administrative Services Group.

The PC(USA), A Corporation (hereafter A Corp), was separated from the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) in the 223rd General Assembly (2018) and the Administrative Services Group (ASG) moved to A Corp, a group of more than seventy employees. These new groups (A Corp and Administrative Services Group) describe themselves as an “entity” and not an “agency.” GACOR interprets this as a distinction without a difference as they are an employer of the PC(USA). Furthermore, the terms “agencies” and “entities” are used interchangeably in the recommendations of “Privilege, Power, and Policy: The Church as an Employer” (the report of the Climate for Change Task Force) that inspired the assembly’s directive to the agencies/entities of the General Assembly (see Item 11-17, 220th General Assembly [2012] items “c” and “d.”). Therefore, A Corp and Administrative Services Group should be subject to the same reviews of the General Assembly as agencies of the General Assembly—see Standards for Review of General Assemblies, *Manual of the General Assembly (2020)*, pp. 85–87. Because the Administrative Services Group is represented by the same corporate board as OGA and PMA, it makes sense for its review to be scheduled at the same time as those bodies. At the time of this writing, the next review was to be reported to the 226th General Assembly (2024).

Endnote

1. At the time of this writing, the PMA and OGA will be reviewed at the 226th General Assembly (2024).

REAC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-037*Advice and Counsel on Item 02-037—From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee*

The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 02-037.

The Racial Equity and Advocacy Committee strongly advises the approval of this resolution. Without a standardized assessment process we cannot ensure equitable treatment for people of color.

Item 02-038

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 306.]

On Approving “Reimagining the World House” and Recommendations for an Ecumenical Study—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) approve the following:

1. Approve the following proposal, “Reimagining the World House: Why the voices of U.S. Christians and partners in the world Christian community are needed to address crucial world problems.”

Reimagining the World House:
*Why the voices of U.S. Christians and partners in the world
Christian community are needed to address crucial world problems*

Martin Luther King Jr.’s essay, *The World House* (1967), called for us to reorient our Christianity and our patriotism toward a just community of nations. In addition to the essential calls for peace, human rights, and international law to be respected (summarized in *Peacebuilding: The Nations’ Calling*, Item 02-40), we believe it is time for the churches to work together to renew King’s vision of global solidarity. Thus, this invitation to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and other churches in the United States, in partnership with churches overseas, to develop a forum for sharing and developing new visions to reimagine human societies beyond short-sighted nationalism, hierarchies of domination, and fantasies of unlimited material growth. By creating a process for listening and responding to voices from outside our polarized culture, and for lifting up prophetic voices and creative thinkers within our own churches, we seek to challenge national debates over “foreign policy” that often exclude Christian values and care little for “the least of these” (Mt. 25).

In some ways it is a simple proposal: to hold, post, and publicize conversations about alternatives to the ways our country has been stuck—in endless wars, incredible military spending, brutality and exploitation of weaker people, and toxic levels of inequality and isolation, addiction, and despair. The boundaries of what is “foreign” and feared need to change. Our churches, “standing together in a world divided,” can lead in reconciliation and the “de-violencing” of societies in accord with the “Gospel of Peace” of Ephesians 6 that transforms a gladiator’s armor. Welcoming a diversity of voices, explicitly including those from the margins, can humanize others who may otherwise be feared or treated as enemies. The goal of this four-year project is to change the public debate and strengthen the churches’ ongoing international witness to God’s “beloved community.”

King’s ecumenical call is only reinforced by the pressures of climate change on all cultures to embody more sustainable values for the sake of all species and future generations:

... Our only hope today lies in our ability to recapture the revolutionary spirit and go out into a sometimes hostile world declaring eternal opposition to poverty, racism and militarism. With this powerful commitment we shall boldly challenge the status quo and unjust mores and thereby speed the day when “every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and tile crooked shall be made straight and the rough places plain.” [Isaiah 40:4]

A genuine revolution of values means in the final analysis that our loyalties must become ecumenical rather than sectional. Every nation must now develop an overriding loyalty to mankind as a whole in order to preserve the best in their individual societies. (<http://pluralism.org/document/the-world-house-martin-luther-king-jr-1967/>)

It would be a mistake to see this proposal for focused ecumenical conversation as overly idealistic. Just as structural racism did not disappear in the 21st century when some people claimed to “no longer see color” and longed for a post-racial culture, so inequality and the global dominance of the rich and militarily powerful will not go away if we simply dismantle the international institutions and organizations of the post-WWII epoch. We need to reform or replace them with ones that promote peace with justice and equity, and now especially environmental sustainability. As Greta Thunberg has underlined, the nations of the world must work together much more effectively on the climate crisis. Otherwise, allowing those now in power to abolish or undercut any institutions that inconvenience them will continue taking us toward a world organized by deals made in private

by the powerful elite, mainly to benefit themselves and ignore the conflicts, inequality, and environmental disasters plaguing our world today.

In our view, Christian values and vision are necessary to find a new path, reimagining relations of mutuality among nations and peoples: the World House. We believe churches in every nation have a responsibility and should have the opportunity to share a vision of just peace, based in Jesus' proclamation of God's reign. This shared vocation of witness in the public square is based on a commitment to the common good (Jer. 29:7; Gal. 6:10). No one denomination or communion can do it alone; each has a tradition and communal wisdom to contribute. As the 222nd General Assembly (2016) said for our peacemaking work, we seek to "cultivate moral imagination and discern God's redemptive work in history" (From risk four, p. 10, in *Five Risks Presbyterians Must Take for Peace*: Westminster/John Knox, 2017).

Too many people today confuse a Christian vision, which should include international peace and justice, with the foreign policy stance of the right-wing "Evangelicals"—which is narrowly nationalistic, simplistically anti-communist, and distrustful and antagonistic toward the United Nations and other world organizations and the rules of behavior they uphold. The PC(USA) and most other mainstream churches were in fact instrumental in supporting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the creation of the United Nations, but in recent decades we have not articulated an alternative vision with sufficient clarity and boldness.

This proposal follows the guidance of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to listen to voices of church partners from around the world and from other Christians in the United States. Presbyterian World Mission ministries and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) co-developed a very productive in-depth consultation, "Standing Together in a World Divided," held in Bangkok, Thailand, November 1–5, 2019. It is an example of the kind of forums that can be created. The participants' public statement follows this proposal and an edited set of papers presented is also available [<https://justiceunbound.org/standing-together/>]. We are deeply grateful to those international partners who helped re-shape this proposal to include more voices from outside the United States.

2. Direct the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP), including members and staff, in consultation with Presbyterian Mission Agency, through Presbyterian World Mission, to do the following:

a. With the advice of the Stated Clerk of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), as chief ecumenical officer, and the General Secretary of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., to invite other member denominations and communions to designate and provide for the participation of members in an ecumenical steering committee (twelve persons), of which both leaders would be ex-officio members. That steering committee would oversee a cooperative effort with shared funding and a diverse team of staff and volunteers from the participating churches.

b. To coordinate with the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through its Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations, the Office of Public Witness, and World Mission ministries, and their counterparts in other communions, to ensure that there is within that steering committee, working groups, and other contributors, a diversity of background, age, experience, expertise, and international connection to enrich the theological, ethical, and social reflection of the churches.

c. To work cooperatively with steering committee members, staff, and volunteers to develop a series of public forums with our ecumenical partners on

(1) the role of religion and morality in international relations, human rights, and international law;

(2) the dangers of racism, sexism, homophobia, ethno-nationalism, religious persecution, and other forms of discrimination among and within countries as well as policies to address these matters, including the treatment of immigrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers;

(3) the relationship of authoritarianism to hate groups, surveillance, and limits on press freedom, free speech, and freedom of worship;

(4) the linked challenges of poverty and climate change in relation to international trade, aid, taxation, treaties, and new institutions necessary for a more equal and sustainable global future;

(5) the balance of statecraft and military power among nations, the improvement of international governance and mutual accountability; and

(6) other topics reflecting the priorities of participating churches.

d. To work with existing Presbyterian and ecumenical international affairs staff to draw on interfaith and nongovernmental organization (NGO) partners in the development of the above-outlined public forums, and to work with the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through World Mission, and its counterparts so that U.S. participants are paired or on panels and podcasts with participants from other nations, including those from nations seen as hostile or estranged from our country. To work in particular with the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through its World Mission partners in Europe and the Middle East, on neo-populism, including La Sapienza University and the Waldensian Church.

e. To work with scholars in church-related seminaries, colleges, and universities in the U.S. and abroad and to seek cooperation with national and international organizations (such as the U.S. Institute of Peace or the United Nations) that uphold diplomacy and international law.

f. To work with the Steering Committee, volunteer and staff groups to prepare initial study resources and an interim report for the 225th General Assembly (2022) and for partner church assemblies, synods, and conferences during this period, using print, podcast, and video vehicles for maximum participation and diversity, requesting response and feedback prior to a final, publication-quality report to the 226th General Assembly (2024) and to other denominations.

g. To explore with partner denominational and ecumenical staff appropriate external funding sources such as foundations and international organizations sharing goals and principles with our churches.

h. To participate in international counterparts to this “Reimagining the World House” organized by the World Council of Churches, the World Communion of Reformed Churches, and other ecumenical and interfaith bodies, and to explore with those ecumenical bodies the growing influence of other leading powers, notably China, Russia, and India.

Rationale

To help General Assembly commissioners and friends in other communions evaluate this proposal, we organize the rationale around several basic questions:

- What would the ultimate output be, for which constituencies and communities?
- Toward this end, what would be the immediate and intermediate output, for what audiences?
- Why is it so broad based? How does that contribute to the changes sought?

What would be the ultimate output of this initiative? For what audiences/constituencies or communities?

The proposal aims to strengthen the vision of the churches and give them voice in public debates about how the United States should behave in the world. Just as no single church can create such a vision, the unity of the World House idea suggests that that no nation should act for itself alone either.

The final output of this exercise would likely bring to U.S. policymakers, their advisors, and their counterparts in other nations recommendations to refocus and strengthen international organizations and institutions¹ in order to address the problems of climate change and environmental degradation and to reduce international armed conflict and facilitate fair international trade and financial transactions. This final result would seek some genuinely new ways to speak of the moral imperatives of human unity. At the grass-roots level, it would provide resources and encouragement to those congregations and individual members whose “daily action ... is the church in mission to the world”² The overall goal is to present the deepest Christian perspective we can develop on how our country can be a trustworthy force for good in the world.

Toward this ultimate end, what would be the short-term, intermediate output? For what audience?

This is a proposal for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) 224th General Assembly (2020), asking them to give the go-ahead for our denomination, but it also goes beyond—inviting other churches and ecumenical partners to join with us in this prophetic responsibility. The proposal envisions a steering committee drawn from participating denominations, with representation from the National Council of Churches, to ensure connection to the broadest Christian families of communions, and consultation with the U.S. Catholic Conference and interfaith partners as appropriate. The recommendations seek to both coordination and openness, drawing upon our existing offices, academic institutions, teachers and other staff, and those of our partner churches.

With humility we Presbyterians acknowledge ways that our Christian faith has been conformed to the limits of our social location, race, sex, and class positions, becoming complicit in historical and current injustice. If we are to be trustworthy ourselves, we cannot ignore key parts of our history, both bad and good. For this reason, our process going forward must embrace diversity and enhance practices of pluralism, such as interreligious dialogue and intercultural learning, drawing on antiracism and gender justice training.

We are already indebted to the Christian thinkers from around the world who helped us analyze the dangers of ethno-nationalism and authoritarianism, problems faced by many countries but intensified by “beggar thy neighbor” economics, the breaking of international treaties and covenants, and harsh treatment of waves of war and climate refugees and asylum seekers. These thinkers have helped us identify crucial problems and ways that Christian values have been blocked or suppressed by political, cultural, and media forces. Churches cannot simply complain about greed, violence, and oppression; we must resist and present alternatives.

Beyond these initiatives of policy and program, Presbyterian contributions to “Reimagining the World House” will be guided by our 2016 adoption of the Confession of Belhar of the South African Reformed churches and the World Communion of Reformed Churches’ continuing work on the 2004 Accra Confession. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has also participated in ecumenical projects like the concise, non-doctrinal *Social Creed for the 21st Century* (2008), and in campaigns like the Poor Peoples’ Campaign for a Moral Revival (ongoing).

The framework of study conferences on “Reimagining the World House” recalls the extensive work of the churches that built support in the 1930s and 40s for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the formation of the United Nations. Those ecumenical conferences were not academic studies but involved large numbers of church members in well-planned discussions that drew public attention to Christian values in international relations.

What is the focus of the initiative? What are the limits of its mandate?

The world has many problems, some seen more clearly from a Christian perspective. To have some chance of success, however, this exercise will need to pick a focus and set limits on what matters it can give priority. While the ecumenical international gathering of participants should decide the focus and boundaries of the exercise, the World House metaphor suggests that it should aim toward recommendations about the international architecture of organizations and rules of the game. What happens within countries is important and somewhat dependent on the international order, but it would be imperialistic for this exercise, dominated by U.S. participants, to pontificate on the internal agenda for other countries.

Further background for this supporting statement comes from the participants in the Thailand consultation, *Standing Together in a World Divided*. Here is their open statement:

Standing Together in a World Divided

We write as participants in an international ecumenical convocation gathered together by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and hosted by the Church of Christ in Thailand, November 1-5, 2019, in Bangkok. The convocation attempted to respond to the divisions that pose high existential threats to the world’s survival. We take as title for this public statement the name of the consultation, “Standing Together in a World Divided.”

We came from multiple countries and church organizations acutely aware that the community of nations has rarely been so divided and so poorly led. The would-be emperors of today’s empires fan the flames of racial and ethnic division and compete for economic domination while ignoring rising protests demanding democracy, free expression, and human rights, and downplaying the accelerating effects of climate change. As Christians who listen with God to the cries of caged children and drowning migrants, we are called first to lament and confess our varied degrees of complicity in an unjust world of disorder. The image of Christian Koinonia that welcomes diversity is a key ecumenical vision of a community at peace which is threatened by increasing levels of economic disparity, racial injustice, and xenophobic nationalism.

We shared our experiences of pains and joys, resilience and transformation. We recognize and confess our complicity with this “scandalous world” and the pain it brings to so many. The proclamation of Jesus calls us to transformation (*metanoia*) and places our confidence in God’s kingdom (Mark 1:15). Jesus’ walking with the crucified of this world leads to repentance and concrete restorative actions.

Grave suffering and brave protest for freedom and social justice around the globe compel us to radical engagement at various levels. We draw on the short papers and presentations we have shared at this gathering, which will be made available as annexures for further study and public discussion in our churches around the world. Without claiming official standing as a body, we believe our churches must stand together to meet this time of testing. Therefore, we encourage urgent and informed action by the councils of churches, communions, denominations, and congregations in which we all participate. We pray this statement can strengthen our solidarity in struggles for justice and peace, and guide us in re-imagining new efforts of mission, witness, and global cooperation that no church or country can do alone. Standing together, may we hear ‘what the Spirit says to the churches!’

Part I: Lament and the Suffering of God’s Creation

We hear the groaning of creation and the blood of sisters and brothers crying out from the earth. We see the causes of this suffering in:

- *Environmental crisis* based on treating nature as a storehouse for human consumption and addiction to unsustainable economic growth; this unchecked commodification accelerates climate change which threatens the whole creation, intensifies natural disasters and displaces entire communities.
- *Failure of unregulated markets* which highlights short-term incentives, worsen the climate crisis, and vastly increase inequality in and among nations;
- *A world divided by broken treaties* without global political governance strong enough to counteract the excessive power of economic and political actors to protect vulnerable peoples and the earth;
- *A United Nations severely hampered* by the individual veto held by World War II victors, blocked from raising standards of mutual accountability among nations, captured by corporate interests, *itself needing deep-seated reshaping* to meet unprecedented global political, economic, and environmental challenges;
- *A Universal Declaration of Human Rights* in need of greater application to social and economic life, supported by effective prosecution and adjudication of international law;

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- *International economic organizations* in need of greater re-direction toward sustainability and the common good and against privatization, austerity, and illegitimate debt;
- Global politics increasingly *dominated by empires* acknowledged and unacknowledged, USA, Russia, China; spurring arms competition, intensifying surveillance, and cyber-warfare to disrupt elections and bully neighbor and client states; and
- *Over-militarized states* neglecting real solutions, entrenching borders, wasting resources, mistreating refugees, and creating terrorism through un-ending proxy wars;

The processes noted above lead to crises of authentic representation and human dignity:

- The rise of *authoritarian populist “strongmen”* preaching false religions of national idolatry, twisting patriotism into ethno-nationalism, racism and resentment, and waging wars on women, LGBTQ and minority communities;
- The consequent *‘sacralization’ of politics* and demonization of opponents, perverting the language and symbols of faith to legitimize politics of violence, patriarchy and exclusion;
- Toleration of *stark, state religious favoritism*, as in Saudi Arabia, Israel, and Iran, and of overt dispossession of religiously identified minorities, such as Rohingya, Kashmiri Muslims, Uyghurs, and West Papuan Christians; a scapegoating of minorities of all kinds feeding deep inter-religious resentments;
- Virulent *aggression against women’s rights*, the normalization--even institutionalization of misogyny, asserting control over women’s reproductive rights and their bodies;
- *Structural corruption* increased by vast income and wealth disparities, flooding campaigns with hidden money, manipulating wealth division with deliberate lies, ensnaring media with capital, and de facto bribery to reiterate these lies;
- *Organized financial opportunism*: speculative and vulture funds, tax haven industry -- allowing the rich and their corporations to evade tax obligations; enabling illicit financial flows and expanding criminal industries, including trafficking of women and children;
- Economic powers are left to grow to monopoly concentration, dominating labor, trade, and technology policy without effective regulation, playing even major countries against each-other, and reviving neo-colonial patterns with smaller countries.

The sum of these factors puts the mere existence of most of the population at risk. It is not a “common” crisis but an “extraordinary” one, demanding us to recognize it, confess that we fall short of being a moral conscience of the states and that in many cases we have become their accomplice.

Part II: Confessing Both Sin and Faith

- God’s Grace and the work of the Holy Spirit provide hope and awaken conscience in the face of all obstacles. God raises up prophets within and beyond the Church, even as the church must strive to live out the holistic spirituality of John 10:10.
- Within our gathering of 30 or so people we recognized different levels of historical involvement by our peoples and nations in the inequities we experience and ecological debt we carry. And for some of us, the racism and white supremacy on display at the highest levels of government are all too recognizable as elements in long histories of domination and abusive privilege.
- The crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth at the hands of empire should warn all autocracies that God hears the cries of the victims and the voices of the oppressed. To all who worship power and privilege: “God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong” (1 Cor. 1:27).
- Justice must be central to our understanding of justification; a Christian politics or a Christian economics may not be fully possible – but a clear Christian witness is always possible.
- Our concentrations *of* wealth and our concentration *on* wealth have led industrialized societies to ignore the health of nature and its many warning signals, including the extinction of species, flows of climate refugees, and mounting dangers to human health. Christians and all concerned for a sustainable future must help nature recover ‘her’ regenerative powers and seek to align social arrangements with those capacities.
- Every church community is called to transformative mission guided by love of both neighbor and enemy, in responsible service and meaningful repentance and forgiveness, recognizing that real reconciliation and collective security require costly grace, historical memory, and concrete and sustained practices of restorative and reparative justice.
- Christian faith provides a frame of reference for the critical evaluation of all institutions, with values that have long informed the shaping of laws and development of modern democracy. These values include the sanctity of human life, human equality and dignity; wisdom about personal and structural sin and evil; and ways to resist the temptations of power. None of our communities are immune from the dangers of hierarchy and exploitation, often visited first on women and girls of color by those seeking to ascend in class or caste position.
- The image of the whole inhabited world as God’s household, the *oikoumene*, the ‘World House’ in Martin Luther King’s adaptation, has helped enrich traditional ideas of the polis in the West and ideas of God’s holy dwelling space in the East. These and other images and models from scripture, discipleship, artistic expressions, and God’s creation are among the resources of faith at this time.
- Each church has a responsibility to contribute moral imagination and the expertise of its members to serve diaconally the city or community in which it is called (Jer. 29:7). Similarly, today, together, the churches are called to help reimagine ‘the World House’ and encourage innovative and effective forms of transnational governance consistent with genuine respect for human rights, rule of law, and care for creation.

Part III: Repentance and the Call to Action: practices and forums for healing communities and political life

We seek alternatives to existing structures and power relations. Yet any new direction, for both the church and the world of insulation and exclusion, is set by repentance: “reign of God is near, repent and believe the good news!” (Mark 1:15), a *metanoia*, that –in Romans 12: 1-2, is a *metamorphosis*, a change in orientation and in the form of our being. Any change of direction toward solidarity re-draws the boundaries of the churches as much as it challenges the artificial borders of unsustainable states. How much study is necessary for our advocacy, how much planning if the road ahead may be short? However important it is to discern the signs of the times, we also need to give present help to the ones who have fallen among thieves on the side of the road.

We have thus come to understand that our shepherding and our service, or ‘*diakonia*,’ entail a thorough commitment to justice and peace. We thus encourage our churches in all their expressions to be open to the Spirit’s initiative and be transformed and empowered as agents of change. From

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congregations to national councils and study committees, this means creating forums for changing the public debate and developing programs for engagement and advocacy. We thus provide several examples of forums for discussion of the political dimension of the church's 'diakonia' that may help those with eyes to see and ears to hear the call to action.

Experience more of the fullness of human community

- Socialize our members to the global dimension of issues; promote grassroots exchanges; promote exchanges with sister churches to learn from each other: best practices, networks of resistance and solidarity; relationship of human rights to sustainability;

- Draw on anti-racism training to resist ethno-nationalism and derogation of people of other heritages as well as immigrants and asylum-seekers. Promote programs at all levels (congregation, Biblical and theological institutions, schools, youth groups, etc.) to foster inclusivity: learning about diversity to counteract the fear of the 'other' that can be exploited by false populism.

- Embrace diversity and enhance practices of pluralism, such as inter-religious dialogue and intercultural learning, or advocating for greater social and gender justice.

Encouraging social creativity

- Practice resistance to authoritarianism and political oppression in all its forms: "we must obey God rather than humans" and consider how this is impacted by new forms and distortions of media and communication.

- Explore the need for new covenants based on a more communal understanding of rights and more care for the rights of communities;

- Promote sustainable, "green," alternatives based on the best science, using the 'precautionary principle' and other means to ensure that risks of new technologies are known and shared as fairly as possible.

Exploring new understandings of mission:

- Work to be part of a united, visionary, transnational and transcultural Church, resisting the abandonment or oppression of any people or region.

- Foster theological work and dialogue towards overcoming the 'sacralization' of politics, weaponization of religion, captivity to the prosperity gospel, trickle down incremental distribution and sectarian tribalism;

- Develop a comprehensive "theology of enough" in order to avoid over-consumptive gluttonous acquisitiveness;

- create forums for challenging, reimagining and re-ordering national priorities, including different voices, particularly voices from the World Church in the global South.

- work with ecumenical bodies and other communions to act as laboratories for developing genuine strategies for decolonization, peacebuilding, and international justice.

- Mission with overseas partners and with diasporic communities in the global North should include indigenous expressions of faith and communal engagement.

Prayer for Hope and Action

In conclusion, we stand together and face not simply divisive issues, but choices of ultimate loyalty. The definition of the church as one, holy, catholic, and apostolic body needs to be expanded and renewed; metaphors like "world house" may prove helpful in this task. Thus, we who pledge to build upon these words of lamentation and confession, with all their imperatives for justice, commit to be partners with all who seek to actualize the reconciling love of God in this world. And to You, Great God of creation, redemption, and the renewal of all things, may we be faithful disciples within your pilgrim covenant community through this time of testing. Amen.

Participants in whose name this statement is offered

Charles Amjad-Ali	The MLK, Jr., Prof. of Justice and Christian Community (Emeritus)	Luther Seminary
George Coorilos	Metropolitan	Malankara Jacobite Syriac Orthodox Church
Debora Spini	Member of Study Commission of Federation of Protestant Churches in Italy	Chiesa Valdese
Mitri Raheb	President	Dar al-Kalima University
Charles Berahino	Executive Secretary for Peace and Diakonia	All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC)
Admire Mutizwa	Economic Justice and Youth Empowerment Programme Officer	Zimbabwe Council of Churches
Dario Barolin	Executive Secretary	Alliance of Presbyterian and Reformed Churches in Latin America (AIPRAL)
Joy Abdul-Mohan	Moderator	The Presbyterian Church of Trinidad and Tobago
Joe Morrow	Chair	Presbyterian Mission Agency Board
Sung Yeon Choimor-row	Executive Director	National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum

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Athena Peralta	Programme executive for the Economy of Life	World Council of Churches (WCC)
Prawate Khidarn	Executive Committee Member	World Communion of Reformed Churches / Church of Christ in Thailand
Michael Neuroth	Policy Advocate for International Issues	United Church of Christ
Emo Yango	Program Coordinator, Discipleship and Witness	United Church of Canada
Pamela Chrabieh	Director	SPNC Learning & Communication Expertise
Emily Brewer	Executive Director	Presbyterian Peace Fellowship
Yenny Delgado	Ruling Elder	Bethesda Presbyterian Church
Ray Roberts	Pastor, Head of Staff	River Road Presbyterian Church
Steven Webb	Ruling Elder	United Christian Parish of Reston
Dianna Wright	Interim Director of Ecumenical Relations	Office of General Assembly/PCUSA
Chris Iosso	Coordinator	Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP)/ PCUSA
Philip Woods	Associate Director, Strategy, Program, and Recruitment	World Mission/ PCUSA
Jieun Kim Han	Associate, Partnerships and Mission Formation	World Mission/ PCUSA

See Appendix for listing of Standing Together papers and presentations.

Endnotes

1. Douglas North and others following him distinguish between organizations as players in the game (e.g. nation-states, the UN, IMF, etc.) and institutions as the rules of the game (e.g. protocol for diplomatic relations, universal declaration of human rights, rules about war crimes, etc.).
2. (*Book of Confessions*, Confession of 1967, 9.37) At the same time, we remember that every congregation is a community of moral deliberation, shaped by word and sacrament in its own context.

COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 02-038

COGA has recommended that this item be referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). However, should the assembly determine that this item of business is core and critical to our governance and sustainability, and needs to be considered by the 224th General Assembly (2020), COGA provides this comment.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly advises that the Office of Ecclesial/Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations and the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations (GACEIR) be included in these international/ecumenical/interfaith works. Partnership with other communions and the work it fosters is really a big part of the vision and work GACEIR is commitment to for the coming years.

REAC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-38

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-038—From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC)

The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 02-038 with the following comment:

“The General Assembly advises the PC(USA) hold itself accountable to the same standards named in this report.”

According to the Organization for Mission, “REAC shall be a prophetic voice for involving people of color in the formation of public policy and monitor the implementation of policies adopted by the church that impact the quality of life of people of color in the church and in the world” (Organization for Mission, VI.1). This document is a clear example of that prophetic voice, and REAC recommends its approval. However, we must hold ourselves to the same standards internally that we ask of the ecumenical community.

Item 02-039

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 308.]

Obstinate Hope—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.

In response to the assignment of the 223rd General Assembly (2018), the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy urges the 224th General Assembly (2020) to approve the following statement of concern and recommendations for the church's mission and witness, and to receive the background summary and appended study resources on theology, policy, and mission development:

1. Approve the following affirmation:

We celebrate our longstanding relationships with mission partners in the region of Central America, some of which date back to the 1880s. This work is grounded in the understanding that it is the Spirit of the God of Creation and the Christ of Reconciliation who moves the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to accompany those who work for justice, freedom, and peace both in Central America and in the United States. To many in the United States, the face of Christ in Central America is unknown; this report seeks to help us better recognize Christ's presence in renewed defense of justice and sustainable lifeways. Prompted in part by waves of brave migrants and asylum-seekers, we must understand and challenge trends that have developed in Central America since the 1980s. As our partners strive to reopen springs of hope, we whose lives are entwined with theirs need to respond.

We engaged as a denomination and listened intently to our brothers and sisters during the 1980s when revolutionary promises clashed with closed political systems, and hundreds of thousands of people suffered dislocation, disappearance, and death. Multiple visits with our partners produced three candid and substantial reports to the General Assembly in 1983, 1987, and 1988. The newly reunited Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) challenged U.S. policy in the region and chose to walk in Christian solidarity with our brothers and sisters in the midst of conflict. These reports authorized significant advocacy for human rights, opposition to the Contra war, and support for the Sanctuary Movement. Their conclusions and recommendations framed the response of our church until negotiated peace accords emerged and were achieved in the 1990s. The General Assembly recognized this change in a brief 1995 resolution, *Marathon of Hope*. Central Americans experienced real steps toward political democratization and initial economic prosperity from expanded trade.

Now is another moment when the church's heart, hands, and voice are needed to help recreate more honorable U.S. policies toward all the peoples in the region, based in real understanding of each country's internal dynamics, and less driven by xenophobia and a willingness to exploit vulnerable neighbors. This report, then, affirms but does not replicate the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s social witness policies on immigration, focusing more on the drivers of that immigration, and the interplay of cultural, economic, and religious, as well as political forces that contribute to social dislocation in Central America.

Tragically, in the first two decades of the 21st century, drug wars, climate change, and increased economic inequality produced a marked descent toward authoritarianism, impunity, and social immobility within the emerging Central American democratic structures. This decay took place despite valiant attempts by civil society, with the support of international bodies, to hold all citizens judicially accountable, to battle systemic corruption, and to expand public investment into the poorest sectors of societies.

Transnational drug cartels developed profitable partnerships with local business and military leaders as they expanded into the northern region of Central America in the postwar period, and emerging youth gangs, fueled in large part by gang members who had been deported from the U.S., fought for dominance in the larger cities. The June 2009 coup in Honduras marked a key step toward an authoritarian model in Central America where one party worked to dominate the executive, judicial, and legislative branches with significant acquiescence and even encouragement from parts of the U.S. government. The internet and cell phone coverage came to link Central American refugee communities in the U.S.A. with relatives in Central America, heightening expectations of respectable wages and strengthened purchasing power.

Several natural disasters ravaged the Isthmus at the turn of the century. Hurricane Mitch devastated Honduras and Nicaragua in 1998, several earthquakes in El Salvador severely damaged the infrastructure in 2001, and then a significant drought corridor emerged extending from Guatemala through Nicaragua due to changes in the El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO). Environmental changes and disruptions have intensified economic suffering while setting the stage for long-term instability. Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) has played a key role in Presbyterian response, working with ecumenical partners, coordinating with the U.S. and other governments as well as mission co-workers, and mobilizing trained volunteers when possible. PDA has also often addressed adverse impacts of immigration and migration policies affecting people from Central America, including security concerns as well as basic physical needs.

The number of citizens fleeing a decaying political and economic situation in Central America's northern region increased dramatically in 2014. For the first time U.S. immigration officials detained large numbers of unaccompanied minors from these countries. Since 2000, more than 1.5 million Central Americans—mostly Guatemalans, El Salvadorans, and Hondurans—abandoned their traditional homes and attempted a dangerous journey through Mexico to the U.S.A. Given these developments, the Immigration Office of the PC(USA), established in 2004, has provided information, advocacy, and legal assistance when possible to refugees, asylum-seekers, and other persons in transit between countries, and to their families in the U.S. and countries of origin. This office has tracked sometimes-drastic changes in immigration law and practice, defending the human rights of these neighbors and working in ecumenical and interfaith coalitions.

Nicaraguans remained largely outside of the drug war corridor, but the Ortega family coopted or eliminated their political competition, consolidated control of the legislature, and strengthened its clientelist relationship with much of civil society—including many religious groups—in this same time period. Attempts to reform Nicaragua's social security system backfired in early 2018, and protests were met with harsh repression from Nicaraguan police. University students who joined protestors were massacred in April 2018, and Nicaragua's business community shut down with strikes and similar protests through July. Two attempts to move toward reconciliation have yielded no measurable gains, and up to 100,000 Nicaraguans have sought refuge—primarily in Costa Rica—in the past year.

This report explores the convergence of these internal and external factors throughout Central America since the early 1990s to illuminate the challenges confronting Christian mission and witness today. A study team visited five of the seven Central American countries (Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica). The team listened intently to the voices of our church partners, met with political and economic representatives, studied the seismic shifts in the region, and lifts up these focal points:

- *La violencia, pan nuestro de cada día.* We heard this Spanish phrase in each country: our daily bread is violence. Persistent political and economic disruptions have led to unprosecuted violent acts, particularly violence against women. Thousands of Central Americans have been murdered, and any who challenge the powers that be face the threat of demise. These dynamics go beyond narco-terrorism and the flood of U.S.-sourced weapons.

- *A deep sense of betrayal.* Many community leaders who gave most of their adult lives to transform the poorest countries of the region into nations where opportunity existed for all feel deeply betrayed by leaders who amassed wealth and political power at the expense of the vulnerable.

- *Greater impacts of climate change:* Despite areas of stunning natural beauty, intentional deforestation and a growing arid zone are making traditional farming impossible for increasing numbers of people, creating unendurable food insecurity and malnutrition.

- *Renewed social and cultural tensions:* Indigenous communities—including many Mayan Presbyterian churches—suffer disproportionately from both the lack of social protections and exploitation at every stage of displacement and emigration.

- *Choosing life and dignity.* Those whom have fled their homes are abandoning hopelessness and are choosing the possibility of a new life, either in country or out of country. This desperate step is often a leap of faith toward a better life with dignity.

- *Weakened churches.* Congregations and other communal institutions become disheartened and drained of resources as family members feel driven to emigrate and encounter very costly and tragic snares along the way, including frequent extortion and kidnapping by both criminal bands and security forces.

- *Increased distrust and resentment of the United States itself:* Unsurprisingly, the harsh treatment of Central Americans at the border and within many parts of the U.S. contributes to perceptions of the U.S. as a place of prosperity but with greater inequality and injustice and hence constant risk. This trend affects the church's diplomatic and public witness ministry, and not simply with countries in the region. Funding for international agencies and adherence to international laws, including financial transparency measures, have been and will likely continue to be a necessary focus of in parts of the NGO—nongovernmental organization community.

- *Accountability.* Our journey in Central America leads us to recommit ourselves to a common journey of accompaniment and accountability. Informed by our Reformed confessional tradition, we engage in relationships of mutual reflection, critique, and ultimately, shared hope. We must learn to listen in the face of complex realities wherein too often lies are turned into “truth” and hearts are hardened so that we cannot see the idolatry in our own lifeways or hear the voices of people who are marginalized by systemic injustice and threats to well-being.

- *Solidarity and accompaniment:* There is a continuing but changing role for mission co-workers who are now (as was the study team) increasingly binational, bicultural, and bilingual or multilingual couples, assisting U.S. and partner churches in bridging political and social obstacles to Christian community and showing another aspect of the United States. Many partnerships between PC(USA) congregations and presbyteries, congregations and organizations in Central America increasingly tie us together in common pilgrimage.

- *A critique of power.* In today's consumer society, some Central American evangelicals, especially neo-Pentecostals, have amassed significant wealth and political power by reducing the Gospel to a commercial transaction in a religious marketplace. Other people of faith struggle to challenge this view by living out a prophetic critique of power rooted in the words and practice of Jesus. This theological work, responding closely to historical and current documentation and research, as well as the lived experience of our partners, led the study team to develop a separate study resource for those in our churches who want a deeper understanding of what is at stake.

This work is a testimony to brokenness and to signs of hope in a region whose destiny is closely intertwined with our own history. A humane and theologically informed response to our historical relationship with Central America, the current migration crisis, and the political stalemate in Nicaragua require us to embrace the life-giving power of the Spirit and imagine a world shaped by the Heavenly Banquet that is the essence of our communion around the table of the crucified and risen Christ.

As North American Christians, we share an identity with our Central American siblings both as Americans and as followers of Jesus. In this we have a shared destiny and thus are called to a relationship of mutual respect and support. We acknowledge that unequal power frustrates and hinders our path toward solidarity with each other.

We join the call of prophets and martyrs in a broad-based ecumenical movement known for sanctuary and resistance to make these recommendations while recognizing our long-term partnership and common service to God's mission.

2. Approve the following recommendations:

a. Public Witness:

The 224th General Assembly (2020) encourages all Presbyterians, sessions, presbyteries, and other councils, and directs the agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), in particular the Presbyterian Mission Agency (through its Office of Public Witness in Washington D.C. and the Presbyterian Ministry at the UN), to:

(1) Defend and support the democratic process and elections, judicial independence and accountability, and international efforts to combat corruption and impunity. The movement towards narco-kleptocracy and authoritarianism threatens the core values of democracy in Central America and contributes to the formation of weak states that fail to respond to the wellbeing of their citizenry. While U.S. support is necessarily indirect, our influence and understanding are needed.

(2) Support ecumenical Christian and interfaith efforts to renew human rights covenants, strengthen multilateral agreements among states, and safeguard the enforcement of international law.

(3) Support Central American led initiatives for regional political economic and cultural integration including the liberty to travel across borders.

(4) Advocate funding for culturally informed and nonviolent public health measures to address the following: femicide, intrafamilial violence, restrictions on contraception and reproductive rights, and persecution of LGBTQIA+ communities.

(5) Affirm the church's advocacy for comprehensive immigration reform and the work of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s Office of Immigration Issues developed in response to the 216th General Assembly (2004) policy, "Resolution Calling for a Comprehensive Legalization Program for Immigrants Living and Working in the United States—with Study Guide." Persons seeking authoritative guidance on immigration matters are directed to this office: <https://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/immigration/policy-immigration/>. Ideological gridlock and fearmongering have blocked reasonable immigration legislation whose contours have been known since the late 1990s, while trade agreements have generally prioritized the mobility of capital over the movement of people. In general, PC(USA) policy would support such reforms as the following in response to Central American realities:

(a) Establish concrete paths to citizenship for those already within the U.S.A, including the population impacted by the Dream Act (DACA);

(b) End family separation, the caging of children, and the lack of due process in the enforcement of immigration law;

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(c) Strengthen and broaden visa programs to allow for fairly paid seasonal employment and for the possibility to return to the home country in periods where labor is not needed;

(d) Increase resources for fair, accessible, and properly funded judicial review of asylum claims within the United States, in a manner fully consistent with international law;

(e) In the absence of such reforms and in the face of frequent abuses of migrants and asylum-seekers, various brave forms of sanctuary solidarity are understandable and morally compelling despite increases in surveillance and tactics of entrapment.

(6) Economic Empowerment: advocate for living wages and labor rights for workers in Central America, as well as investment by governments and the private sector in education and job creation as part of a development strategy to mitigate the desperation that drives many to emigrate.

(a) Work to ensure that trade agreements strengthen local economies, preserve ecological sustainability, and reduce dependency on debt;

(b) Encourage the trend toward greater World Bank and IMF support for investment in public goods and social infrastructure as opposed to the privatization and deregulation that have increased inequality, recognizing that all international investment needs greater transparency and accountability to prevent corruption;

(c) Support the investigation and regulation of the tax haven industry as revealed in the “Panama Papers” by independent journalists and the Tax Justice network to help reduce money-laundering and tax evasion.

(7) Support increased international efforts to monitor and implement judicial reform to challenge State corruption and impunity in Central America, including programs recently suspended of the Organization of American States and the United Nations in Guatemala and Honduras such as the UN’s International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala (CI-CIG) and the OAS’s Mission to Support the Fight Against Corruption in Honduras (MACCIH).

(8) Call for the legal regulation of drugs based on scientific evidence of health risks and consistent with PC(USA) policies for reducing mass incarceration at home and militarization abroad, addressing spiritual root causes, and undermining the influence of kleptocracy in U.S. and Central American societies. Harsh policies relying on deportation of gang members and militarization have generally helped narcotics traffickers and money launderers consolidate power and weaken civil societies and governments.

(9) Environment: stimulate deep cross-cultural conversation about care for future generations—including careful listening to the teachings of ancestral traditions and spiritualities—and accelerated incentives for “green” development policies to mitigate severe consequences of climate change upon Central America.

b. Mission Partnerships and Solidarity with Church Partners

The 224th General Assembly (2020) directs the Presbyterian Mission Agency, within the context of overall world mission strategy, and in consultation with its ecumenical and humanitarian programs, to:

(1) Update and strengthen the recruitment and role of mission co-workers in cooperation with church partners, ecumenical, and interdenominational institutions in the Central American region, noting the needs for community mediation, conflict resolution, advocacy, theological education, and pastoral accompaniment of marginalized communities, as well as the continuing need for bridging between U.S. and Central American cultures and churches.

(2) Support church, ecumenical, and interdenominational partners as they guide and develop leaders for church and society who understand the multiple dimensions of conflict in the region and have the intercultural competence to be effective peacemakers in our interconnected world.

(3) Assess the feasibility of Young Adult Volunteer program presence in the region along with other international education and exchange opportunities.

(4) Encourage and support mission networks for education, relationship-building, building shared spiritual resources and solidarity in witness for human rights.

(5) Work with PC(USA)-related colleges, universities, and seminaries wherever possible to deepen ethical and theological as well as political, economic, and historical understanding of the links among our nations and peoples, giving

particular concern to the rights and character of indigenous and Afro-Central American cultures and the role of Protestantism in a changing ecumenical context.

c. Education and Formation for Transformation in Congregations

The 224th General Assembly (2020) invites and encourages PC(USA) congregations and presbyteries to:

(1) Engage Central Americans through acts of hospitality. Our conversations with partners in Central America remind us that we are called to build upon our humanitarian impulses and engage the Central Americans in our midst in biblical and theological reflection. Acts of accompaniment and compassion can lead us to share faith stories: “What have we seen and felt together, how have our experiences of hope and hardship connected us with our experience of God’s grace?”

(2) Encourage congregations to respond to Central American migration through the intentional formation of partnerships with local immigrant communities. Engage in prayerful reflection and dialogue as to how to engage in mutual and shared ministry, responding to the emergent spiritual and material needs in our local communities, as well as in Central America.

(3) Study the appended study resources as well as resources from our partner churches and pertinent documents from the Roman Catholic Church, such as the Pastoral on Human Mobility of the Guatemalan Bishops Conference.

(4) Deepen the understanding of the theological importance of human rights, guided by resources developed by our partners in the region, including materials such as legal and ethical analysis and advocacy published by the Jesuit Order in Honduras.

(5) Reflect on the meanings of Nicaragua’s apparent reversion to dictatorship and the fragility of democracy, as well as on the changes within the Roman Catholic church and our own church and culture in relation to the rights of oppressed peoples and the need for accountability and peacebuilding within and among nations. Nicaragua’s transformation reveals the difference between idealism alone and obstinate hope, and also raises questions about the role of U.S. diplomacy and other influence in such situations of government transformation.

Rationale

The main body of the Study Team’s report is the study paper contained in the appendix. It contains the analysis of social and economic dynamics and the theological-ethical reflection requested by the 223rd General Assembly (2018), much of it articulated in dialogue with our church partners in the region. It identifies the members of the bilingual study team and the mission co-workers who were essential to the work and familiar with each of the countries. In addition to documentation, the two study visits to the region are described, without naming some contacts for security reasons. The recommendations above summarize findings and urge application, but the first task is to read and understand more of the sometimes-heroic lives of sisters and brothers who are nearer to us than we may think. Let us join them in prayer and faithful witness.

See APPENDIX for study paper.

ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-039

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-039—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC)

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 02-038.

ACWC is grateful for the thorough and thoughtful work of our partner committee, the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Our hope would be that women do not get lost in this report and recommendations. While women are named briefly in the recommendations, the full report does much more to engage the issues faced by women in Central America, as well as their role in creating hope and initiating change and healing.

ACWC reminds the assembly of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, which affirms the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building, emphasizing the importance of women’s equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance of peace and security and the need to increase women’s role in decision-making.¹

Endnote

1. <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/wps/>

OGA COMMENT ON ITEM 02-039

COGA has recommended that this item be referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). However, should the assembly determine that this item of business is core and critical to our governance and sustainability, and needs to be considered by the 224th General Assembly (2020), OGA provides this comment.

The Office of the General Assembly, through the Office of Immigration Issues, expresses concern regarding the immigration-related recommendations in this report. This office appreciates the work of the volunteers in the study group and shares their collective passion for those who are suffering in Central America. This office also recognizes that any study of Central America is destined to reveal a complicated set of circumstances involving a history of colonization, racism, the economic and political interests of multiple countries and corporations, government corruption, control of resources, the dispossession of indigenous peoples, and the personal stories of those who are affected. As immigration is only one of a complicated mix of realities that the study group was addressing, it is understandable that the specifics of the recommendations in 2.a.(5) might need some revision. There are multiple groups of Central Americans who are affected in the complex web of immigration and each group has its own set of policy changes and reforms that are necessary to alleviate suffering.

Please consider this alternative language for the recommendations in 2.a.(5):

“(5) Affirm the church’s rich 127-year history of advocacy for a fair and just immigration system. Many aspects of immigration law and its current interpretation are poised to harm the future of both Central Americans who are living in the U.S. and in their home countries. Approximately 1.65 million of those undocumented in the U.S. are from Central America. Current policies place all at risk of deportation. Additionally, temporary, renewable immigration statuses, like temporary protected status (TPS) and deferred action for childhood arrivals (DACA), are under threat. Both of those programs were scheduled to end and are only in place protecting people now because of litigation. More than 250,000 TPS holders and another 62,000 DACA recipients are from Central America. Between increases in enforcement and the threatened end of temporary, renewable immigration statuses, the lives and livelihoods of almost 2 million Central Americans in the U.S. hang in the balance. What would happen to them and their fragile nations should they all be forced to return? Presbyterians, with the support of the Office of Immigration Issues and the Office of Public Witness, are encouraged to call upon the federal government to do the following in response to this threat to Central Americans in the U.S. and in their home countries:

“(a) Establish a concrete path to citizenship for those who are undocumented in the U.S.;

“(b) Establish a concrete path to citizenship for those who have been in the U.S. for multiple years under TPS, DACA and other temporary statuses;

“(c) This path should be non-punitive and should prioritize family unity;

“(d) In the absence of comprehensive immigration reform that offers a path for undocumented people and those with temporary statuses, continue temporary immigration relief for TPS and DACA recipients;

“[Engage this advocacy in community and be transformed and energized by how God is working among you.

“[Acknowledging that the above relief does not improve the situation for those who are forced to leave and will travel to the U.S. from Central America seeking protection. This assembly affirms the years of statements in support of asylum seekers coming to the U.S. Presbyterians, as resourced by the Office of Immigration Issues and the Office of Public Witness, are encouraged to call upon the federal government to do the following:

“(e) Oppose family separation and actively work toward a plan for family reunification that honors due process rights and rights to family integrity for every parent;

“(f) Oppose an expansion of and urge an end to family detention. Asylum-seeking families must have freedom to access due process, to find lawyers, and to prepare their cases as a family unit;

“(g) Oppose the criminalization of humanitarian immigration. Enforcement officers, among their many duties, should honor asylum law, which allows those seeking protection to ask for asylum, regardless of entry or immigration status.

“(h) Protect the asylum process. Allow asylum seekers entry into the U.S. to heal, prepare their case and find attorneys.

“(i) End the policy requiring asylum seekers to ask for asylum in the countries that they pass through on their way to the U.S. The Immigration and Nationality Act allows for safe third country agreements but limits its use to places “where the alien would have access to a full and fair procedure for determining a claim to asylum.” Northern triangle nations are struggling to not create their own refugees and do not currently have systems in place to offer safety or full and fair procedures to asylum seekers.

“[Engage this advocacy in community and be transformed and energized by how God is working among you.

“[We may persist a while in our advocacy for relief for undocumented persons, those with temporary statuses and asylum seekers. In the meantime, Presbyterians, resourced by the Office of Immigration Issues and Presbyterian Disaster Assistance and in partnership with migrant-led initiatives, are encouraged to discern engagement in the following actions:

“(j) Offer migrant-centered sanctuary, when necessary, to those with final orders of deportation;

“(k) Accompany asylum seekers and those at risk of deportation to immigration court and check-ins with Immigration and Customs Enforcement;

“(l) Assist in preparing family care plans with those who are at risk of detention and deportation so that issues of child custody and immigration counsel can be handled for them should they become incarcerated;

“(m) Find the trusted, competent immigration lawyers in your community and be ready to use mission funds to pay for their services when someone in your community is under threat.

“[Engage this outreach in community and be transformed and energized by how God is working among you.]”

REAC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-039

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-039—From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee

The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 02-039.

The Racial Equity and Advocacy Committee (REAC) enthusiastically supports this resolution!

Item 02-040

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 306.]

Peacebuilding: The Nations’ Calling—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) approve the following call (A) and principled directions (B) to ground its advocacy for a more just and peaceful international order:

A. Peacebuilding: The Nations’ Calling

This resolution presents the church’s challenge to the current role of self-interested nationalism and reliance on force in international affairs. It offers a Christian vision of the “things that make for peace” today, applying prior General Assembly teaching in a church that seeks to be “ever-Reforming.” It is accompanied by a separate proposal for ecumenical Christian study forums to “reimagine the World House,” using Martin Luther King Jr.’s phrase for a more just community of nations. This resolution will provide immediate support to Presbyterians, and specifically our Office of Public Witness in Washington, D.C. and Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations as they face an erratic foreign policy that appears to favor authoritarianism over human rights. The “World House” proposal is longer term, to unite U.S. churches in contributing to a new, more inclusive and sustainable world community. This resolution underlines the need for that larger, ecumenical project, but speaks directly to today’s lack of moral direction in foreign policy.

In 1980, the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America General Assembly adopted *Peacemaking: The Believers’ Calling*, leading to the creation of a Peacemaking Program that continues today. That social witness policy stated:

Peace is more than the absence of war, more than a precarious balance of powers. Peace is the intended order of the world with life abundant for all God’s children. Peacemaking is the calling of the Christian church, for Christ is our peace who has made us one through his body on the cross ...

02 RECOMMENDED REFERRALS TO THE 225TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2022)

1. The church is faithful to Christ when it is engaged in peacemaking,...
2. The church is obedient to Christ when it nurtures and equips God's people [to be] peacemakers ...
3. The church bears witness to Christ when it nourishes the moral life of the nation for the sake of peace in the world ... (*Peacemaking: The Believers' Calling*, pp. 5, 6)

Today our political leaders are abandoning the moral values that should undergird our nation's purpose in the world, which seems to be up for grabs. Treaties are broken, allies betrayed, human rights abandoned, catastrophic climate change ignored, larger nations coerce smaller, and nations interfere in each other's political systems through cyberwarfare and other means. Where honest patriotism faces up to national misdeeds, nationalism based in nativism and ethnic favoritism scapegoats others, particularly refugees and asylum-seekers, and blames them for the causes of their desperation. The United States is not alone in putting itself first (or mobilizing resentment on racial and religious lines), but is unique in our unilateral exercise of military force and economic power over diplomacy.

Nor is this solely the matter of an individual leader. With the weakening of checks and balances on the power of its Executive branch, especially in foreign affairs, the U.S. has moved closer to authoritarian systems we have historically pitied and opposed. Hence a shortsighted, "beggar thy neighbor" version of national interest now subverts the principles of justice that most U.S. churches have long affirmed, and the international institutions that have sought to implement those principles. In the words of Psalm 11:3, "If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?" Then, Psalm 12:8 continues, "vileness is exalted among humankind."

Those Psalms call on the righteous who seek God's justice to maintain their witness. For more than a century (as documented in the rationale to this resolution) Presbyterians have held that national purpose is more than the exercise of power, and that power more than a vast standing army, or military-industrial complex, thirsting to be used. Our calling as peacemakers requires Christians to live out an alternative model of national purpose directed at protecting the human rights of all who share in God's image and God's good creation. We do not make of our nation an idol that demands mass sacrifice, and do not confuse the mission of the church with that of the state. The idea of sovereign nation-states may need to change if our species, and countless others, are to survive. Yet our responsibility for now is to affirm Christian bases for democracy and fairness, the priority of the common good over self-interest, and the goals of reconciliation, liberation, and cooperative security.

As U.S. Christians, we are greatly helped by experiencing the church to be one transracial and transnational body despite differences in nationality, culture, and politics. As Christians first, we cannot be believers in "blood and soil;" rather, "From one ancestor [or 'blood'] God has made all nations to inhabit the whole earth" (Acts 17:26, NRSV). As Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), we seek to be a Matthew 25 Church, seeing the Living Christ in those of different races and conditions than our own, addressing the systemic nature of racism and economic inequality, and welcoming the congregational vitality that comes with this broader sense of mission.

Peacebuilding is a concept that builds on strategies of peacemaking and peacekeeping and that seeks to strengthen relationships within and among communities—ultimately a community of nations. It looks at the conditions and structures, economic and environmental, as well as political, that give people spaces for voices rather than places of violence. Peacebuilding reflects the longing for order rather than disorder among nations, without excusing oppression in the name of stability. It shares with "Just Peacemaking" the goals of preventing war and achieving as close to a just peace as possible after hostilities, even genocide. Peacebuilding requires serious reorientation to sustainability and trust building, choosing the high ground over the low road without underestimating the universality of sin and self-interest. In the description by the University of Notre Dame's Kroc Institute:

"Peacebuilding" is the creation and nurturing of constructive relationships across ethnic, religious, class, and racial boundaries. Peacebuilders seek to resolve social inequities and transform structural conditions that generate deadly conflict. This work spans the entire conflict cycle and includes conflict prevention, conflict management, conflict resolution and transformation, and post-conflict reconciliation. ... It may involve efforts to stop open warfare as well as practices that create sustainable peace and justice, such as monitoring of peace agreements, demobilization of armed parties, accountability for human rights violators, economic development, reconciliation, and resettlement of displaced people. (<https://kroc.nd.edu/research/strategic-peacebuilding/>)

In 1995, a chief negotiator and author of the 1978–79 Camp David accords between Israel and Egypt, spoke to a Peacemaking Program conference on the 50th anniversary of the United Nations. Presbyterian Elder Harold Saunders, formerly of the Carter Administration State Department but at that conference as a private citizen, emphasized not only the formal values and processes of democracy and diplomacy, but the role of civil society organizations, climates of opinion, and grass-roots mobilization within and among nations. He felt this "public peace process" helped fulfil the Confession of 1967's charge to the church "to commend to the nations as practical politics the search for cooperation and peace." Further,

We cannot do everything, but the concepts of peacemaking and post-conflict peace-building can provide a framework ... to define objectives and methods. Those methods do not depend on resources on the scale of the Marshall Plan; they depend rather on bringing people together in creative ways. The primary investment is the energy of imaginative Americans. ... (Harold H. Saunders, "Peacemaking: The Nation's Calling," *Church & Society*, Jan/Feb 1996, Vol. 86:3)

In the recommendations below, the General Assembly of the PCUSA affirms both key principles and “practical politics” needed at this time to reorient the international relations of the United States on a more moral basis.

B. Recommendations for the Church’s discernment, deliberation, and witness on matters of foreign and military policy:

For the church’s discernment and deliberation, the 224th General Assembly (2020):

1. Encourages members and congregations to read the statement and presentations from the World Mission/ACSWP consultation, “Standing Together in a World Divided,” held in Thailand (November 1–5, 2019), which brought together Christian thinkers in politics, economics, theology, and ethics to look at the challenges to mission in authoritarian and ethno-nationalist contexts. That statement is background to the ecumenical study forum proposal, *Reimagining the World House* (Item 02-38). The papers and presentations are available at <https://justiceunbound.org/standing-together/>.

2. Encourages congregations to invite their members and neighbors from overseas, or with experience living in other countries (including veterans), to share their understandings of how peace is maintained and of what the Church is seen to stand for, on its own and in relation to U.S. foreign policy. Especially when hearing from people who have or who are suffering wounds of war, oppression, and discrimination, care must be taken to be open to challenges and to “de-center” our own usual ways of seeing and assumed links between power and goodness.

3. Encourages congregations to review their own formal “Commitments to Peacemaking” with guidance from the Peacemaking Program and *Five Risks Presbyterians Must Take for Peace* (Westminster/John Knox, 2017), which is based on five affirmations made by the 222nd General Assembly (2016) following a six-year discernment process. Participants looked at how more than a dozen years of war in the greater Middle East have impacted our views of national security.

4. Encourages pastors and theologians to reconsider the idea of “covenant” in light of the attention given to division and distrust that lead to disorder, confusion, fear, and anger. What bonds do we need to affirm alongside all our differences, even as we affirm religious liberty among our most cherished human rights? How has the church spoken about national purpose in the past, and how have we prayed for and loved our nation, even when striving to heed the truths prophetic critics have spoken about exclusion and empire?

5. Encourages mid councils, ecumenical, and interfaith bodies to convene public discussions and advocate for reconciliation, verifiable disarmament, collective security, and human rights.

For the church’s witness in support of treaties and international institutions:

6. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) recommits itself to work with other Christian Churches for a lasting peace among nations and peoples based on the vision of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the highest principles of international law. These principles should always apply to the national purposes of our country, so as to guide the use of power with high ideals, to provide “liberty and justice for all.” This resolution is to guide all agencies of the General Assembly in their public witness and coalition-building work. Among other actions, a more moral foreign policy of the United States should include:

- a. Full U.S. participation in and support for the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court;
- b. Closing Guantanamo Bay and overseas “black sites,” which criminalize U.S. service people who hold others in indefinite and unconstitutional detention;
- c. Limiting the presidential pardon to require a human rights review of any prospective pardons of war criminals;
- d. Ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW);
- e. Renewed endorsement of and participation in UN scientific studies and regulation of climate change, including covenants such as the Paris Accords, with any decisions to withdraw from same subject to majority support in both houses of Congress;
- f. Greater support for United Nations programs and improvements in UN governance (such as requiring three security council members for any use of a veto), consistent with the Peacebuilding concept.

With regard to the military and human security:

7. Since unilateral military action and treaty breaking have already led to much tragic miscalculation and distancing from our allies, the U.S. should renew or renegotiate regional security and arms reduction treaties. It should consider human rights, food security, and environmental sustainability before imposing economic, trade, immigration, or travel sanctions, which should be subject to congressional review. Specific policy and program improvements seem warranted:

a. To strengthen the War Powers Act requiring Congressional Declarations of War, sunset clauses on such authorizations, determinations of what constitutes “humanitarian intervention,” disclosure of armed drone and cyber security operations (offensive and defensive), and other congressional oversight functions;

b. To assess the effectiveness of antiterror or counterterrorist policies in light of empirical studies of the roots of terrorism, and in light of the impacts of these policies on the security of Christian and other religious minorities;

c. To reduce the military budget and network of international bases, particularly where climate change has already deteriorated facilities;

d. To strengthen agencies for arms control, atomic energy, and disarmament, and to expand them to include all countries with nuclear weapons, to restrict further nuclear testing and proliferation, to monitor all nuclear sites and facilities, and to ensure the safe disposal of nuclear waste and deactivated weaponry.

In statecraft, diplomacy, and foreign assistance:

8. Increased funding for strong and effective statecraft, including strategic and generous foreign assistance, is essential for a national security that is also collective security and basic human security. No U.S. military or humanitarian aid or subsidy should go to human rights violators and those who deprive ethnically and religiously different groups of full citizenship rights, and trade relationships should follow similar standards, with the inclusion of labor rights and environmental standards. Specific policy and program improvements seem warranted:

a. To require career foreign service diplomats in all major ambassadorial appointments and to protect those representatives from politicized manipulation and retaliation; to reduce unprofessional, corrupt, and incompetent behavior, conflicts of interest, nepotism, and otherwise improve decision-making;

b. To increase protections for whistleblowers, particularly in national security agencies, and reduce politicization of appointments to security and surveillance agencies;

c. To increase funding for the Peace Corps and study abroad by scholars, as well as ease restrictions and obstacles for students and scholars seeking to study in the United States;

d. To provide assistance, medical care, and relocation, if necessary, to persons and families involved in assisting U.S. military efforts (such as translators) and restoration assistance in locations where nuclear and other highly toxic chemical use or disposal has contaminated the land.

Rationale

Introduction

The redirection of U.S. foreign and military policy toward peacebuilding points beyond the scope of this resolution and will take years, as we have noted in pairing it with the proposal for an ecumenical revisioning of “the World House.” The above affirmation and specific recommendations, however, reflect an awareness of two broad and related crises: a crisis in international order and a crisis in national purpose. This background rationale looks briefly at those crises, then reviews some Presbyterian precedents and resources, and then provides a brief review of some of the missed opportunities and military blunders since 1989 and the end of the Cold War. Overall, beneath the specific principles and more incremental measures, we point to an enduring Presbyterian conviction that God’s moral law knows no human boundaries.

A Crisis of Devolving Global Order

The first crisis is global. According to many experts the post-World War II order has reached an inflection point. Technology has created a politically, economically, and ecologically interdependent world that holds possibilities for global community and creaturely flourishing, but which has been intensifying inequality among and within nations. Yet today many powerful nations are withdrawing support from the law-based institutions that shepherded the global order through the Cold War. Regionally powerful states are challenging the sovereignty of their neighbors as well as the post-World War II order’s emphasis on human rights. First World nationalists have joined voices from the Two-Thirds world in challenging trade agreements and the justice of an unregulated or neoliberal market system—sometimes for the good. Militant fundamentalisms challenge the

values of the global cosmopolitan culture, often allying with racism and anti-immigrant sentiment, while traditional alliances block the development of participatory government, leaving authoritarian governments in place. Global health and environmental protections are weakened. Yet only by working together can humanity and other species survive.

A Crisis of National Purpose

The second crisis has to do with national purpose. What should America's role in the world be? Americans of both political parties wonder whether the U.S. should continue to serve as a "global policeman."¹ They question the expense of America's defense budget and the wisdom of its military adventures.² They are uncertain where a stable international order ranks among other pressing national priorities, and what approaches (other than military interventions) are most effective for achieving it. If upholding a rule-based global order is in the U.S. interest, can it be divorced from democratic values, diplomacy, and ecologically sustainable economic development? Faith in democratic institutions has plummeted among young adults in America and in other Western democracies.³ The U.S. election of a president who scorns traditional democratic values like a free press and independent judiciary, and who has rejected a bipartisan internationalism in favor of an "America-First" foreign policy, has made these questions more pressing. Racism is particularly corrosive of traditional institutions that were never free of it.

Because the United States wields concentrated economic, political, and military power, the crisis in our national order exacerbates the crisis in global order.⁴ The national confusion comes at a time when the world economy has become more integrated than at any previous point in history, and when climate change, nuclear proliferation, disease, and terrorism require a more effective response from all nations. Our national confusion has discouraged our allies and emboldened our rivals.⁵

Presbyterian Precedents

Presbyterians are called to a renewed vision of a just and durable peace based in a community of nations guided by international law, cooperating for mutual benefit and to reduce risks of war and irreversible environmental damage. Commissioners may be familiar with the general support for human rights and the United Nations since 1948, but here we provide precedents to show the church's values expressed before World War II before those stronger international institutions were put in place. These are affirmations of past General Assemblies:

- a. In 1914, the "court of international arbitration" at the Hague was endorsed as a possible preventive of war, to which "every international controversy shall be submitted."
- b. In 1919, "we call upon our people ... to the support of the Treaty of Peace and the League of Nations as vigorously and unitedly as they supported the armies on the battlefield."
- c. In 1922, 1923, and 1924, commended "participation in the Permanent Court of International Justice," or "World Court," and conferences on disarmament.
- d. In 1928, supported the "Paris Peace Pact," otherwise known as the "Kellogg-Briand Pact," an effort to "outlaw war" on moral principle but without enforcement mechanisms that was approved by Congress (and most other nations). This antimilitary sentiment was consistent with votes in 1936 and 1938 by majorities of presbyteries in the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. to remove "just war" language from the Westminster Confession (votes that fell short of supermajorities needed for confessional change).
- e. In 1933, "We believe that private manufacture of munitions of war ought to be prohibited in order that the temptation to the manufacture of both munitions and war may be removed from private parties and that there ought to be no exportation of the munitions of war contrary to the spirit of the Paris Pact."
- f. In 1935, celebrated the "membership of the United States in the International Labor Organization ... in Geneva ... for protective labor legislation in all countries to promote social justice, human rights, industrial peace and prosperity."
- g. In 1936, "register[ed] our protest against the racial and religious intolerance now being carried on in Germany, joining our prayers with theirs that the day of deliverance may soon come," and in 1939, "We condemn[ed] every expression of race hatred wherever it appears in the world. We confess the sins of our country in this respect ... We urge our Government to continue its efforts to make generous arrangement for the settlement of refugees, so continuing our national tradition of being an asylum to the oppressed of all nations."
- h. In 1943, endorsed the Six Pillars of Peace envisioned by the Commission on a Just and Durable Peace headed by Presbyterian elder John Foster Dulles.
- i. In 1948–50 affirmed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and formation of United Nations, and the establishment of international economic institutions to prevent worldwide depressions and assist development and decolonization.

This short listing omits some actions of the former PCUS, insightfully presented in Rick Nutt's *Toward Peacemaking: Presbyterians in the South and National Security, 1945–1983*, and similarly actions of the United Presbyterian Church of North America, which united with the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. in 1958.

From the End of the Cold War to 9/11/01

Despite the formation of the United Nations, the rivalry of two power blocs, seen as the “Free World” and Communism, took the form of a “Cold War.” As many have observed, it was not very cold for those involved in wars on the dividing lines between spheres of influence, such as Korea and Vietnam, and those impacted by military interventions by the “superpowers.” A question for those interested in peace and international cooperation is what opportunities were lost in that decade plus between the Berlin Wall’s fall in 1989 and inauguration of a “war on terror,” at least by the United States, following the attacks of 9/11/01.

In the later 1980s and early 1990s, after the collapse of USSR, some countries in Latin America, Africa, and especially the former Soviet Union adopted more democratic electoral systems. But the Cold War pattern of the NATO and the USSR competing for and sometimes restraining clients also withered. Without that framework, more open military conflicts arose, and are still ongoing. There are many complex stories in these countries of the greater Middle East and Central Asia in particular, often with important effects on the internal politics and society in the major powers. Part of the challenge of supporting a more just world order is determining how much regional collective security agreements can or should be modeled on NATO, and how much leadership can be expected of other blocs (such as a European Union without Britain) in a world increasingly affected by China. China’s perceived pragmatism in expanding its relationships poses clear questions about human rights, most evident in Hong Kong and Taiwan.

The Cold War concluded with an astonishing display of peacemaking among former rivals, as the West forged a partnership with Russia to reduce nuclear stockpiles and prevent nuclear proliferation. The West even sent advisors to help revitalize the tattered Soviet economy, an effort that was perhaps bound to fail, even if a more constructive transformation of state enterprises and fairer distribution of state assets had been envisioned.⁶ Much of the hope that characterized the immediate post-Cold War era has dissipated.

When the bipolar, Cold War world collapsed, a unipolar world remained, leaving America and her allies militarily, economically, and culturally preeminent.⁷ There was no Peace of Westphalia, Congress of Vienna, or Dumbarton Oaks to establish the contours of the post-war peace as there had been following other conflicts. Instead, there was continuity, sometimes described as “status quo plus.”⁸

President George H. W. Bush asserted that the “New World Order” presented an opportunity to build an international community of nations based on “the rule of law, not the law of the jungle.”⁹ In saying this, he hoped the institutions founded after World War II would finally be able to live out their promise. The National Council of Churches [including the PC(USA)] responded quickly to that sense of possibility with a one-year project supporting a human rights and development-oriented foreign policy.¹⁰ The first Iraq war tempered the Bush Administration’s ambitions. During the relatively peaceful Clinton years, Secretary of State Madeline Albright envisioned a constructive U.S. dominance when she called America the “indispensable nation.”¹¹ She urged America to work in concert with allies to provide leadership and military backbone for a relatively just, peaceful, and law-based international order still structured by the post WWII institutions. Again, with a hope of encouraging a genuine redirection of U.S. hegemony, the National Council of Churches in 1998 updated the six pillars of peace, adding a seventh concerning ecology.¹²

The period since 9/11/01 has been one of “endless war” in the greater Middle East and West Asia, and the failure of international cooperation to address climate change. Military establishments have expanded and nuclear proliferation has resumed. Civil wars, dictatorships, and climate-influenced food shortages have then fed refugees into unprepared host countries, prompting ethnic, racial, and religious tensions. In some countries Christianity has been almost extinguished, in other countries other religions have been targeted. The statement from the consultation, *Standing Together in a World Divided*, noted above, captures some of the tragedy and threat experienced across the world today.

The recommendations of this resolution do not do the work of “reimagining the world house,” but point to the need for U.S. Christians to try to get our own house in order. As a reaffirmation of the church’s principles and hopes, however, this resolution may be a resource for that larger project as well as a grounding for current advocacy. Let us remember Paul’s advice in 2 Corinthians 8:21, “We give consideration to what is noble not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of people.”

Endnotes

1. A pew study found that 57 percent of Americans thought that the U.S. should deal with our own problems and leave others to manage theirs https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/usa/2016-06-13/case-offshore-balancing?cid=nlc-fatoday-20161228&sp_mid=53086948&sp_rid=cmF5bW9uZHJyY2JlcnRzQGdtYWlsLmNvbQs2&spMailingID=53086948&spUse_rID=MjIxNTgwNjA1MzZM2S0&spJobID=1065071969&spReportId=MTA2NTA3MTk2OQS2.

2. A recent poll of registered voters found that only 14 percent believe recent American foreign policy has made us safer. <https://www.charleskochinstitute.org/news/majority-believe-foreign-policy-made-americans-less-safe/>. Note the source of this study; the values of world order can be presented in many ways, as concerns for safety can be directed toward “national security” or “human security.”
3. According to one study, young Americans who say it is “essential to live in a country with a democracy” (where “essential” is 10 on a 10-point scale) has plummeted from 91 percent in the 1930s to 57 percent today. <http://www.journalofdemocracy.org/sites/default/files/Foa%26Mounk-27-3.pdf>. The decline in democracy is global. <https://www.csis.org/analysis/how-democracy-s-decline-would-undermine-international-order>. See also, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/15/opinion/across-the-globe-a-growing-disillusionment-with-democracy.html>. Edward Luce says that while “democracy is something of a sacred value to the generation who fought against fascism—or suffered under it—and lived through the Cold War,” American and European millennials no longer hold this to be true. “Today, one in six people of all ages in America and Europe now believe it would a good or a very good things for the ‘army to rule.’” Luce is most troubled with how the rich have lost faith in democracy. See, *The Retreat of Western Liberalism* (New York: The Atlantic Monthly Press, 2017), p. 121. Some doubt that support for democracy is in decline, though they admit that the quality of democracy is in decline. See https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/06/26/is-democracy-on-the-decline-not-as-much-as-some-pundits-want-you-to-believe/?utm_term=.e78f8d7a0d6c.
4. John Ikenberry hints at the stakes of our current political moment,
- Compared with past orders—imperial and anarchic systems of various sorts, from the Greek and Chinese worlds of the classical era to the nineteenth-century European imperial system—the liberal order stands alone. Choose your metric. But in terms of wealth creation, the provision of physical security and economic stability, and the promotion of human rights and political protections, no other international order in history comes close. The liberal order may have its shortcomings—costly and ill-advised wars have been fought in its name, and vast economic and social injustices remain—but it has empowered people across the world who seek a better life within a relatively open and rules-based global system.
- See, John Ikenberry, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/usa/2017-04-17/plot-against-american-foreign-policy>.
5. For discussion of how allies are hedging see, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/world/2018-01-23/how-us-allies-are-adapting-america-first?cid=int-lea&pgtype=hpg>.
6. Chris Miller argues that glasnost (openness) undermined perestroika (economic reform), making it impossible for Gorbachev to outmaneuver the interest groups who found perestroika threatening. Miller doubts Gorbachev could have taken the authoritarian path China took in ending Mao’s socialism. See, Chris Miller, *The Struggle to Save the Soviet Economy*, Mikhail Gorbachev and the Collapse of the USSR (Chapel Hill, N.C.: The University of North Carolina Press, 2016).
7. Daniel Philpott argues that glasnost and perestroika represented an ideological collapse that preceded the political falling away of former Soviet Satellites. See, *The Shield of Achilles*.
8. Some may ask whether the Charter of Paris for a New Europe (November 1990) is comparable with previous peace treaties. Though the agreement followed perestroika, which both undermined the ideological basis for Soviet participation in the Cold War and outlined democratic principles and human rights, it quickly passed into obscurity in the confusion that followed the collapse of a signatory, the Soviet Union. Much discussion of this period in history and what has followed is drawn from Charles A. Kupchan, *No One’s World: The West, the Rising Rest, and the Coming Global Turn*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).
9. George H. W. Bush “New World Order Speech” September 11, 1990.
10. The Project for a New World Order was supported in part by the Veatch Foundation of Plandome, LI. Key papers from its consultations are found in Christian Iosso, Ed. *A World Made New: The New World Order Project Report* (N.Y.: Friendship, 1992).
11. Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright interview on NBC-TV *The Today Show* with Matt Lauer in Columbus, Ohio, February 19, 1998. As a literal statement, calling America “indispensable” considerably overstates things. Despite its exaggeration and dissembling innocence, it has become a popular way to speak about the benevolent role American power could play in a multilateral world. <http://secretary.state.gov/www/statements/1998/980219a.html>.
12. The NCC advocated these six pillars:

“1) International political framework (provided by the United Nations); 2) International economic accountability; 3) International legal framework; 4) Protection for the most vulnerable; 5) Resolution and transformation of conflict; 6) Honoring human rights.” They also suggested a seventh pillar, “concerned with ecology and the environment.” <http://www.nccusa.org/news/news58.html>. The NCCC international relations team that reopened this approach to world order was supported in part by the Stanley Foundation.

REAC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-040

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-040—From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC)

The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 02-040.

According to the Organization for Mission, “REAC shall be a prophetic voice for involving people of color in the formation of public policy and monitor the implementation of policies adopted by the church that impact the quality of life of people of color in the church and in the world” (Organization for Mission, VI.1). This document is a clear example of that prophetic voice, and REAC recommends its approval.

Item 02-041

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 306.]

Lazarus Is Walking in Baltimore—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy requests the 224th General Assembly (2020) of the PC(USA) receive this testimony for prayer and study in response to ongoing tragedies of gun violence, and to orient Presbyterians to ministry in Baltimore:

Lazarus Is Walking in Baltimore: A Resurrection Uprising

Robert P. Hoch, Ph.D.¹

I.

*His eyes wouldn't stay shut.
They taped them shut,
and then they'd just pop open again ...*

Initially, it seemed like small talk on a typical Sunday afternoon. That, at least, is what I imagined when I sat down at a round table with Treshawna Williams, LaChelle Rice, and Phyllis Scott in Reid Chapel, just outside the main sanctuary of the First & Franklin Presbyterian Church, in the Mt. Vernon neighborhood of Baltimore. It was a little after 2 p.m. on March 24, 2019. Our church was preparing to host a community-wide concert to raise awareness about the violence in our city. So it was that Treshawna, Phyllis, and LaChelle were there, in Reid Chapel, preparing to speak in a traditionally white church. They were united by a story of loss: each had lost a child to the violence in Baltimore, Treshawna just a few months before.²

If the concert that followed was powerful (and it was), the testimonies of these three women were inexpressibly beautiful and to the same degree painful. Yet what I heard *before* the concert continues to haunt me: “His eyes wouldn’t stay shut. They taped them shut, and then they’d just pop open again. I think he was seeing something beautiful, that’s why his eyes wouldn’t stay shut.” “He was messed up,” Phyllis said over and over, just shaking her head, like she was trying to shake away an image that haunted her at that moment, shaking her head as if stung, shuddering as if she had suffered the gunshot herself. Another told how her family took care of her son’s body: trimming his fingernails, shaving him, washing him, dressing him, almost like a mother would do before sending her child to school ... only, he wasn’t going to school. Or graduating. Or getting married. Or posing with their first child. Instead, the bodies of their children were being prepared for burial, for incineration.³

At one level, maybe this talk makes us uncomfortable because it is too true. But there is another possibility: if we think of these tender expressions as a longing, a call, and a plea for resurrection, or even more sharply expressed, as a call for an uprising of resurrection, for incarnation, for mending of the creational hoop, then I suppose we have begun to hear the true import of their testimony.

II.

This Is Crazy

Brian K. Blount, New Testament scholar and president of Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, Virginia, believes that the story of resurrection isn’t only for Easter, but for a world typified by death: “In a world typified by death, killings, even high-profile killings, do not raise a transforming alarm. ... What the purveyors of death notice is defiant life. It is resurrection that frightens them. ... Only life can conquer death.”⁴ As powerful as Blount’s challenge is, a profound obstacle stands in the way of the kind of witness he imagines. Perhaps we could call it the cultural hermeneutic of white denial, that whiteness does not in fact exist. This sort of denial is endemic to the way we talk about race, violence, and the inequities of our nation.

In the planning for this assembly, this was a familiar comment: “What’s happening in Baltimore doesn’t reflect what’s going on in our communities. ...” This, or something close to it, was a comment made frequently enough in the planning stages for this meeting that it deserves a firm rebuttal, not because it is unique but because it is commonplace and wrong.

At the risk of sounding glib, it is about Baltimore. Ours is a national church, a predominantly white church, and it is meeting in the heart of a majority black city, where Freddie Gray died as a result of police brutality in 2015.⁵ From 2015 through 2019, there have been 1,660 homicides in Baltimore, 348 in 2019 alone.⁶ That’s 55 deaths per 100,000 people, higher than the per capita rate of homicide in New York, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, or Chicago. Alone, the raw numbers disguise the impact of the violence. In 2015, 93 percent of the victims were black. There have been around one thousand people wounded every year by gunfire. One person laments the carnage as a scourge of “hurt people hurting hurt people.”⁷

Even so, talking about this as an anomalous crime wave falling within the unique confines of the City of Baltimore fails to name the systemic and racial contours of the violence in our nation. It presupposes that highly segregated congregations of the suburbs and rural parts of America are, by definition, sane while Baltimore (and cities like it) are insane.

This gets harder to believe with each act of white terrorism. Consider the April 27, 2019, antisemitic attack on the Chabad Synagogue in Poway, California. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, Poway is 76.9 percent white. The pastors of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (majority white) where the white terrorist, John Earnest (nineteen-years old) worshipped, where his father was an ordained ruling elder, would not have seen themselves as actively racist, and would in all likelihood self-describe as antiracist. However, they do pride themselves on their orthodoxy. Indeed, Earnest's pastors were not shocked by the racist ideas within his "manifesto"—they were shocked that Earnest was, by their standards, theologically coherent. OPC leaders believe that white supremacist views are incompatible with their doctrinal statements.⁸ Maybe, to explain this contradiction, some would say this outburst was an "anomaly"—limited to one person's mental illness, unrelated to his apparent theological literacy.

W.E.B. Du Bois might see it differently. Seemingly isolated expressions of white racism "are not instances of 'Europe gone mad' but of Europe itself, 'the real soul of white culture ... stripped and visible today.'" ⁹ Could it be possible that the madness of our city is only more visible here than it is everywhere else?

The history of the City of Baltimore, redlining (the practice of excluding majority black communities from financial resources¹⁰), corrupt policing, and starving public schools reflects a prevailing theology of white nationalism. Was the white church a "neutral" player in forming the social, economic, and political infrastructure of cities like Baltimore? Did the architects of segregation draw from the myth of white theological coherence? Amid such violent eruptions, Du Bois might see whiteness stripped of the pretense of being anything but ultimately and profoundly insane.

In November of 2019, as people from the community of Sandtown Winchester gathered to prepare a memorial for the shocking number of deaths they have witnessed, people kept saying, "This is crazy," as in entire neighborhoods redlined again through the violence of denied funding of necessary social services and by a "war on poverty" that looks like a war on the poor. Will Tyler, whose son, Delante' Tyler, was murdered in 2017 (he is survived by two children), takes me into his home, where, like many others, he keeps a memorial of photographs, family and friends, with his son at the center. He points to them, one by one: "He's been killed. He's dead. He dead. My son. These two are in prison. This one, he's dead. He was killed a week ago, no—no four days ago." Altogether, he counts thirteen people lost in three years.

Will relates the story of the loss of his son, Delante' Tyler, with whom he was talking at the moment of the shooting: "I told him, 'Get out of the store,' cause I had a bad feeling and then I heard *pop, pop, pop* ... and somethin' in me knew it was Delante' got shot. I dropped my phone right there," he says pointing to a nearby playground, situated between the projects, the Gilmore Homes, just four blocks from where Freddie Gray lived. "I ran over to where he was, the store, and saw him there shot in the head. He died in my arms."¹¹

Lor Choc, twenty-one-years old, is a rapper and a local celebrity in her home neighborhood of Sandtown Winchester.¹² Gunshots, she says, are "pretty much the same" as what she has always known.¹³ Sometimes, as she talks, she seems ambivalent about whether she is immune to the violence or not. But you hear it in her music, and in her own sense of shock at what has been lost: "Before my uncle was shot, we'd be at his house all the time, sharin' a drink and relaxin', but after he was killed it wasn't the same. I still go over there, to see my cousins, but it's empty now, it's just empty, empty. Empty."

In November, I hadn't seen Phyllis for nine months, since the memorial concert in March, when she had recounted the loss of her son, Malcolm. Seeing me again, she locked onto me with the intensity of a person who has known too much pain to abide fools: "You don't know what I been through! *You don't know! You don't know!*" Soon I would: "My son," she says, "was shot, 23 times, 23 times! He lost his eye and his foot is really messed up. He's not able to work and he has got a lot of anger and mental issues. PTSD? I really think so. ..." I meet her son, Jay'Trelle, twenty-five-years old, a few days later, when I go to Phyllis' home in Westport to donate some socks she plans to distribute to people in the community. I knock on the door. In answer, someone shouts, "It's a white man! There's a white man at the door!" I say, "I'm here to see Phyllis." I hear Phyllis' voice from inside. She opens the door, and her son limps out of the house. "Don't pay any attention to him," she tells me. "People ain't crayons," she says, calling after him. "He know better than that!" Jay'Trelle's left eye is turned out, permanently twisted in blindness as a result of the shooting. "He lost that eye. He ain't gettin' that one back," she says, almost as if speaking of a catalog of losses he has experienced as a result of the shooting. She thinks it was a case of mistaken identity.¹⁴

It is insane. Markell Hendricks, sixteen-years old, was another murder victim. He was the grandson of Dorothy Cunningham, a member of Baltimoreans United in Leadership Development, a leading grass-roots organization. As I attended the memorial, it struck me again, how incongruous our city: the funeral home where Markell's services were held, was efficient, right on time. It felt like the bureaucracy of a well-oiled necropolis. Pictures of Markell were being streamed. There was an open casket. I confess I didn't want to know him that way. So, I looked at the pictures. The smile. The teenage swagger. The promise. A decorated basketball was posed as a kind of centerpiece, as doll-like as a body embalmed for burial. There was

plenty of parking at the funeral home. The building itself was in prime condition: no broken windows, no graffiti, plenty of parking, and it was expanding, with new additions—while around it, the neighborhood was dilapidated and collapsing. Funeral homes should be struggling to survive, not expanding their brands. High school graduates should be the crown jewels of Baltimore, not the doll-like products of its morticians.

Commissioners will, no doubt, enjoy the beautiful space of Baltimore’s Inner Harbor. It seems so sane. But is it? Is it sane in the same way that the gleaming products of the mortician in Sandtown Winchester are? Seemingly aglow, but dead, dead, dead? At a community meeting in Edmundson Village (near where Taylor Hayes, seven-years old, was mortally wounded by gunfire in the summer of 2018), the newly appointed Police Commissioner Michael Harrison took questions from residents. Renee McCray pointed out the difference between Inner Harbor—where our assembly is meeting—and Baltimore’s distressed communities:

The lighting was so bright [in the Inner Harbor]. People had scooters. They had bikes. They had babies in strollers. And I said: “What city is this? This is not Baltimore City.” Because if you go up to Martin Luther King Boulevard [the demarcation between downtown and the west side] we’re all bolted in our homes, we’re locked down ... all any of us want is equal protection.¹⁵

Was this just another version of redlining, only this time the line was blue?¹⁶

Indeed, victims of violence not only bear the burden of their loss alone, often with minimal support from police and social services, they have also become the targets of racist barbs from Washington D.C. The president of the United States, with the support of Fox News and hate-radio, uses dog-whistle phrases to stir up white nationalists, calling the city rat-infested, with the not-so-subtle call for racial extermination and so on—how can this General Assembly be anything but a moment of deep self-examination for us as a denomination? It is as if the church were to meet in New York City, following the September 11 attack. Would there be any question at all whether the meeting would be about New York City? Yet when the genocide taking place is a citywide lynching executed amid unapologetically racist attacks from Washington D.C., then it is a “local” issue, that “doesn’t speak to” our national narrative, much less our local ones. It is as if this question, this body-talk, is confined to Baltimore, as though the violence here were somehow anomalous rather than the tragically predictable outcome of historically systemic racism, inequity, and police brutality.

Our church adopted the Confession of Belhar but has not confessed its cooperation with systemic violence against people of color since the birth of the slave economy in 1619.¹⁷ Is it possible that this meeting, in a city scarred by the stain of racism, is the time and the place for us as a national body to repent of our complicity with racist powers?

In Baltimore, you will see unrest and uprising. It will be up to the assembly to determine how it will be a part of this historic moment.

III.

III.

Dead: A Relative Term

“The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, ‘Unbind him and let him go.’” (John 11:14)

Mostly, when we read this story, the raising of Lazarus is complete when Jesus commands Lazarus to come out of the tomb. But in John’s telling, it wasn’t a living person, but a dead person that came out, walking, however improbably, with hands and feet bound with graveclothes. The narrator deploys language with brutal honesty (“‘ Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days’”) as well as with frightening audacity, evoking resurrection. Albeit unintentionally, artists and journalists seem to almost probe the Lazarus event, both its agony but also its power, through their investigations and interpretations. Baltimore journalist, Alec MacGillis, says that you can tell a lot about the politics of people by the different words they use to describe events surrounding Freddie Gray: “Some people ... call them the ‘riots;’ some the ‘unrest.’ [Others always refer] to them as the ‘uprising,’ a word that connoted something justifiable and positive. ...”¹⁸ Devin Allen, a Baltimore photographer who gained national recognition for his work during the riots, is in the latter group:

When most people think about the “ghetto,” they think of poverty, struggle, pain, violence, drugs. But for me, the word “ghetto” is so much more. When I look deep into my community, I see a beauty that is often overlooked and unappreciated. There are so many different aspects to an uprising: rioting, looting, cookouts, block parties, prayer circles, town hall meetings. The Baltimore uprising gave people like me a voice. Since the murder of Freddie Gray, my city has not been reborn, but it’s on its way.¹⁹

By meeting in Baltimore, the assembly has got in line with the crucified and at the same time is witness to Jesus’ calling the dead out of our national graves, painful and beautiful to behold. But resurrection, in John’s estimation, includes collaborative works of community, as together, we collectively become implicated in the story of Lazarus’ resuscitation unto resurrection.

IV.

IV.

Raising the Dead

Because our church has worked to name whiteness in America, our liturgy sometimes becomes uncomfortably realistic as we attempt to craft liturgies that play a part in the determined preservation of uncomfortable truths about America’s violent

history. Following the president's comparison of his impeachment to a lynching, we incorporated this short litany into worship, adapting it from Michele Norris' *Washington Post* column, "So You Want to Talk about Lynching?"²⁰

One: So, you want to talk about lynching?

All: O God, we confess that we know too little about lynching.

One: A lynching involved a man or a woman, or sometimes a child, dragged from their homes, hauled out like lambs to be slaughtered.

All: O God, we confess that we know too little about lynching.

One: A lynching also involved a man (almost always a man) who had a rope or a rope that was ready with a noose. It had to be a coarse, heavy, corded rope.

All: O God, we confess that we know too little about lynching.

One: A lynching was an impulsive act, but the actual lynching itself took technique, skill; someone had to know how to find the tree suited to the work, a branch strong enough, high enough, to do the work.

All: O God, we confess that we know too little about lynching.

One: It took a lot of people to hold a lynching. Good people. People who taught Sunday school. People who looked the other way. Dedicated people. Nice people.

All: O God, we confess that we know too little about lynching.

One: According to the NAACP, 4,743 people were lynched in the United States from 1882 to 1968. 3,446 were black.

All: O God, we confess that we know too little about lynching.

One: No matter what, gravity always won.

All: O God, we confess that we know far, far too much about lynching.

Forgive us, O God, but not too quickly.

Forgive us, O God, but not too cheaply.

Forgive us, O God.

Removing the graveclothes of our racist history is not something that we can do alone, or with liturgies; maybe this is because many of us don't realize that we are walking while bound in the graveclothes of whiteness. After all, everyone tells us we're alive. However, the longer we sit with John's account of the raising of Lazarus, the more difficult it becomes to tell who is really dead in this story: is it Lazarus, the dead man walking, or the onlookers, still acting as if death rules the day, while seemingly fully alive? Is "dead," as Brian Blount suggests, a relative term?

The Reverend Dr. Phyllis Felton, the pastor of Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church and I met together, as she put it, to "break the ice" between our two congregations. Madison Avenue shares a history with First & Franklin Presbyterian Church. In 1848, the original First Presbyterian Church purchased a property for the black people who worshipped in the same building as whites but not as a body, not as a congregation. The oral history suggests that African Americans wanted to have a greater leadership role in the church. This was not to be. Instead, being a wealthy congregation, the white leadership of First Presbyterian Church decided to purchase a "substantial church" for their use.²¹

Today, we are hearing a call to come out, or we are together coming out of our complicity with whiteness as the ruling principality and power in America: "We're pushing for the same thing," Felton says of our two congregations. "We know our churches were born in the womb of racism. That's not all we are, and we don't need to stay there, but we do need to acknowledge that past." Our buildings are on opposite ends of Madison Avenue, linked by a road but divided by a segregated history. We were invited to join the Madison Avenue Church in a Watch Night Service on January 31, 2019, 400 years after the birth of the slave economy. Seven adults and four children from the First & Franklin congregation gathered with about twenty or so adults and children of the Madison Avenue Church, which is currently located just off North Avenue, in the same zip code as Sandtown Winchester.

We broke bread, talked about what hope looks like for us, and worshipped together. It was a small gathering around a tomb that has been sealed for too many years. "We leave right at midnight," she tells us. And then, comfortingly, "Sometimes we hear gunshots, but it's okay. Don't worry about that."

We're still at the beginning of this journey, but somehow that act feels like living; it is clear that whatever we're about, it's about community building, not simply church buildings. And it is also more than Baltimore, according to Felton: "I would

think we would have something to say to this General Assembly. We are at a time in our nation and in our church when if anyone has a voice, it should be us.”

V.

Lazarus Is Walking

When I sat down with Phyllis, Treshawna, and LaChelle, what I heard was body talk of the most profound kind. In a few minutes, we would walk into the main sanctuary for a memorial concert to those who had lost their lives to the gun violence in Baltimore. They would be speaking to an audience of nearly 300 people from across Baltimore. Over ninety-minutes, they told a rapt congregation of their experiences of loss, pain, misunderstanding, and hope. Corneilius Scott and Pam Stein of the Family Survivor Network use four prompts to help those impacted by the violence process their feelings: where I was when I found out; what I miss most; the big lie; and what comes next. Their responses to those prompts formed the heart of the service:

I miss his fat cheeks; I miss our talks late at night after I got home from work; he always used to cry out when he came home, “Ma, Ma? Where are you, Ma?” When I asked, “Why you yell out like that, when you know I’m home?” He told me, “Because I want you to know that I have arrived.” I will never forget that you have arrived.

Just ten days before his untimely death, Corneilius Scott shared that they had added another prompt to these four: “I want to introduce you to my son/daughter/brother/sister—using the present tense.” Scott explained that for survivors the present tense is gone. Perhaps, in a sense, what Scott was attempting to do was undermine the finality of the tomb with living testimony.

People of faith live under two obligations: we are called to speak truth to power and to speak the truth in love. And yet, so often, when we speak the truth to power, there is no love; and when we speak in love, there is no power. Treshawna, Phyllis, and LaChelle told us their truth in love and in power—and Lazarus is walking.

Endnotes

1. The author has served as the pastor of First & Franklin Presbyterian Church since June 2016. Before he came to Baltimore, he served as a professor of homiletics and worship at the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary, a PC(USA) school. He self-identifies as Alaska Native descendent (Athabascan) of mixed ancestry.
2. The Family Survivor Network (FSN) (a group that supports families impacted by the scourge of homicides in our city by providing, among other things, support groups, case management, art therapy, and fellowship opportunities) had been instrumental in bringing us together with these three courageous women. Pam Stein, clinical program director for FSN, is a licensed social worker and art therapist. Stein says that FSN deliberately chose to locate its office in the Sandtown Winchester neighborhood, just a few blocks away from where Freddie Gray lived and at the epicenter of the killings. The founder and executive director, Corneilius Scott, died unexpectedly on December 20, 2019. His son was a victim of handgun violence in August 2014. Pam relates that after Cornelius’ son, Ian, was assaulted, he had a conversation with God: “God, if my son survives, you have me.” His son survived. That experience moved Corneilius to become a dedicated advocate for victims of gun violence in Baltimore. This piece would not have been possible without the incredible courage, hospitality, and generosity of the FSN community. Read more about its work at <https://www.fsnwork.org/>.
3. Treshawna Williams, LaChelle Rice, and Phyllis Scott gave me permission to share their experiences.
4. Brian K. Blount, *Invasion of the Dead: Preaching Resurrection* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2014), 23–4.
5. “Among the deaths at police officers’ hands that animated the Black Lives Matter movement in its early stages, Gray’s was uniquely ambiguous. He was not shot, as were Laquan McDonald in Chicago; Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri; Tamir Rice in Cleveland; and Walter Scott in North Charleston, South Carolina. All that is known for certain is this: When he encountered the police officers, Gray—who had engaged in low-level dealing over the years—ran. When the police gave chase and tackled him, they found a small knife in his pocket and placed him under arrest. Gray was put in the back of a police van shackled and unbuckled, in violation of a new department policy. When the van arrived at the Western District’s headquarters, Gray was unconscious with a nearly severed spinal cord. He died seven days later.” Alec MacGillis, “The Tragedy of Baltimore” in *The New York Times* (12 May 2019), accessed on January 4, 2020, at <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/12/magazine/baltimore-tragedy-crime.html>.
6. The killings occur in the most distressed neighborhoods of Baltimore, with a narrow swathe of the City, Bolton Hill, Mount Vernon, and Inner Harbor nearly untouched. See “Baltimore Homicides” in *The Baltimore Sun* at <https://homicides.news.baltimoresun.com/>.
7. The statistics only tell part of the story, as Courtland Milloy reminds us: “Violence has a cumulative effect. A 10-year-old child growing up in the city’s most troubled neighborhoods has a decade of gun violence impacting his or her life—murdered and wounded friends, classmates, neighbors, relatives and strangers alike.” Courtland Milloy, “At One Church, Combating Neighborhood Violence Requires Prayer and Footwork” in *The Washington Post* (7 January 2020), accessed on January 8, 2020, at https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/at-one-church-neighborhood-combating-violence-requires-prayer-and-footwork/2020/01/07/f3119ec8-315d-11ea-91fd-82d4e04a3fac_story.html.
8. Julie Zauzmer, “The Alleged Synagogue Was a Churchgoer Who Talked Christian Theology” in *The Washington Post* (1 May 2019) accessed on January 4, 2020, at <https://www.washingtonpost.com/religion/2019/05/01/alleged-synagogue-shooter-was-churchgoer-who-articulated-christian-theology-prompting-tough-questions-evangelical-pastors/>.
9. W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of White Folk* in W.E.B. Du Bois, ed., *Writings* (New York: Library of America, 1986) quoted in Martín Alcoff, *Future of Whiteness*, 140.

02 RECOMMENDED REFERRALS TO THE 225TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2022)

10. Antero Pietila documents the historical development of what became popularly known as the “black tax”—that is, the additional cost extracted from African Americans for inferior housing located in areas color-coded as “undesirable” by Federal housing authorities. According to their explanation, redlined neighborhoods exhibited “detrimental influences in a pronounced degree [with an] undesirable population.” Pietila concludes, “a two-tier lending industry was born. Banks served well-to-do white areas; blacks had to get financing from speculators at harsh terms.” Pietila uncovers a similar discriminatory process for Jewish communities. See Antero Pietila, *Not in My Neighborhood: How Bigotry Shaped a Great American City* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2010), 70.
11. Will Tyler’s stepson, Brandon (called “D”), eighteen-years old, was killed in early January 2020, next to his home and right near a memorial that was designed by FSN to draw victims together.
12. To hear Lor Choc, click on “Soul Cry” (2019) at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zcc6UClsUyA>.
13. Quinn Kelley, “Lor Choc Rapper and Singer” in “Female Troubles: Episode 64” in *The Baltimore Sun* (23 January 2018), podcast accessed on January 8, 2020, at <https://www.baltimoresun.com/audio/podcasts/bs-female-trouble-lor-choc-20180123-htmlstory.html>.
14. Should you ever call Phyllis, her phone message is simply, “Mom.”
15. MacGillis, “The Tragedy of Baltimore” in *The New York Times* (12 May 2019).
16. Some say there are three institutions that are still strong in the city’s distressed neighborhoods: churches, grass-roots organizations, and gangs—not necessarily in that order. Notably, the police department isn’t often included as a positive force for change. There are some signs that this could be changing. Police Commissioner Michael Harrison describes the guiding philosophy of the Department: “My philosophy is that officers should be tough on crime, but soft on people.” Col. Sheree Briscoe of the Baltimore Police Department echoes these commitments: “Bring those to justice who violate the law but also address the phenomenon of crime through relationships and resources to address crime born of need. The juvenile population, for example, just wants to belong. When we learn of families in need, we point them to resources to assist them. The challenge becomes timely intervention.”
17. [“Confessing” refers here partly to the *Book of Confessions*, which includes the Confession of Belhar. Both predecessor churches sought to repudiate racism; a brief apology for slavery was made in 2001.]
18. MacGillis, “The Tragedy of Baltimore” in *The New York Times* (12 May 2019).
19. Devin Allen, *A Beautiful Ghetto* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2017), xx.
20. Michelle L. Norris, “So You Want to Talk about Lynching?” in *The Washington Post* (23 October 2019), accessed on January 9, 2020, at https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/so-you-want-to-talk-about-lynching-understand-this-first/2019/10/23/c5a5fd2a-f5ac-11e9-ad8b-85e2aa00b5ce_story.html.
21. African Americans were not allowed to own property at the time, so the board of the First Presbyterian Church purchased and held it on their behalf. Its pastor, and the leaders of First Presbyterian Church, clearly viewed this gesture as progressive and liberal-minded. In retrospect, while well-intentioned, it was a part of the myth of white exceptionalism that has dominated (bound) white people in America since 1619. John H. Gardner Jr., *The First Presbyterian Church of Baltimore: A Two Century Chronicle* (Baltimore: First Presbyterian Church, 1962), 94.

REAC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-041

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-041—From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC)

The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 02-041.

According to the Organization for Mission, “REAC shall be a prophetic voice for involving people of color in the formation of public policy and monitor the implementation of policies approved by the church that impact the quality of life of people of color in the church and in the world” (Organization for Mission, VI.1). This document is a clear example of that prophetic voice, and REAC recommends its approval.

Item 02-042

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 306.]

Epistles from Baltimore: Insights for Urban Ministry and Mission—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.

In order to deepen Presbyterian understanding of God’s work in Baltimore and the current context for urban ministry, the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020):

1. Urge commissioners and others visiting Baltimore to walk prayerfully and with eyes open to God’s presence both amid the high towers and successes of redevelopment and the neighborhoods afflicted by unemployment and violence, still affected by de-industrialization and the lack of green reinvestment. The purpose of this report, *Epistles from Baltimore*, is to

show urban ministry in Baltimore and to show how its churches deal with issues of race and class, as in similar reports to the Detroit (2014), Portland (2016), and St Louis (2018) General Assemblies.

2. Commend the congregations of Baltimore and the presbytery as a whole for their responses to the racial tension tragically visible in the death of Freddie Grey, as contained in the book of prayers and sermons, *From Hope to Wholeness*, ed. John V. Carlson, Mary D. Gaut, and James Parks (2015), and encourage the presbytery in its efforts to address long-term patterns of disadvantage, segregation, and preferential treatment of some neighborhoods over others.

3. Lift up the example of “The Center” as a place and program to provide education and dialogue about city concerns, opportunities for mission to groups from around the country, and for its service to the “Hands and Feet” focused program.

4. Receive and commend for study the testimonies of Baltimore pastors Michael Moore of Knox Presbyterian Church, Andrew Foster Connors of Brown Memorial Park Ave. Presbyterian Church, and Robert Hoch of First & Franklin St. Presbyterian Church, whose epistles are contributions to an ongoing conversation about urban ministry. Also, direct the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) to make those three contributions and the Supporting Statement that follows available online and in limited print publication.

5. Invite the reading of the meditation, “Lazarus Is Walking in Baltimore,” to inform how the church may respond to the national crisis of gun violence as it is experienced in Baltimore, and also be considered a part of the Epistles from Baltimore.

6. Encourage governing bodies with cities within their bounds to increase coordination with Full Communion partner denominations (in particular) to ensure critical mass for congregational life, pastoral presence, and new forms of ministry in neighborhoods under stress.

7. Encourage governing bodies with rural areas within their bounds similarly to engage in collaboration with Full Communion partners and appropriate public investment efforts as well to ensure viable ministries and sustainable communities.

8. Recognize the need for denomination-wide mission strategies to lessen urban/rural divides and reduce new forms of inequality among cities and regions, and to develop shared financial vehicles that can help governing bodies and congregations redevelop properties to better serve Christian witness, family, and communal life in the future.

9. Request that the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through its Compassion, Peace, and Justice ministries unit, to evaluate denominational efforts to support urban ministries, in consultation with representatives of the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, leaders of the Urban Ministry Network, and presbytery and synod leaders with urban mission program commitments, and report as appropriate to Presbyterian Mission Agency leadership and Board and the 225th General Assembly (2022).

10. Recommend that congregations consider participation in community organizations along the lines of B.U.I.L.D. (Baltimoreans United in Leadership Development) for mobilizing neighborhoods for improvements in housing, transportation, education, employment, and policing, and for providing the power analysis to enable effective campaigns. Commend the current example of BUILD and other organizations and citizens for pushing for adequate funding for the five policy areas in Maryland’s Kirwan Commission report on Innovation and Excellence in Education (see: http://dls.maryland.gov/pubs/prod/NoPbIT-abMtg/CmsnInnovEduc/2019_11_21_MDDraftimplementationtimeline.pdf).

In other urban social witness:

11. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through its Office of Public Witness (OPW), and urge other Presbyterians to support policies to reverse generators of the “racial wealth divide” and overconcentration of wealth generally in the U.S. economy, and restore regulatory protections, such as in the Consumer Finance Protection Bureau, to restrain “wealth stripping” of the poor and lower middle class (see Supporting Statement).

12. Affirm continuing efforts to end the discriminatory effects of the cash bail and “fines and fees” system in keeping the poor, especially persons of color, economically insecure, and to advocate reforms of policing and sentencing practices, together addressed by the 223rd General Assembly (2018) in the *Gospel from St. Louis*.

13. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through OPW, and urge similar support for policies to reduce homelessness and address shortages in housing through such efforts as the Baltimore Housing Mobility Program, helping public housing families and facilities move to higher opportunity and less segregated areas, as well as through expanded multifamily zoning, and removing federal housing funding caps, as is proposed in the Green New Deal for Public Housing Act, which would upgrade 1.2 million homes over a ten-year period.

14. Recognize and affirm the vocations of members involved in positive innovations in the city of Baltimore, such as Mr. Trash Wheel, a boat skimming plastic and other debris from the harbor, the program to study and reduce gun violence at the Bloomberg School of Public Health at Johns Hopkins University, the light rail and other public transport improvements, and the level of urban planning evident in the inner harbor redevelopment.

15. Support policies that reduce destructive and inefficient economic competition among cities, such as through tax abatements that favor large firms from other areas, while encouraging public alternative enterprises and local hiring where possible, mindful that all Christians have a stake in and a calling to help all cities transform their infrastructure to be healthy, welcoming, and sustainable communities in the face of major climate changes, especially in coastal locations.

Rationale

This rationale for the recommendations has four sections:

- I. Theological-Ethical Framework and Sources for Further Information on Baltimore’s Social and Economic Context;
- II. Comparison with General Assembly Action on Detroit in 2014 and Developments Since;
- III. Urban Ministry Network Conversation and Challenges Since 2014;
- IV. Testimonies from Three Baltimore Congregations.

For clarification, the primary author of Section II is the Reverend Kevin Johnson, with supplemental work by Dr. Gloria Albrecht, both Detroit residents. The Reverend Phil Tom is convener and chief source for Section III, on the Urban Ministry Network. A range of Baltimore pastors and elders, as well as Advisory Committee on Social Witness members and staff, contributed to the recommendations and Section I. Section IV, categorized as an annex or appendix under assembly rules, contains the epistles from the Reverend Michael Moore of Knox Presbyterian Church and the Reverend Andrew Foster Connors of Brown Memorial Park Avenue Presbyterian Church.

The study or testimony, “Lazarus Is Walking in Baltimore,” by Dr. Robert Hoch, is also an epistle meditating on the effects of gun violence in the ministry of a particular Baltimore congregation. The display of ribbons bearing the names of victims of gun violence along the side of First & Franklin St Presbyterian Church is a public witness matched by the naming of those sisters and brothers in the prayers of each worship service there.

I. Theological-Ethical Framework and Sources for Further Information on Baltimore’s Social and Economic Context

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) takes seriously its understanding of the “whole Gospel,” which claims God’s grace in all aspects of life, and always seeks to match its gratitude with responsibility. Remembering the ironic question in John 1:46, “can any good come from Nazareth?,” in 2014 the call for renewed urban ministry and mission was named, “The Gospel *from* Detroit,” stressing that the General Assembly was not bringing the Gospel *to* that city. We can perhaps see God’s irony in the selection of two other cities, St. Louis and Baltimore, which have seen the divisions of race and class reflected in harshly strained community/police relations. St. Louis had not gone through the bruising of a municipal bankruptcy like Detroit, but it did face significant public protests over policing and public leadership. In the General Assembly reports from those cities, there are clear public policy recommendations on public finance, investment, and criminal justice system accountability.

In Baltimore there is the same love of Jesus Christ holding congregations together and in place in difficult neighborhoods, places where the church must resist the forces of abandonment. No city, of course, is immune from those forces, some of which come straight out of our very unequal economic system. Under current law, or lack of law, as seen in the competition for a second Amazon headquarters in 2018, most cities are in a “race to the bottom” to attract private investment, either through lower taxes or more amenities (paid for by other citizens). In Baltimore’s case, though, with a 23 percent poverty rate (almost twice the U.S. average) and a 62 percent African American population, a *Baltimore Sun* editorial summed up the challenges the city faces:

... according to [research funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation](https://www.baltimoresun.com/opinion/editorial/bs-ed-0207-baltimore-poverty-20190205-story.html) that came out this week [February 5, 2019]. Low-poverty neighborhoods receive one and a half times the investment of high-poverty neighborhoods. ... Neighborhoods that are less than 50 percent African American received nearly four times the investment of neighborhoods that were more than 85 percent African American. <https://www.baltimoresun.com/opinion/editorial/bs-ed-0207-baltimore-poverty-20190205-story.html>

Although Baltimore is part of a statistical metropolitan area of more than 2.7 million, recent figures put the population of the city proper at 602,000, down from almost 950,000 at its peak in 1950, and down from almost 621,000 in 2010. About one third of Baltimore’s workforce is in the nonprofit sector; stabilized, but not in booming industries, again according to the Urban

Institute research. The Baltimore city planning department provides helpful demographic breakdowns (<https://planning.baltimorecity.gov/planning-data>). But only part of the racial and class division is the legacy of segregation and geographic exclusion, which was pioneered in Baltimore and also separated Christians and Jews initially. A professor at Morgan State University in Baltimore, Joseph Pettit, has written a provocative paper on the economics of racial segregation, “Blessing Oppression: The Role of the Churches in Housing Apartheid,” presented to the Society of Christian Ethics in January 2020.

Baltimore also exemplifies the nationwide and deeply entrenched “Racial Wealth Divide.” The Institute for Policy Studies’ Inequality.org website documents the enormous wealth concentration overall, with mega-billionaires Bezos, Gates, and Buffett owning more than the lower 50 percent of the U.S. population. But it also shows starkly: “the median White family has 41 times more wealth than the median Black family and 22 times more wealth than the median Latino family” (<https://inequality.org/facts/wealth-inequality/#racial-wealth-divide>). It is this disparity, which was reinforced during the 2008–09 credit crisis, that consistently drives the argument for economic as well as moral reparations. In the Gospel from St Louis, the General Assembly addressed the ways the criminal justice system uses “fines and fees” and the threat of jailtime to keep people financially on-edge, but the main mechanisms are business practices.

Courtney Martin summarizes some of the scholarship on how the inequality is perpetuated: “In 1996, the economist John Caskey wrote a book,” *Fringe Banking: Check-Cashing Outlets, Pawnshops, and the Poor*, that popularized the term “wealth-stripping” (<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/23/opinion/closing-the-racial-wealth-gap.html>). The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau developed by Elizabeth Warren started regulating these practices of overcharging, particularly the “unbanked” part of the working poor, but has been largely stopped by the current administration. For there to be a significant change in U.S. poverty rates, the engines of inequality have to be reversed.

II. Comparison with General Assembly Action on Detroit in 2014 and Developments Since From Detroit to Baltimore: “From All of the Places We’ve Been”—Gil Scott Heron

Eight years ago, a Detroit pastor on ACSWP asked, “Does anybody care to know about Detroit?” The question seemed appropriate given that Detroit was the host city for that General Assembly. The Committee on Local Arrangements (COLA) designated a very positive theme for the 221st General Assembly (2014), “Abound In Hope” (Romans 15:13). At the same time, the Michigan chapter of the Black Presbyterian Caucus made a declaration that its constituent churches were in crisis. And *Forbes* magazine reported in 2013 that Detroit was “America’s Most Miserable City.” As ACSWP grappled with the juxtaposition, a report emerged for 221st Assembly (2014): “The Gospel From Detroit: Renewing the Church’s Urban Mission.” Now as the 224th General Assembly (2020) prepares to convene in Baltimore, it’s time to reflect on all of the places we’ve been as a church and society.¹

The assembly received the “Gospel from Detroit” with enthusiasm. Then-Stated Clerk Gradye Parsons wrote, “It is a core belief of our Reformed Protestant tradition that Christians have a public responsibility to work with others to help reform the societies in which we live.” One of the vehicles through which Christians carry out their public responsibility is the church. The church is the presence of the Body of Christ in the public space; an embodiment of the Word ... the “Word made flesh.” In the paradox of two positions, “abounding in hope” and “crisis,” the “Gospel from Detroit” chronicled the movement of Presbyterian churches away from downtown Detroit to the suburbs as racial and economic shifts occurred in the public space. As the city grew blacker and poorer, the Presbyterian presence of a “Word made flesh” steadily declined. Thus, as Parsons noted, the assembly’s response was “offered as a resource to all congregations and to all presbyteries for the study of our churches’ relationship with and responsibility for urban ministry.”

The first recommendation of the “Gospel From Detroit” (GFD) was to “commend the efforts of Presbyterians in city congregations and presbyteries that embody an urban Christian vision.” After Jesus observed rich people putting their gifts into the Temple treasury, he saw a widow put in “... two copper coins ... ‘Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them; for [they] have contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in all she had to live on” (Lk. 21:2–4). Within the urban core, many of the Presbyterian churches that hold fast to an incarnate presence do so without the benefit of endowments. Many exist on budgets that cannot meet the Board of Pensions’ criteria for “called” pastors. And while the Presbytery of Detroit may be “rich” in restricted funds, none of the churches that classified themselves “in crisis” have full-time, called pastors, yet they continue to minister to “the least” of Jesus’ brothers and sisters. Indeed, those churches are to be commended.

The second recommendation from the GFD was to “strengthen the church’s witness and outreach ‘on the ground’ ... [encouraging] presbyteries to (a) examine their own histories and statistics of city congregations ... and (b) renew their own urban strategies in response to existing racial and economic inequity and to new urban demographic, economic, and transportation dynamics, including the promising movement of more young people into cities.” (This recommendation and others were affirmed at the Portland, Oregon, assembly in 2016). Based on a survey of urban mission strategies by the Reverend Phil Tom in 2017, most urban presbyteries have not reviewed their own histories of movement out of city centers. Nor have many adopted strategies (including reinvestment of funds from sold properties) for mission with the people now moving into cities.

As the Urban Ministry Network noted in 2016, the “promising movement” back into cities today is notably younger people of economic means/wealth potential. One consequence of that movement is often a dislocation of “the least” among us. Presbyteries such as Detroit are then challenged by unreconciled relationships between whites and non-white peoples both in gentrifying urban neighborhoods and the inner ring suburbs where the urban poor relocate. There we see a repeat of the cycle of new or renewed congregations trying to make do with once grand but often ailing structures and a denomination that seems without resources to help them. Even redefined, these worshipping communities usually want a stable and welcoming place.

The third recommendation was to “strengthen the PCUSA’s commitment to bear the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the cities ... by renewing its urban mission strategy and designating a staff position ... related to metro/urban ministry..;” and the fourth recommendation to “equip new ministries and worshipping communities. ” The staff position could not be funded, but \$24,000 was allocated to help develop a new network for urban ministry.

As the 224th General Assembly (2020) convenes in Baltimore, Maryland, it will see many of the same disparities that awaited us in Detroit. Black infants in Baltimore have a mortality rate 1.55 times greater than white infants. Black males who grow to manhood are 17.5 times more likely to die from homicide than their white peers. In Baltimore, more than twice as many black families as whites live in “liquid asset poverty” (meaning they do not have sufficient savings to subsist at the poverty level for three months in the absence of income). Though Baltimore bills itself as a city of the future, the economic plight of many of its residents suggests a struggle to break free of the past.

So how do we equip new ministries and worshipping communities in our core cities? Even with Full Communion partner denominations, this question has implications that stretch far beyond Detroit, St. Louis, Baltimore, or Columbus in 2022. As urban mission was being debated at the Portland assembly, a commissioner entered the following blog:

Today we heard from a pastor in Detroit, Michigan about the struggles of urban congregations. I have no experience as a pastor in an urban setting. I do not know the struggles faced by pastors and congregations in that context. I do not know what it means to serve a community so vastly different than mine. But I did recognize in that pastor’s plea to be heard and seen and supported, my own desire for our rural congregations to be heard, and seen, and supported.

I serve in an area where traveling to the grocery is a half a day event, and sometimes a full day event. I know what it is like to drive hours for a hospital visit. I have learned on-line shopping makes being isolated a bit easier. I do not know what it means to be so close to abundant wealth, to be able to see it a few streets over, or on the way to work, and yet be a part of a congregation full of people who live far below the poverty level.

Tonight, my brother in Christ, my colleague, a person who took the same ordination exams and vows I did, stood before the body and talked about his love for his community and his sense of call to them. ... This was powerful... because we serve very different communities in very different contexts, and yet we speak the same language. We love with the same love of Christ. Tonight, I heard an urban church pastor speak and had he not told me he was an urban pastor, I would have thought he was serving in the town next to mine. ... We serve the same Lord, we are called to the same ministry of reconciliation and love, and until we share our stories and learn to hear each other we will continue to be ineffective at demonstrating to the world what it means to be changed by God” (Cheyanna Losey, storiesoflifetogether.com)

That quotation alone speaks to the solidarity of the church and the need to address rural areas as well.

III. Urban Ministry Network Conversation and Challenges Since 2014

In its response to the “Gospel from Detroit: Renewing the Church’s Urban Vision” (GFD), the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) allocated \$24,000 over two years for convening two roundtables of urban ministry practitioners to address the issues and recommendations in the GFD report and to affirm and support urban ministry. Understanding the need to focus the funds carefully in light of past, full-time offices devoted to urban ministry, and in consultation with the Compassion, Peace, & Justice and then-Racial Ethnic and Women’s Ministries units, the Reverend Phil Tom developed three goals:

1. To create regional networks of urban practitioners who would support and resource each other.
2. To challenge presbyteries as well as the PC(USA) to support and resource urban ministry, and to stay engaged with our urban communities.
3. To keep the issues and challenges facing urban practitioners and congregations in front of the PC(USA) and society.

Phil recruited pastors from ten cities to form an Urban Ministry Network team (UMN). The pastors came from New York City; Philadelphia; Detroit; Chicago; Cleveland; Richmond, Virginia; Miami; Pittsburgh; Kansas City, Kansas; and San Francisco. The group met in Chicago, October 26–28, 2015, to assess urban ministry challenges and resources, recognizing that the group itself would need to serve as a resource for any more regional networks or support groups, as well as General Assembly agencies. Phil was in contact with a group of urban presbytery executives who met annually to discuss work in their presbyteries. In addition to regular conference calls, the Urban Ministry Network established an urban ministry webpage to provide accounts and lessons from across the country about urban ministry, and to develop a broader network of urban ministry folks.

In the year following, members of the team organized consultations and shared resources in Detroit, Philadelphia, Chicago, and Heartland (Kansas City) presbyteries, but there were also frank questions. The Los Angeles member reported, “Two ministers stated or asked, ‘what makes this initiative different than the past efforts? There seems to be a lack of trust that things would change for the better.’” Faced with many congregations hunkering down to survive and others uninterested, some members left the group. The team also experienced the deep loss in the untimely death of the Reverend Eugene Blackwell, pastor of Manna in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, although an overture he initiated to fund ministry to young African American men in six urban presbyteries subsequently received some support. The Urban Ministry Network also contributed to the report to the Portland 222nd General Assembly (2016), “City Churches: Convictions, Conversations, Call to Action” (<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/City-Churches-Conviction-Conversation-Call-to-Action.pdf>).

In 2016–17, the Urban Ministry Network (UMN) added pastors from San Antonio, Texas, and Baltimore. Looking toward the St. Louis 223rd General Assembly (2018), the UMN and ACSWP felt the PC(USA) needed to address the ongoing tension facing that city in response to the killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, and the overall crisis of urban gun violence, including the frequent killing of unarmed African Americans by police. Phil Tom put together a UMN meeting in St. Louis with three black pastors that influenced both the Big Tent in midsummer 2017 and the eventual Gospel of St. Louis approved by the 223rd General Assembly (2018), based on five congregational conversations and the theological work of the then-dean, now president of Eden (UCC) Seminary. ACSWP staff and UMN members helped develop the dramatic “March Against Cash Bail” by most of the General Assembly commissioners. In addition to opposing cash bail practices, recommendations responded to U.S. Justice Department reports designed to reduce deadly use of force and racial profiling. Members of the UMN also hosted site visits.

In 2017, a pastor from Rochester, New York, asked how urban presbyteries were using the funds from the sale of urban churches/properties to support urban ministry. Phil conducted an informal survey of thirty-nine presbyteries, finding that only a handful (notably National Capital and Chicago) had policies designating fund from urban property sales to support their urban pastors, congregations, or specialized ministries. Most used those funds generally on new church development, church revitalization, or presbytery operations. This report is still available from ACSWP.

In 2019, several members of the UMN made presentations about urban ministry issues at Ecumenical Advocacy Days and at the Big Tent Gathering. Conversations with Baltimore pastors and staff revealed a presbytery that had already given considerable attention to urban ministry and racial justice challenges, much of which will be in evidence at the General Assembly, including the work of The Center. Many Baltimore churches are to be commended for their work, which leads regularly to epistles on city ministry. This has contributed to the Urban Ministry Network’s assessment of its overall work, which has remained focused on General Assemblies, policy analysis, and mutual support. On the other hand, one pastor affirmed hope in the General Assembly process: “After reading the sections, I found myself both angry and inspired. To me to have GA meet in Baltimore and not have a critical analysis and exposure to the city’s struggles, not to have a set aside time for reflection and confession, and not to expose commissioners to the realities that Hoch and Moore describe, would be unconscionable. . . .”

It is thus up to the commissioners to respond to the recommendations in the policy section of this report, including Recommendation 9. That recommendation calls for a review of the Urban Ministry Network and other churchwide urban strategies, including what realities of General Assembly cities are presented to commissioners, and in what forms. How does the assembly as event support the whole church by creating an arena to lift up dedicated and creative efforts, understand and pray for them, and encourage those in tough places? Let us pay attention to what the Spirit is saying to those “in the trenches” in our cities.

[NOTE: Please read the Appendix Section with the testimonies of the Reverends Michael Moore and Andrew Foster Connors, and the study of ministry in the face of gun violence, “Lazarus Is Walking in Baltimore.” These are the firsthand “Epistles from Baltimore” that describe God’s redemptive power in the city.]

IV. Testimonies from Three Baltimore Congregations. Appendix Section of “Epistles from Baltimore.”

The appendix section is a part of the Report, “Epistles from Baltimore.” References to social witness policy, mission, and evangelism are framed and given background in that report, as are recommendations for action intended to strengthen the ministries of congregations such as the two featured in these testimonies. The related resource for study and prayer on gun violence and ministry, “Lazarus Is Walking in Baltimore,” by the Reverend Robert Hoch, may also be seen as an epistle with these two. Let it be said also, that every pastor and congregation in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has a distinctive witness and mission. These are two examples for which we are very grateful to these two pastors for articulating and sharing with the whole church, particularly to help commissioners understand the host presbytery of the Baltimore General Assembly.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy serves the prophetic mission of the whole church and all its members by proposing ethical applications for our faith. Thus, we would also relate these testimonies to the work of The Center in Baltimore, a mission enterprise of that presbytery, and to the work of the “Hands and Feet” project initiated by the Stated Clerk but necessarily guided by bodies like The Center. As noted in the Epistles from Baltimore report, this effort to learn lessons

from the ministry and mission in cities hosting the General Assembly began with the “Gospel from Detroit” (2014) and continued through the “Gospel from St. Louis” (2018).

Endnote

1. Today, for many, Detroit is a symbol of “the comeback city.” In the 5 percent of Detroit called Mid-Town change has come quickly since 2014. Adding to the long-established medical, cultural, and academic institutions are new corporate headquarters bringing thousands of workers into the city. Restaurants, sports complexes, entertainment venues, and new retail stores provide reasons to stay in the city after the workday. New multifamily housing and upscale apartments and condos attract new residents. A new light rail cruises down a three-mile central avenue. Nearby, new inns and hotels draw new tourists. Financing has come from large for-profit corporations and nonprofit foundations, as well as hundreds of millions from city and state development funds and generous tax incentives, tax abatements, and fire-sale land prices.

Outside that 5 percent, residents of Detroit ask, “who benefits?” What about the remaining 95 percent in other neighborhoods outside? What about those displaced as the “Renaissance” area experiences slow, but steady gentrification? Similar questions may be asked in Baltimore neighborhoods outside the Inner Harbor redevelopment.

Detroit’s unemployment rate of 7.9 percent at the end of 2018 was much improved from over twice that rate during the Great Recession (2008–09), but it was still twice that of Michigan (Reese and Sands, “Detroit’s Recovery: The Glass is Half Full at Most,” *The Conversation*, at <https://theconversation.com/detroits-recovery-the-glass-is-half-full-at-most-69752> accessed on 9/10/19). In 2017 the median household income was \$30,344, still lower than it had been before 2008 (<https://www.detroitnews.com/story/business/2018/11/08/labor-statistics-unemployment-rate-detroit-lower/1932604002/>). The poverty rate was largely unchanged from the previous year at 34.5 percent. By one estimate, the workforce participation rate was only 62 percent. As one urban scholar put it, urban America has a poverty problem that is too often the easy explanation for this disturbing economic isolation:

“Detroit is 80 percent African-American. If you walk around Campus Martius, the faces you see are 80 percent white. The people moving into the city are more likely to be white. The people moving out are more likely to be black. And who is making the big decisions about Detroit? (Mayor) Mike Duggan, Dan Gilbert . . . Race is the subtext for all these issues.” (Alan Mallach, “Poverty is Detroit’s biggest problem. Gentrification doesn’t come close.,” *The Conversation*, at <https://www.detroitjournalism.org/2018/06/19/poverty-is-detroits-biggest-problem-gentrification-doesnt-come-close/>)

REAC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-042

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-042—From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC)

The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 02-042.

According to the Organization for Mission, “REAC shall be a prophetic voice for involving people of color in the formation of public policy and monitor the implementation of policies approved by the church that impact the quality of life of people of color in the church and in the world” (Organization for Mission, VI.1). This report addresses essential justice issues for people of color and aligns with the mission and purpose to which REAC is called.

Item 02-043

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 306.]

Changing Families and the Church—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.

Convinced that Presbyterian churches deserve new and instructive resources to assist their ministry with diverse families in a rapidly changing culture, the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.):

1. Direct the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) to update the 2004 Presbyterian study, “Transforming Families.” The study team will be composed of five persons representing diversity of race, gender, sexuality, and age. ACSWP will designate the chair and one other member of the study team and appoint the rest of the members in consultation with the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC), the Racial Ethnic Advocacy Committee (REAC), and, if approved by the 224th General Assembly (2020), the newly formed Advocacy Committee for LGBTQIA+ Equity. In doing this update, the study team will give particular attention to issues of race, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, and any differences in family experience that need to be considered in the church’s care and concern for the well-being of families.

2. Commend the 2004 study, “Transforming Families,” which includes a study guide, for churchwide usage until an updated study can be developed.

3. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) to make use of Research Services in conducting a survey of the denomination’s family demographics and needs as members of the church, both for the study team and other church programs.

The study team will follow the guidelines of *Why and How the Church Makes A Social Policy Witness* in its theological and ethical analysis and reflection on this and other appropriate data and bring a report back to the 225th General Assembly (2022).

4. Affirm the “Religious Freedom Without Discrimination” policy approved by the 223rd General Assembly (2018) and reject practices that discriminate against LGBTQIA+ persons who wish to adopt, foster, or bear children.

Rationale

Introduction

The 216th General Assembly (2004) approved a policy statement entitled, “Transforming Families.”¹ This report affirms that “this vision of transforming families presents a challenge to the church at every level. . . . This challenge of strengthening and transforming families will require wide collaboration and a multitude of co-laborers. The task is daunting, but the power of God can make more of our imperfect efforts than we could ask or think” (p. 12).

In 2020, the task of strengthening and transforming families—those in the PC(USA) church family and in the larger society—is even more daunting. The whole notion of “family” is in transition as we move into the middle of the 21st century. Additionally, notions of “church” are being transformed, as reflected in the new language of “emergence.” What both families and churches have traditionally been is being reshaped by a spectrum of cultural forces and movements for change. The very planet on which we live, and hopefully survive, is changing to a degree that families and churches are experiencing disruption and angst, but also, gratefully, new experiences of justice and mission.

The 2004 “Transforming Families” study declared that families were facing “troubling challenges.” Furthermore, lest the church pretend “that there was a golden age when happiness and stability reigned in families,” it maintained “that family well-being in our time is beset with peculiar as well as perennial perils” (p. 1). In 2020 we might also acknowledge, as Charles Dickens did of the 19th century, that “it was the best of times, it was the worst of times . . . it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity . . . it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair” (*A Tale of Two Cities*, 1859, p. 1). In this time, fraught with destabilizing fear and uncertainty, families and churches still struggle to be renewed into bodies of love and justice, welcome and inclusion, holy places where the Spirit of God is the transformative agent.

Theological and Biblical Concerns

Many contemporary Christian churches, including those of the PC(USA), have been led to new understandings of family that are less bound by traditional cultural norms. In the past, the church supported the culturally normative “nuclear” family (married heterosexual couple and children) in its patriarchal structure. This support has been based on biblical texts interpreted through a broadly Western cultural lens. However, in recent decades, the church has begun rightly to acknowledge the beauty and goodness of God’s love as it can be known through a variety of relationships. We acknowledge that a range of relationship structures can be categorized as “family” or familial in nature.

A new robust understanding of what constitutes family seeks to reach far beyond the patriarchal bounds set forth as normative and prescriptive by previous generations of church and culture. In this sense, a critical and ongoing work of the church is to reflect upon the many ways that the church has historically institutionalized, in its policies and practices, dominant cultural norms to the detriment and harm of countless people. The church is not called to perpetuate unjust norms for the purpose of maintaining these dynamics of power. Instead, the church is called to honor the dignity of all people in God’s love. This means the church must consciously advocate for a just and loving humanity—and all of God’s creation—instead of sanctifying traditional patterns that are no longer regarded as faithful to God’s will. Not all traditional elements are bad or were static, of course; this update will take into account the church’s continuing discernment and pastoral experience in dealing with family situations and look to the future.

In our Christian faith, various forms of family are called to a life together. Family is built upon God’s love and known as a gift of grace. This gift of grace also calls individuals to great responsibility in our care for one another. Family relationships must be guided by principles of mutuality, respect, equality, and responsibility, rooted in the Love of God that interconnects our lives. God calls individuals to join their lives together in a variety of forms of family. Although the forms of family may vary, these various forms share the same call to function for the purpose of mutual upbuilding and the sustained nurturing of all members’ well-being in life and faith. By God’s grace, families are called to live together graciously and to extend circles of God’s love as revealed in the life of Christ beyond the often narrowly conceived traditional family structure.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) now acknowledges and celebrates the sanctity of marriage between two people, rather than a man and a woman, and as such the church should provide resources that update and expand our current understandings of “the family.” The Bible itself provides us with many examples of nontraditional or non-nuclear family styles, and we are called to reflect on their value in our modern or even “post-modern” world. We must contend with the fact that the Bible was written across various times and cultures, where women and children, particularly those children who were not the firstborn

sons, were ignored, disfavored, and in some cases, outright mistreated. At the same time, we see God working redemptively through that range of cultures. We must thoroughly reflect on our sacred texts, confessions, and polity to ensure that we are not replicating harm and injustice.

Every year at Christmastime, we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ into an uncommon family centuries ago. Such a family—young woman finds herself pregnant before marrying a man who is not the father—was scandalous in that day and might still get a cool reception in our churches today. However, Jesus lived among us to reveal God’s love for people in all kinds of life circumstances, including families.

This is an inclusive direction for our theology. The call to the study team is to produce a resource that will help our church in its calling: to honor children and adults in the full range of living situations that witness to God’s love.

Cultural Factors

Much of the 2004 “Transforming Families” study is still relevant today, including its analysis of economic and time pressures on family relationships. However, there have been several developments in the lives of families, particularly within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), that this study did not anticipate. A reform of the existing study is necessary to reflect cultural changes, as well as the movement of the Holy Spirit within our denomination on various social issues. Changes in our understanding of “families” show our current policy’s limitations.

The 2004 study does a good job describing a faithful hetero-normative marriage but treats such marriage as the singular expression of the Christian vocation of marriage. Since 2004, same-sex marriage has become legal in both secular and Presbyterian polity, marriage and divorce rates have shifted, and new, faithful family patterns have emerged.

Many cultural changes are taking place that affect Presbyterian churches. Just a few of these are:

1. The U.S. has the world’s highest rate of children living in single-parent households.
2. A 2015 survey found that two-parent households where both parents work full-time now make up 46 percent of the American population, compared to 31 percent in 1970.
3. One in 4 women (24.3 percent) and 1 in 7 men (13.8 percent) aged 18 and older in the United States have been the victim of severe physical violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime.
4. There were more than 700,000 cohabiting same-sex couples in the U.S. in 2016, and an estimated 114,000 were raising children.
5. In spite of discriminatory laws and negative cultural attitudes, same-sex couples are six times more likely to foster children than their non-LGBTQ counterparts, and at least four times more likely to adopt.
6. In 2018, for the first time, the combined nonwhite population—blacks, Hispanics, Asians, persons identifying as multiracial, and other races—comprised the majority share of children under the age of fifteen (50.1 percent).

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) needs a new and relevant response to current family needs that accurately reflects the society around us. The proposed study would build upon the excellent foundation of “Transforming Families” while providing a theological framework for the church to welcome and support LGBTQIA+ families, families without children, and those who are not married. Also, this study ought to include updated analyses of marriage and divorce rates, media portrayals of marriage and committed relationships, and other aspects of cultural context. Lastly, an updated study of changing families and the church needs to include resources for sexuality education and sexual ethics for Presbyterian families. Our denomination is seriously lacking in materials for churches and families to address contemporary sexuality issues from a Reformed perspective.

Resources

1. *Transforming Families with Study Guide*, 216th General Assembly (2004), Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, Office of the General Assembly, 100 Witherspoon Street, Louisville, KY 40202-1396. <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/3-transformingfamilies-2004.pdf>.

2. https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/12/12/u-s-children-more-likely-than-children-in-other-countries-to-live-with-just-one-parent/?utm_source=Pew+Research+Center&utm_campaign=95a5958a72-RELI-GION_WEEKLY_2019_12_12&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_3e953b9b70-95a5958a72-399917297.

3. pasatiempomagazine.com, August 30-September 5, 2019.
4. The National Domestic Violence Hotline, thehotline.org, “Get the Facts and Figures.” Statistics compiled from various sources.
5. Goldberg, Shoshana K. and Keith J. Conron. “How many same-sex couples in the U.S. are raising children?,” The Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law, July 2018. WilliamsInstitute.law.ucla.edu.
6. “LGBTQ Family Fact Sheet,” Family Equality Council, familyequality.org, August 2017.
7. Frey, William H. “Less than half of US children under 15 are white, census shows,” Brookings Institute, Metropolitan Policy Report, June 24, 2019. (<https://www.brookings.edu/research/less-than-half-of-us-children-under-15-are-white-census-shows/>).

Appendix

Report on a Big Tent workshop on Changing Families

In early 2019, ACSWP submitted a workshop proposal to be given at the Big Tent gathering, and this workshop on “The Church and the Changing Family” was selected. Sylvia Thorson-Smith represented ACSWP in leading the workshop in Baltimore, MD, on August 2.

The workshop was described as follows:

While “traditional family values” still influence church life and ministries, we know that churches are also experiencing challenges presented by many varieties of family patterns. We invite participants to share their questions, comments, cares, and concerns about the following topics: family patterns, stresses on families or would-be families, challenges to family stability, how the church meets or responds to family needs in the local congregation and in the wider church, or any topic related to today’s families. This conversation will guide ACSWP as we prepare to offer recommendations on “family values” to the 224th General Assembly (2020).

Thirty-four people registered for the workshop; 28 attended, and of those, 22 filled out and turned in a survey that was distributed during the workshop. What follows are some key findings from the survey results:

1. There were 10 women and 12 men who submitted responses to the survey. Eleven were white and 11 were African American, Hispanic, and Asian. They ranged in age from 30s (5), 40s (3), 50s (7), 60s (4), and 70s (1). (Two didn’t answer this.) Those that indicated church role were pastors (8), elders (7), members (2), deacons (2), Parish Associates (2), and other (2). Seven described their congregations as conservative, 6 were moderate, and 7 were liberal. (Two didn’t answer this).

2. Participants were all given copies of the most recent study, “Transforming Families, 2004,” and indicated appreciation for it; however, their comments indicate a strong interest in having the PCUSA update that study.

3. Several themes were consistently mentioned in their comments regarding an updated study and the desire for help with significant issues:

- Increased cultural diversity, LGBTQ persons attending, changing marriage and intimacy arrangements
- Aging parents and issues of seniors
- How to be inclusive congregations, welcoming of all people and families
- Conflict between traditional and emerging family patterns
- Need for sexuality education appropriate for all ages
- Broken families, struggling families, single parents, multigenerational economic issues, drugs and alcohol addictions, opioid crisis
- Time pressures of families, stresses on work, church, and family times
- Particular needs across the life cycle, children and youth in church
- Mental health conditions and needs

4. Overwhelmingly, attendees called for resources to help congregations with the issues of changing families. Tools for education, all ages, so that the church is an active partner with families in moving Christian faith communities into the future.

5. Ten participants signed their names and contact information to indicate that they would like to be involved in a future study of the church and changing families.

ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-043

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-043—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC)

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 02-043.

The story of how Mary, Joseph, and Jesus became a family unit was not one of simplicity, nor did they fit the mold for what a traditional family should look like—just like 21st century families. Presbyterians are being called now more than ever to be agents of the social change that would appropriately reflect the love, kindness, and justice taught to us through our faith. The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns believes that with particular attention being paid to those most vulnerable in our communities, the updating of “Transforming Families” would greatly benefit women of color, and trans and queer women.

One focus of the Matthew 25 Initiative is to build congregational vitality throughout the denomination by building “relationships modeled on God’s love, which leads to genuine reconciliation and peace.” Building congregational vitality cannot be done unless churches are inclusive and resourceful for families that include aging parents, LGBTQIA+ family members, childless homes, mental health needs, drug and alcohol addiction disorder needs, and numerous other elements.

The ACWC celebrates the unique family structures that diversify our church, but we also understand the deep need for these families to be valued and protected through our policy. As approved by the 216th General Assembly (2004), “At times of crisis, all families, regardless of family form or the cause of crisis, should expect to find the support, solace, and encouragement of the Christian faith through the ministries of the church.”¹ As society continues to oppress families that challenge the traditional family structure, the church should be fully equipped to be a supportive and resourceful presence. In a study done in 2015, children living in a household with two parents in their first marriage was at 46 percent, a 37 percent decrease since 1960. For black children, the rate is even lower, reaching only 22 percent.² Despite the various forms that families have evolved into, the church has yet to shift its resources and policy around this dynamic.

Understanding the cultural and socioeconomic influence on families can transform the church’s family ministry to reflect the church’s ability to adapt to change. As we strive to actively engage in the world around us, we must build relationships with those who find themselves in complex family dynamics.

Endnotes

1. 216th General Assembly (2004), *Transforming Families*, 15. (https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/resolutions/transformingfamilies.pdf)
2. <https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2015/12/17/1-the-american-family-today/>

COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 02-043

COGA has recommended that this item be referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). However, should the assembly determine that this item of business is core and critical to our governance and sustainability, and needs to be considered by the 224th General Assembly (2020), OGA provides this comment.

The Office of the General Assembly affirms the intent of this action, which is to strengthen families and update our understanding of transforming families. As this task force will utilize per capita funds, OGA asks the assembly to utilize a more inclusive process in the naming of the committee members. Specifically, OGA encourages the assembly to utilize the General Assembly Nominating Committee as well as the General Assembly Committee on Representation in a consultative role. Using a more formal process in the naming of members to the task force would not preclude participation of ACSWP, ACWC, or REAC members, but would broaden the pool of candidates to ensure the broadest possible representation, including family experience.

Item 02-044

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 303.]

Safe and Sacred Space Task Force Report to the 224th General Assembly (2020).

“God intends for the church and its ministries to be a safe place for all to encounter God and grow into lives of service and fulfillment. We are called to be a holy community.” (Statement on PC(USA) [Creating Safe Ministries](#) web site.)

The 222nd General Assembly (2020) directed the Office of the General Assembly to appoint a task force to help congregations implement child, youth, and vulnerable adult protection policies. All sessions, presbyteries, synods, and the General Assembly are required under the *Book of Order*, G-3.0106, to adopt and implement a sexual misconduct policy and a child and youth protection policy.

The task force held its first meeting in Louisville, August 14–15, 2017, reviewing the resources that could be accessed through the PC(USA) website and began to identify additional sources for education and training materials. Representatives from the task force attended the 2017, 2018, and 2019 Mid Council Leaders Gathering to participate in a feedback loop regarding the needs of congregations and mid councils as they create and implement protection policies. Our continuing work, individually and in conference calls through February 2020, has been focused on identifying best practices and effective resources for education, training, and response. The task force met in Louisville in March of 2018 and again in October of 2019 to identify the needs of mid councils and congregations for creating and implementing child, youth, and vulnerable adult protection policies, as well as materials for congregational healing when abuse does occur.

The task force annually contributed to ongoing revision and supplementation of the Creating Safe Ministries website: <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/legal-resources/creating-safe-ministries/>.

Specifically, in response to the direction from the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to help congregations implement child, youth, and vulnerable adult protection policies, the task force created an online module based educational platform. This educational module is located at Equip PC(USA), which can be found: <https://equip.pcusa.org/>. We invite all congregations to take advantage of these resources when creating and implementing the child, youth, and vulnerable adult policy, which should be tailored to the specific needs and location of each congregation. We are grateful for the ongoing work of mid councils in supporting congregations who are reducing the risk of abuse as well as responding to members and leaders who have been hurt through abuse within the church. We invite congregations and mid councils to supplement the equip modules with modules that they have found to work well within their faith communities. The task force identified that open conversations within congregations about reducing risk, healthy sexuality, and healthy boundaries, as well as annual assessment and review of the policies, increase the effectiveness of these policies to keep congregations safe from abusive behaviors.

Equip PC(USA) educational platform supplements the more comprehensive online videos and modules provided by Praesidium, Inc., through the Insurance Board and its Safe Conduct Workbench, which is available through agreement between the Office of the General Assembly and the Insurance Board and Praesidium, Inc. and can be found: <https://www.insurance-board.org/safety-resources/safeconduct-workbench/>. This partnership additionally provides a toll free number for members and leaders within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to report abuse or request help in responding to abuse.

1-866-607-SAFE (7233)

The Safe and Sacred Space Task Force joins other groups and individuals in the church whose efforts respond to that call. Especially the Safe and Sacred Space Task Force joins with the Survivors of Sexual Misconduct Task Force in calling for the identification and creation of resources for those who provide trauma-informed pastoral accompaniment to individuals, families, congregations, and communities affected by sexual misconduct.

ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-044

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-044—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC)

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 02-044.

All sexual abuse is, at the core, an abuse of power. That is why certain populations—such as children and youth, developmentally disabled adults, and immigrant night shift workers—are more vulnerable to abuse and are often the targets of sexual misconduct.

To the extent that the church of Jesus Christ is grounded in white supremacy and patriarchy, it creates situations ripe for the abuse of power. Within the church, gender inequities rooted in theological misunderstandings and based in patriarchy have left women particularly vulnerable to sexual misconduct from clergy as well as from male members of their congregations. Clergy sexual misconduct sends out ripple effects beyond individual victims to impact spouses and children, families and marriages, congregations and presbyteries.

As the makers of Item 11-09 on Sexual Misconduct in the PC(USA) approved by the 223rd General Assembly (2018), the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns commends the Safe and Sacred Task Force for its report. The focus of their work, however, was necessarily on prevention within the institutional church rather than on justice for and healing of victims, secondary victims, and congregations. The work of justice and healing for victims within the PC(USA) remains incomplete.

It is essential that the first PC(USA) responders to sexual abuse accusations come from a pastoral care perspective, rather than an insurance perspective that inevitably focuses on liability and institutional protection. In order to call the PC(USA) into its pastoral and justice focus, it is essential that the work of the Survivors of Sexual Misconduct Task Force continue beyond the 224th General Assembly (2020) to report back to the 225th General Assembly (2022).

Item 02-045

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 306.]

Amending Standing Rule I.1.d. Determination of Host Site for General Assembly—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) amend Standing Rule I.1.d. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“d. In determining a possible site for hosting a General Assembly, the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall seek a balance between the importance of distributing the benefits experienced from hosting a meeting with the values of seeking financial incentives and affordability. ~~In order to distribute the benefits experienced from hosting a General Assembly meeting throughout the church, the place of meeting shall be rotated among the following four areas (unless prevented by financial or other practical considerations):~~

“~~Area A: Synod of Alaska/Northwest, Synod of the Pacific, Synod of Southern California and Hawaii, Synod of the Rocky Mountains, Synod of the Southwest;~~

“~~Area B: Synod of the Sun, Synod of Lakes and Prairies, Synod of Mid America;~~

“~~Area C: Synod of Living Waters, Synod of Lincoln Trails, Synod of the Covenant;~~

“~~Area D: Synod of South Atlantic, Synod of Puerto Rico, Synod of the Northeast, Synod of the Trinity, Synod of the Mid Atlantic.”~~

Rationale

This flexibility will allow the Office of the General Assembly staff to consider and recommend locations that for a variety of reasons may be a better value in a year other than what is prescribed by a strict rotation system.

Item 02-046

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 306.]

Amending Standing Rule I.1.b. Regarding the Host Presbyteries for General Assembly—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) amend Standing Rule I.1.b. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“b. Each session of the General Assembly is hosted by a presbytery of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), which may share its responsibilities with other mid councils as it sees fit. The Office of the General Assembly shall consult with potential hosts prior to any action being taken to set the date and place of a particular meeting. ~~The host body for any session of the General Assembly shall be a presbytery(s) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Any presbytery that desires to invite the General Assembly to meet within its bounds shall forward an invitation to the Stated Clerk no later than May 1 of the year that is seven years prior to the earliest effective date of the invitation.”~~

Rationale

This revision is intended to better reflect actual practice, that it is more common for the Office of the General Assembly to approach a presbytery that includes a city under consideration to host a General Assembly to ascertain whether an invitation will be forthcoming. Many host presbyteries seek varying levels of support from neighboring presbyteries and the synod in carrying out the financial and human responsibilities involved in hosting an assembly.

Item 02-047

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 306.]

Amending Standing Rule I.1.a. Regarding the Recommendation of the Date and Place of Future Assemblies—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) amend Standing Rule I.1.a. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“a. The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall meet on the date and at the place fixed by the preceding General Assembly for a period, which shall be known as a session of the General Assembly, preferably between May 15 and July 31, subject to the possibility of change (see Standing Rule I.4.b.(10) and Book of Order, G-3.0503, for exceptions). The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall recommend to the General Assembly for its action the date and place of meeting *no less than four* ~~six~~ years hence and any necessary changes in dates and places of meetings previously set. Should action regarding date or place of meeting become necessary at a time when the General Assembly is not in session, this committee is empowered to fix a new date or place of meeting.”

Rationale

The current standing rule requiring that a location is selected six years in advance can make it difficult or impossible to consider and implement some changes to how the meeting is conducted in the near future. With this change the location will not be locked in quite as far in advance (unless it is deemed particularly advantageous to do so), allowing more flexibility in planning. With the recommended change to Standing Rule I.1.d that removes the rotation requirement, it is anticipated this will still be far enough out to secure the facilities necessary.

Item 02-048

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 306.]

Amending Standing Rule L.2. Clarity on When Changes to Standing Rules Take Effect—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) amend Standing Rule L.2. as follows: [Text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“2. The Standing Rules of the General Assembly may be amended by a majority vote of the commissioners present and voting. A motion to amend the rules is debatable. *Amendments to the Standing Rules go into effect at the adjournment of the last meeting on the final day of the assembly.*”

Rationale

The proposed amendment provides clarity about when changes to the Standing Rules take effect.

Item 02-049

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 307.]

Amending Standing Rule K.1.b. Alternative to Appointing Special Committees or Commissions—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) amend Standing Rule K.1.b. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“b. *When the assembly is ~~in~~ considering the creation of a special committee or commission the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures shall hear from the most closely related assembly entity or entities as to whether the work to be assigned to the special committee could be more effectively and economically assigned to that entity or entities.* ~~relevant~~

~~agencies~~, *The Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures will also consult with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, a representative from the General Assembly Nominating Committee, a representative from the General Assembly Committee on Representation, as well as from the assembly committee considering the proposal. The Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures shall report to the assembly on their consultation and may provide comment, guidance, or an alternate recommendation to the assembly regarding the creation of a special committee or commission.* Financial implications of special committees or commissions shall accompany any recommendation to the assembly.”

Rationale

The existing Standing Rules authorize the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures to consult with representatives of various committees or agencies about proposals for new special committees, but the rules do not give them any guidance about their role in those consultations. The proposed amendment makes explicit that the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures can provide comment or guidance regarding these recommendations. Out of these consultations the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures could recommend a different way of accomplishing the work of the recommendation that fits within standing structures. This proposed amendment also adds the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, as the elected body that monitors the OGA budget, to the list of groups in consultation with the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures.

REAC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-049

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-049—From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC).

The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 02-049.

Since the Organization for Mission states “...the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee] REAC shall be a prophetic voice for involving people of color in the formation of public policy, particularly where race is a factor that negatively impacts the quality of life of people of color. The committee will also monitor the implementation of policies approved by the church that impact the quality of life of people of color in the church and in the world” (*Organization for Mission*, VI.1), REAC should also be part of the decision-making process for creation of a special committee or commission to insure full participation of people of color.

Item 02-050

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 306.]

On Amending Standing Rule K.1.a. Regarding Utilization of Standing Committees, Commissions, and Entities—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) amend Standing Rule K.1.a. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“a. Every effort shall be made to carry out the actions of the General Assembly through standing committees, commissions, and entities. If necessary to fulfill particular and specific purposes, ~~the~~ the General Assembly may establish special committees and commissions to carry out decisions of the assembly or make recommendations to the assembly on matters that cannot be undertaken or accomplished by an existing entity. (Book of Order, G-3.0109)”

Rationale

The formation of special committees and task forces has the potential to become financially burdensome and practically inefficient. Finding members to serve on and lead them, as well as staff to resource them, can be a strain on the church’s human and financial resources. It is not a sustainable way to accomplish the work of the church.

REAC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-050

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-050—From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee

The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) disapprove Item 02-050.

Given the nature of our polity and our commitment to social justice, REAC strongly disapproves this resolution. The PC(USA)’s polity is grounded in committee work to allow for deliberate examination of issues, enable diverse voices to be heard, and ensure that power is not centralized. The work of social justice depends on voices that have long been silenced be

heard on all matters. If special committees and task forces are eliminated, then people with power and of the majority culture will have more access to the decision-making process. Financial reasons for eliminating and/or disregarding programs and policies that affect people of color continue to be an excuse to prevent people of color and communities of color from obtaining any degree of equity. Therefore, we again, strongly disapprove this resolution.

Item 02-051

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 306.]

On Deleting Standing Rule I.4.—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) strike Standing Rule I.4. in its entirety. [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through.]

~~“4. Assembly Meeting Work Group Membership~~

~~“a. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall establish a work group on assembly arrangements to be composed of designated members from the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, the Stated Clerk, the Moderator of the General Assembly, and the Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. The moderator of the Committee on Local Arrangements, and the moderator and vice moderator of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures (when selected) shall be nonvoting members of the committee at all meetings in which matters will be considered that affect their particular work. This work group shall be assigned responsibilities (1) through (10) in this Standing Rule I.4.b.~~

~~“b. Responsibilities~~

~~“(1) Review the evaluation of each General Assembly session secured by the Stated Clerk.~~

~~“(2) Outline the programs for future General Assemblies sufficiently in advance to ensure an orderly progression of themes and emphases and to ensure the appointment of significant speakers and other program participants.~~

~~“(3) Review and present to the Assembly Committee on Business Referral a recommendation regarding the Stated Clerk’s proposed docket for the next session of the General Assembly.~~

~~“(4) Review and present to the Assembly Committee on Business Referral a recommendation regarding the Stated Clerk’s proposed referral of each item of business to an appropriate assembly committee.~~

~~“(5) Assist the Moderator regarding the appointment of a commissioner to be the moderator of each assembly committee and a commissioner to serve as vice moderator of each assembly committee.~~

~~“(6) Consult with the Moderator regarding the planning of all worship at the General Assembly.~~

~~“(7) Coordinate the programmatic aspects of each General Assembly session, ensuring that adequate time is provided for the business that must be transacted.~~

~~“(8) Review requests from entities of the General Assembly, councils, other entities related to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in any way, or coalitions in which this denomination or any of its entities participate to schedule meetings, briefings, hearings, or other events of any kind during those hours when the General Assembly or its committees are in session.~~

~~“(9) Prepare a report, including recommendations on the docket and the referral of assembly business, to be printed and distributed with other materials provided to commissioners.~~

~~“(10) — Review and present to the General Assembly for its action the date and place of meeting six years hence and any changes in dates and places of meetings previously set.”~~

Rationale

Section I.4. of the Standing Rules establishes “a work group on assembly arrangements,” naming members from specific groups to a subcommittee to coordinate specific responsibilities outlined at I.4.b. This work group has not actually been meeting, and OGA staff and COGA have completed these tasks in other ways. These responsibilities are already assigned to COGA in

the Organization for Mission (IV.C.2.d., items 8-17, with identical language), so this standing rule unnecessarily duplicates responsibilities outlined elsewhere.

Item 02-052

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 306.]

On Amending Standing Rule H.2.b.(3)(a) Regarding the Stated Clerk Nomination Committee Consultation of GACOR—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) amend Standing Rule H.2.b.(3)(a) as follows: [Text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“(a) The slate of nominees for the nomination committee shall consist of the following: three members of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (nominated by the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, one of whom shall serve as moderator of the committee), one member of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (nominated by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board), and five at-large members nominated by the General Assembly Nominating Committee, *in consultation with the General Assembly Committee on Representation*, in the following categories: one mid council stated clerk and four persons (two ruling elders and two ministers of the Word and Sacrament) from among commissioners who have attended an assembly in the past six years. The General Assembly Nominating Committee shall present to the assembly for election the slate of nominees for the Stated Clerk Nomination Committee. The slate presented shall reflect the denomination’s commitment to inclusiveness.”

Rationale

This recommendation came to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly from the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR). The *Organization for Mission* (IV.5.B.a.1) states that the General Assembly Committee on Representation shall “advise the assembly and all entities created by and accountable to the General Assembly with regard to diversity and inclusiveness in its elected and employed leadership.” This adjustment in the standing rule ensures that GACOR shall provide advice regarding the diversity of the nomination slate of the Stated Clerk Nomination Committee.

REAC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-052

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-052—From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC).

The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 02-052.

In order to ensure equitable representation and participation, REAC agrees that GACOR should be consulted in this process. As a 90 percent white denomination, it is essential to be intentional in ensuring diverse and equitable representation.

Item 02-053

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 306.]

On Amending the Title to Standing Rule H.—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) change the title of Standing Rule H. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added is shown as italic.]

“~~Persons in Ordered Ministry~~ *Officers and Elections*”

Rationale

Standing Rule H is oddly titled. “Persons in Ordered Ministry” is a term used in the Form of Government to describe ruling elders, ministers, and deacons. “Officers” is still used in the Form of Government to describe those persons elected by a council of the church (such as the General Assembly) to lead the meetings of that council.

Item 02-54

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 305.]

On Amending Standing Rule G.a. Consulting GACOR in Planning Daily Worship at General Assembly—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) amend Standing Rule G.a. as follows: [Text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“a. The Moderator of the preceding General Assembly shall plan daily worship at the General Assembly, and a worship service including the celebration of the Lord’s Supper; and shall provide, in advance, suitable leadership for these periods of worship. The Lord’s Supper shall be celebrated at the first service of worship of the General Assembly session, and the Moderator shall preside on this occasion and preach a sermon or deliver an address. The Moderator shall seek advice to ensure inclusivity in the planning of appropriate daily worship periods, *in consultation with the General Assembly Committee on Representation*. The Moderator shall assure adequate transmittal of information about the planning of worship periods to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.”

Rationale

This recommendation came to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly from the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR). As provided for in the *Book of Order*, G-3.0103, every council above the session shall establish committees on representation to advise the council regarding the implementation of principles of unity and diversity. The *Organization for Mission* [IV.C.5.b.(8)] charges the General Assembly Committee on Representation with assisting “the church to build an ethos of inclusion and involvement of all persons.” The inclusivity and diversity of worship within General Assembly falls within the function, purview, and work of GACOR. The current language of the standing rule states that the Moderator must “seek advice to ensure inclusivity” regarding General Assembly worship, but it does not state from where this advice should come. GACOR has sought out this consultation with the most recent Co-Moderators, but adjusting this standing rule ensures that this dialogue occurs going forward.

REAC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-054

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-054—From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC).

The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 02-054.

In order to ensure equitable representation and participation in worship, REAC agrees that GACOR should be consulted in this process, ideally early in the planning process. As a 90 percent white denomination, it is essential to be intentional in such matters to avoid monocultural, exclusionary, and/or offensive practices.

Item 02-055

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 308.]

On Amending Standing Rule F.5.b.(1) Regarding Voting on Actions Requesting Constitutional Change—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) amend Standing Rule F.5.b.(1). as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“b.(1) The General Assembly shall ordinarily decide questions by electronic voting. The Moderator may also call for unanimous consent by voice vote or show of hands. All decisions made by assembly ~~standing~~ committees by a three-quarters (supermajority) vote shall be placed on the assembly plenary consent agenda to be considered as the first order of plenary business following committee meetings. Any actions requesting constitutional change must be considered in plenary, *unless the assembly committee recommends disapproval by a three-quarters (supermajority) vote, in which case the recommendation for disapproval may be placed on the assembly plenary consent agenda.*”

Rationale

The Assembly Committee on Church Polity report often includes a number of potential constitutional changes that have been recommended for disapproval by a near-unanimous vote of the committee but cannot be placed on the assembly Plenary Consent Agenda because of a provision in F.5.b.(1). This report, therefore, often ends up taking extensive plenary docket time solely to reject these various amendments that are more in the spirit of a “manual of operations” approach to the Constitution. (There is also a misstatement of the name of assembly committees in this rule—“assembly standing committees” is an internal contradiction, so the word “standing” should be stricken.)

Item 02-056

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 305.]

On Amending Standing Rule F.5.a. by Adding a New Section (2) Regarding Motions for Previous Question—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) amend Standing Rule F.5.a. by adding a new (2) as follows: [Text to be added is shown as italic.]

“(2) Motions for the previous question on more than one pending item are not in order at any time.”

Rationale

Commissioners with knowledge of parliamentary procedure abuse the motion to call the previous question on all pending items when the Moderator has called only for amendments and not permitted open discussion on the item before the Assembly, usually when there are multiple items pending and debate veiled as questions has taken the time and energy the Assembly has to consider the particular item.

Item 02-057

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 308.]

On Amending Standing Rule F.5.a. Limits on Debate—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) amend Standing Rule F.5.a. as follows: [Text to be added is shown as italic.]

*“a. In debate on any pending matter, no commissioner or delegate shall be allowed to speak more than two minutes until all other commissioners or delegates who desire to speak on the pending matter have been heard. *These or any other limitations to debate in the Standing Rules or approved by the assembly apply to all persons recognized by the Moderator for any purpose, including resource persons and corresponding members.*”*

Rationale

Answers to commissioner questions cannot be opportunities for open-ended speeches or argument for one side or the other. Parliamentary procedure rules address this, and the above suggested new sentence would make it explicit that answers to questions need to fit within the same time limits as speakers debating the motion.

Item 02-058

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 306.]

On Amending Standing Rule F.4.b. Regarding Approval of Per Capita Budget—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) amend Standing Rule F.4.b. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

~~“b. On the final day of the assembly, an amended per capita budget that incorporates the financial implications of actions taken by the assembly shall be presented to the assembly for approval the assembly shall vote to amend the approved per capita budget to account for actions taken by the assembly with financial implications. If the assembly approves a budget that does not adequately fund the estimated financial implications of new actions, all new items will be scaled in proportion to the amended per capita budget.”~~

Rationale

This amendment is tied to suggested changes in Standing Rule F.4.a. These amendments would allow an agency to manage their budget more effectively while allowing the assembly to ensure that its’ priorities are also addressed.

Item 02-059

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 308.]

On Amending Standing Rule F.4.a. Regarding Consideration and Action on Budget—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) amend Standing Rule F.4.a. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

~~“a. At the first meeting of the General Assembly for the transaction of business following the meetings of assembly committees, the assembly shall ~~hear~~ consider and act on a report on the per capita budget recommended by ~~from~~ the committee that has reviewed that budget.”~~

Rationale

Voting on the per capita budget at the end of the week as a whole can have the unintended impact of cutting an agency’s baseline operations if the rate is not increased enough to fund both ongoing operations and new work assigned by the assembly. A clear, specific, engaging presentation of the per capita budget needs to take place earlier in the week, possibly the opening plenary after committees have met, possibly before committees meet at all, in order for commissioners to understand how their decisions fit into the overall financial picture and per capita rate.

Item 02-060

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 305.]

On Amending Standing Rule F.3.b. Regarding Coordination of Presentations at General Assembly—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) amend Standing Rule F.3.b. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

~~“b. The moderator of the committee, or another member of the committee, shall present reasons supporting the committee’s recommendation. They may be presented before any minority report is moved or presented during the narrative report of the committee, or presented during debate on the question of whether or not the substitution shall become the main motion. *The presenters of the committee’s recommendation and the minority report are to coordinate their presentations so that the assembly can best understand the particular issues at hand and keep them as equal in length as possible.*”~~

Rationale

Currently, there is no rule governing how the time of a committee report is shared when there is a minority report. While it is important to be sure minority reports are heard, the opening remarks of the majority and the minority should not be imbalanced.

Item 02-061

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 305.]

On Amending Standing Rule E.7. Regarding Authority to Set a Budget—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) amend Standing Rule E.7.c. as follows: [Text to be added is shown as italic.]

“c. Each assembly committee shall include with each recommendation or action in its report statements advising the General Assembly whether or not the recommendation or action has fiscal implications affecting any budget under consideration by the assembly. *General Assembly entities have the authority to set a budget and/or scale the work mandated by the assembly to fit the budget approved by the assembly in consultation with their elected boards/committees.*”

Rationale

This amendment recognizes the authority of the assembly to set priorities and allocate funding for those priorities, while also recognizing the responsibility and authority of an agency to manage those allocations to fit old and new mandates from assemblies.

Item 02-062

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 307.]

On Amending Standing Rule D by Adding a New Section 4. Regarding Acknowledgement of Indigenous Peoples—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) amend Standing Rule D by adding a new 4. as follows: [Text to be added is shown as italic.]

“4. *Opening worship or the first meeting of the General Assembly for the transaction of business shall include an acknowledgement of the Indigenous peoples on whose land the assembly is meeting. The Stated Clerk shall seek to include a welcome from those Indigenous peoples currently living on the land.*”

Rationale

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) instructed OGA to offer an amendment to the Standing Rules to incorporate the work of the Doctrine of Discovery Team.

Item 02-063

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 305.]

On Amending Standing Rule A.3.d. and e. Regarding Submitting Overtures—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) amend Standing Rule A.3.d. and e. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“d. Submitting Overtures

“(1) Overtures proposing an amendment to the Constitution or requiring an interpretation by the General Assembly of the Book of Order (see Book of Order, G-6.04a and G6.02) must be *submitted* ~~delivered in writing~~ to the Stated Clerk ~~postmarked~~ no later than 120 days prior to the convening of the General Assembly, and shall be promptly referred to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (see Book of Order, G-6.02 and G-6.04).

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“(2) All overtures that have financial implications for current or future years’ budgets must be *submitted delivered* ~~in writing~~ to the Stated Clerk ~~postmarked~~ no later than sixty days prior to the convening of the General Assembly. Overtures with financial implications not received within the designated time limit shall not be considered, ~~but shall be returned to the originating council.~~

“(3) All other overtures intended for consideration by the General Assembly shall be *submitted forwarded* to the Stated Clerk, ~~postmarked~~ no later than forty-five days before the convening of the General Assembly.

“(4) Overtures not received within the designated time limits shall not be considered, ~~but shall be returned to the originating council for reconsideration.~~

“(5) Presbyteries or synods submitting overtures with a recommendation(s) that affects the work or budget of a General Assembly entity(ies) shall submit evidence that the affected entity(ies) has (have) been consulted *in an appendix to the overture*. If such evidence is not submitted, the Stated Clerk shall recommend that the overture be received and referred to a future session of the General Assembly so that consultation may take place.

~~“e. Overtures that do not propose constitutional amendment or interpretation, and that are postmarked at least sixty days prior to the convening of the General Assembly, shall be published (print or electronic) in the reports distributed by the Stated Clerk. Overtures received in the same manner, postmarked no later than forty-five days prior to the convening of the General Assembly, shall be distributed to the commissioners before the convening of the General Assembly.”~~

Rationale

With the transition from a paper-driven assembly to a digital process, the language regarding submission of papers does not reflect the reality of the process. These amendments enable the Standing Rules to catch up with the digital process for submission of papers to the General Assembly.

Item 02-064

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 305.]

On Amending Standing Rule A.3.c. Regarding Writing Overtures—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) amend Standing Rule A.3.c. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“c. The stated clerk of a presbytery or synod considering an overture to the General Assembly shall:

“(1) *Consult with the Office of the General Assembly regarding past and current actions on similar items of business, including:*

~~“(1) (a) Examine the most recently published Minutes of the General Assembly or electronic meeting records to determine if a similar overture has already been passed.~~

~~“(2) (b) Consult with the Office of the General Assembly to determine whether the desired action has been disapproved voted by any the previous General Assembly.~~

~~“(3) (c) Consult with the Office of the General Assembly to determine whether a similar overture has already been proposed in order that the presbytery or synod may concur with the existing overture.~~

“Should the overture be determined to deal with substantially the same issue considered at the previous General Assembly, the Stated Clerk shall determine whether or not to refer them to the Assembly Committee on Business Referral. The Stated Clerk shall report to the committee regarding those overtures not referred.

“(2)(4) Draft the overture in the following form:

“‘The Presbytery of _____ overtures the [# of the assembly] General Assembly [(year)] of the PC(USA) to [state the specific action the General Assembly is asked to take].’

“To this shall be appended a rationale, stating the reasons for submitting the overture.”

Rationale

The existing Standing Rules do not provide guidance as to the purpose of consultation for both mid councils and staff facilitating consultation. This amendment makes clear what actions should be taken during the consultation process and gives instruction on subsequent steps that may be taken regarding the overture’s referral to the General Assembly.

Item 02-065

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 307.]

Amendments to Session Annual Statistical Report—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve the following questions and definitions on the Session Annual Statistical Report (SASR) be replaced with the following: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

Current	Change
<p>Age Distribution of Members</p> <p>25 and Under 26–40 41–55 56–70 71 and Over</p>	<p>Age Distribution of Members</p> <p><i>17</i> and Under <i>18–25</i> 26–40 41–55 56–70 71 and Over</p>
<p>Age Distribution of Christian Education</p> <p>Birth 3, Age 4, Kindergarten, Grade 1, Grade 2, Grade 3, Grade 4, Grade 5, Grade 6, Grade 7, Grade 8, Grade 9, Grade 10, Grade 11, Grade 12, Young Adult, Over 25, Officers/Teachers</p>	<p><i>Youth in your congregation:</i></p> <p><i>Age 4 and Under</i> <i>Elementary School (K–5th grade)</i> <i>Middle School (6th–8th grade)</i> <i>High School (9th–12th grade)</i></p>
<p>Persons originating from or descended from black Africa.</p> <p>Persons originating or descended from Japan, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Taiwan, Korea, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand, Hawaii, Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Trust Territories of the Pacific or the Northern Marianas; Tibet, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and India.</p> <p>Persons originating or descended from any races, cultures, and nationalities from Latin American countries (Mexico, Central America, South America, and the Caribbean).</p> <p>Persons descended from American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut, and regarded as such by the community of which the person claims to be a part.</p> <p>Persons originating from or having ancestry from these countries: Egypt, Libya, Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Sudan, Armenia, Kurdistan, Bahrain, Cyprus, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.</p>	<p>Strike the definitions.</p>

A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe.	
Persons descended from two or more racial groups listed.	

Rationale

These recommendations are small changes to the Session Annual Statistical Report (SASR). The first acknowledges the differences between persons who are still in high school and those who are in college. The second change reflects the change in how this question is used at the national level. These statistics are no longer used to guide in the creation of curriculum at the General Assembly level and are of limited value for local congregations in planning contemporary faith formation efforts. While Christian education is not used, there is a need to know younger participants. The third change deletes the definition in the racial section.

REAC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-065

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-065—From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC)

The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 02-065.

While REAC agrees in principle with the basic premise of the resolution—simplify the age categories to bring them in line with the current denominational curriculum—we also believe that even though “race” is a social construct, there is a need for the PC(USA) to continue to identify the different ethnicities, cultures, and racial categories in an effort to quantify the diversity of the PC(USA). We recommend the current named categories are retained without the descriptions. It remains important to monitor inclusiveness and participation of people of color in every aspect of the church for as long as the PC(USA) is a majority-white denomination.

Item 02-066

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 305.]

On Amending Section IV.C.1.c. of the Organization for Mission—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) amend Section IV.C.1.c. of the *Organization for Mission* by adding the word “*Ordinarily*” to the sentence, “No person may serve more than two consecutive terms, full or partial” so that it reads, “*Ordinarily* no person may serve more than two consecutive terms, full or partial.” It would read as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“c. Persons nominated for election by the General Assembly shall ordinarily be eligible to serve a four-year term and be eligible for election to one additional term. *Ordinarily* ~~No~~ no person may serve more than two consecutive terms, full or partial. At the conclusion of their term of service, a person shall not be eligible for nomination to a General Assembly entity until two years have elapsed.”

Rationale

The recommendation came to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly from the General Assembly Nominating Committee. This amendment would provide the General Assembly Nominating Committee with flexibility to consider and respond favorably to requests of entities for re-nomination of persons who have served a partial term where the incumbent has filled a vacancy of two years or less of a four-year term. Entities whose bylaws limit service to no more than two consecutive terms, full or partial, would not be impacted by this change.

Item 02-067

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 305.]

On Amending Section IV.B.2.c. of the Organization for Mission—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) amend Section IV.B.2.c. of the *Organization for Mission* by adding the sentence, “*When the Stated Clerk deems it necessary, the Stated*

Clerk may refer to the General Assembly, through the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, any request for authoritative interpretation of the Constitution.” It would read as follows: [Text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“As an officer of the General Assembly, the Stated Clerk shall preserve and defend the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and support the decisions, actions, and programs of the General Assembly. The Stated Clerk shall give advisory opinions concerning the meaning of the provisions of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and shall give advisory opinions on the meaning of the actions of the General Assembly. *When the Stated Clerk deems it necessary, the Stated Clerk may refer to the General Assembly, through the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, any request for authoritative interpretation of the Constitution.* When the Stated Clerk deems it necessary, after consulting with appropriate persons or bodies, the Stated Clerk may retain legal counsel and institute or participate in legal proceedings in civil and criminal courts.”

Rationale

This proposed amendment places back into the Standing Rules the power of the Stated Clerk to identify areas of confusion among councils regarding interpretation of the Constitution and directly request as an item of business that the General Assembly issue an authoritative interpretation of the Constitution. Currently, mid councils and committees of the General Assembly are empowered to bring business to the General Assembly in the form of an overture or recommendation. As the Stated Clerk develops advisory opinions concerning the meaning of the provisions of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Stated Clerk often identifies areas in which there is no clear interpretation amongst the councils and that have become a source of conflict. This proposed amendment allows the Stated Clerk to identify those areas of confusion that multiple councils have in common and directly request that the General Assembly issue an authoritative interpretation as a means for clarification.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 02-67

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) to approve Item 02-67.

The Committee on the General Assembly seeks to add language clarifying the responsibility of the Stated Clerk with respect to transmitting requests for constitutional interpretation to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution. G-6.02 describes the process for addressing requests for interpretation of the Constitution arising from councils of the church:

All questions requiring an interpretation by the General Assembly of the *Book of Order* arising from councils of the church shall be communicated in writing to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly no later than 120 days prior to the convening of the next session of the General Assembly. The Stated Clerk shall refer all such questions of interpretation to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, except those pertaining to matters pending before a judicial commission.

The section mandates that when written requests arise from *councils*, the Stated Clerk *shall* refer them to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution. It does not address requests arising from other persons or entities of the church, nor does it state that *only* requests arising from councils may be referred by the Stated Clerk for interpretation. In interpreting the Constitution, what the Constitution does not prohibit is permissible. The General Assembly, by its own rule, may add to officers, entities, committees, or commissions of the General Assembly other powers or responsibilities not explicitly prohibited or otherwise assigned in the Constitution, but it may not abridge powers or responsibilities that are explicitly established in the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution believes the proposed amendment to the Manual of Operations does not conflict with the Constitution and fills a need not addressed in the Constitution.

Item 02-068

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 307.]

Approval of Amendments to the Organization for Mission—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, the Board of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, the Board of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, recommend that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve amendments to the *Organization for Mission* as indicated: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

**ORGANIZATION FOR MISSION
OF THE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)**

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Introduction

The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people’s trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming. But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body,

joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love. (Eph. 4:11–16¹)

These presbyters shall come together in councils in regular gradation. These councils are sessions, presbyteries, synods, and the General Assembly. All councils of the church are united by the nature of the church and share with one another responsibilities, rights, and powers as provided in this Constitution. The councils are distinct, but have such mutual relations that the act of one of them is the act of the whole church performed by it through the appropriate council. The larger part of the church, or a representation thereof, shall govern the smaller. (*Book of Order*, F-3.0203)

I. History of the Structure for Mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

The two denominations that came together in 1983 had similar ecclesiastical polity and theological beliefs. They were leaders in the ecumenical movement and in commitment to the unity of the church. Each had been faithful in ministering in Christ's name. Each had been intentional in revising mission policy and program in response to the leading of the Holy Spirit and a changing world context. Within the previous two decades, each had a major reorganization of General Assembly agencies as it attempted to be more effective in mission.

These two denominations also had developed some differences in their styles, structures, and expectations of the various mid councils. Though they were engaged in similar mission programs, the agency structures they formed did not easily fit together.

The uniting General Assembly in 1983 directed that consultations be held to discern the church's understanding of mission before preparing a mission design. "Today Into Tomorrow: A Year of Consultations" was the process followed, and it challenged all parts of the church to examine their understanding of what God required of the church. The result of this process was the "Life and Mission Statement," which was adopted by the 197th General Assembly (1985).

The biblical image of the church as the body of Christ was a major theme in the "Life and Mission Statement" and provided the pattern for the church's life and work. This pattern was marked by interdependence and sensitivity to the needs, experiences, and gifts others brought; by honest communication and courage to risk, and by a global vision of both the church and the world. It called for working in partnerships characterized by enduring commitment, equality, humility, openness, sensitivity, flexibility, and love.

A number of basic principles were significant in the drafting of the *Structural Design for Mission*, which was approved by the 198th General Assembly (1986), and prescribed the organization for mission from 1986–93. These principles are based on the Reformed interpretation of Scripture represented in *The Book of Confessions*.

The year 1992–93 was devoted to the theme: "Discerning the Spirit, Envisioning Our Future." A convocation on this theme manifested a deep sense of the Spirit's stirring among us, creating an excitement and passion for the future ministry of the church. One theme was the resounding emphasis on the importance of the ministries of congregations as they are resources for mission. Another was the yearning for church wide organizational forms that are flexible and innovative, with the ability to let agreed-upon priorities lead our work and so restore confidence in our connectedness. The convocation contributed to a continuing process of discernment and envisioning that reflected a sense of the future mission direction of the denomination.

A new organizational structure for mission was approved by the 205th General Assembly (1993). Several of the specific elements of the new structure derive from the Report of the General Assembly Committee on Review, which reported to the 204th General Assembly (1992). A simpler design called for fewer ministry units and related bodies, fewer priority goals, and a balanced budget that reflects the mission priorities.

~~Beginning in the year 2002, the General Assembly Council [now the Presbyterian Mission Agency] engaged in a Strategic Planning process including a comprehensive self-assessment. The self-assessment used instruments developed by BoardSource, Incorporated and a BoardSource consultant guided PMA in the process completed in January 2003.~~

~~The self assessment revealed the need for PMA to be closer to congregations, presbyteries and synods and to find ways to better communicate with them. The self assessment also indicated the large size of PMA was a concern and that PMA needed to look at its size and the relationship between PMA elected and PMA staff roles and relationships.~~

~~As a result of the learnings from the self assessment, the PMA appointed a 2005–2006 Mission Work Plan Task Force. The 2005–2006 Mission Work Plan was approved by PMA in February 2004 and by the 216th General Assembly (2004). Following the 216th General Assembly (2004), the PMA turned its attention to a specific objective under the 2005–2006 Mission Work Plan's PMA Role/Identify Goal which was: "Evaluate, develop and propose a structure of the PMA (elected and~~

¹All Scripture references in this document are from the *New Revised Standard Version*.

national staff) that will strengthen connectedness with presbyteries and synods.” (Refer to 2004 General Assembly *Minutes*,—Item 07-03, General Assembly Council 2005–2006 Mission Work Plan, B.5.c.; p. 479.)

In the summer of 2004 the PMA appointed a Governance Task Force to carry out the objective above involving the structure of PMA. The Governance Task Force submitted a proposal for a new PMA Elected Structure to the 2006 spring meeting of the PMA. The PMA elected structure was approved by the PMA and subsequently by the 217th General Assembly (2006). Following the 217th General Assembly (2006), the PMA appointed an Implementation Work Group to work with the PMA Executive Director to smoothly and efficiently transition the PMA into the new structure.

The new structure is reflected in the *Presbyterian Mission Agency Manual of Operations* and throughout this document.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is committed to working in partnership with other churches in this nation and around the world. Such a mutual ministry is consistent with the denomination’s self-image as one part of the body of Christ, as a servant community willing to be poured out on behalf of all people.

The church’s mission finds its center in the gospel of Jesus Christ and in witnessing to that gospel. Beneath the variety and complexity of its forms of witness, the church’s mission is one—from the congregation to the General Assembly. To share fully in that mission is the task of every Presbyterian and every council. As the most inclusive council, the General Assembly represents the unity of the synods, presbyteries, sessions, and congregations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Among its other responsibilities, the General Assembly has the power to set policies, objectives, and priorities for mission, to provide the agencies appropriate for that mission, and to superintend their work (*Book of Order*, G-3.0501).

~~The Presbyterian Mission Agency, as agent of the General Assembly, implements policies established by the General Assembly; works in partnership with synods and presbyteries; and develops and proposes a comprehensive budget to the General Assembly. Members of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board are elected by the General Assembly and are representative of synods, presbyteries, and the church at large.~~

The General Assembly, ~~the Presbyterian Mission Agency~~ its entities, the synods, the presbyteries, and the sessions work together in partnership on behalf of the mission of the church. The *Organization for Mission* places emphasis on the congregation as an instrument of mission and on the mid councils working together to provide resources and services to the congregations.

A. *The Unity of the Church*

The unity of the church, with Christ as the Head of the body, is a fundamental principle that affirms the church is called to demonstrate unity, both within a given denomination as well as ecumenically and internationally. Perhaps the strongest image of this unity is the apostolic vision of the body of Christ, in which the many members, though different, work together for mutual health and upbuilding. Recognition of the unity of the whole church carries with it a series of implications for the internal structure of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and for the denomination’s ecumenical commitment.

Clear communication is needed among the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency *Board*, ~~and~~ the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, ~~and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation Board of Directors~~. These relationships and coordination of program, policy implementation, and support functions give visible expression to unity within the denomination.

While the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is called to be the church in and of itself, there is an important sense in which this denomination recognizes that it is one part of the church of Christ. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) undertakes its ministry with a full awareness of the global and ecumenical dimensions of Christ’s call, and provides a means to share mutual mission, decision making, and resources with partner churches in this nation and around the world.

B. *Commitment to Mission*

The church, as the body of Christ, exists to share the love of Christ with the world. The *Book of Order* states the great ends of the church in terms of the call to mission through proclamation, nurture, worship, preservation of truth, promotion of social righteousness, and exhibition of the ~~Kingdom~~ *Kindom* of Heaven to the world (*Book of Order*, F-1.0304). The vitality of the life and mission of the congregation is central to the calling of the church as a whole. As has been noted, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is called to be the church, yet is itself a member of the worldwide body of Christ. Each congregation, too, is called to be the church of Jesus Christ in its own time and place. Furthermore, the responsibilities of the session include: “to [govern] the congregation and [guide] its witness to the sovereign activity of God in the world” (*Book of Order*, G-3.0201).

C. *Diversity and Inclusiveness*

Within the denomination, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has affirmed the strength of a unity characterized by mutual interdependence in which diversity contributes to wholeness. Various members of this body enrich the whole through the particular qualities they bring

- as people of color of multicultural constituencies that make visible our rich diversity and offer varied histories and traditions;
- as persons with a variety of physical and mental abilities and disabilities;
- from diverse geographical areas and socio-economic backgrounds;
- as ~~male and female~~ *persons of all genders and of all* ages;
- with a variety of theological perspectives within our Reformed tradition;
- with many differing gifts;
- with ~~various a long history~~ *histories* and traditions within the Reformed family of churches.

Patterns are established to ensure that elected bodies represent the wealth of diverse gifts found in the church and to provide a means to share power and decision making. Similarly, churchwide personnel procedures promote equal employment opportunity.

D. Tradition and Flexibility

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) professes a Reformed theology that is solidly grounded in Scripture as the rule of faith and practice. The *Book of Order* affirms: “The Protestant watchwords—grace alone, faith alone, Scripture alone—embody principles of understanding that continue to guide and motivate the people of God in the life of faith” (*Book of Order*, G-2.04). The church has also inherited and continues to affirm a Reformed polity that is representative in nature.

Openness to renewal by God entails a flexibility of structure and openness to growth and change. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) recognizes the need for growth and is open to it under the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Reformed tradition’s awareness of the fallen nature of humanity and human institutions has led to the development of church government made up of a system of checks and balances. In recent years, these checks have included limited terms and rotation for elected officers, and plans to ensure fair representation of the diverse elements of the church on mid councils.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shares with all Reformed churches a belief in the priesthood of all believers. For this reason, persons called to leadership positions in the denomination are envisioned by this organizational plan as enabling the whole church to do the work of mission.

E. Partnership

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) seeks to develop a system of relationships among mid councils functioning through collaboration rather than competition. Partnership is characterized by enduring commitment, equality, humility, openness, sensitivity, flexibility, and love. More than an end to be attained, partnership is a process or journey that can be undertaken only under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Consultation is highly valued as part of the process of decision making.

Each council is a primary agent in mission and has two foci:

- its appropriate role in assisting congregations and other mid councils in the mission of the whole church; and
- the performance of its own mission as a council in consultation with other mid councils.

F. Personnel and Compensation

~~The General Assembly has approved a personnel, equal employment opportunity and affirmative action, and compensation system that is used by the Presbyterian Mission Agency. This system provides guidance regarding overseas personnel, and for General Assembly level entities, synods, presbyteries, sessions, congregations, and church-related institutions in their employment practices. In order to develop consistency and equity across the whole church, these mid councils and institutions are urged to approve and implement these policies with such adaptations as may be necessary.~~

G.F. Additional Factors

Additional factors to guide the structure and style of mission are:

- the need to affirm the centrality of the mission of congregations, and their need and desire for resources from General Assembly entities, as well as from presbyteries and synods;
- the need to recognize demographic realities that bear on the life of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.);
- the need to be responsive to persons who identify themselves as Presbyterian without actually taking part in a particular congregation's life and ministry;
- the need for styles that support and enable the momentum of movements rather than styles that create or lead to institutional inertia;
- the need to reverse the trend toward reducing the church's function and style to that of a regulatory agency, creating instead a more responsive, less bureaucratic reality;
- the need to be more simple yet holistic;
- the need to build hope and trust within the denomination, while maintaining commitments to and safeguards for those historically ignored, excluded, or silenced; and
- the need for an evolutionary design that can be responsive to unfolding changes in the structure and work of the General Assembly, synods and presbyteries.
- The value of shared services in the PC(USA) exists when all agencies, carrying out their respective missions as directed by the General Assembly, collectively best serve the church with excellence, transparency, and efficiency. Simultaneously, sharing any service must be accomplished without harming the safety, soundness, well-being, or missional goals of any individual agency.

II. Statement of Vision and Priority Goals for Mission

~~A statement of vision and goals that articulate the mission emphasis for the next phase of our life are identified.~~

~~A. Statement of Vision~~

~~At the heart of our vision for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is its congregations, dedicated to Jesus Christ and scattered~~

- ~~• from rural Alabama to Sitka, Alaska;~~
- ~~• from suburban Pittsburgh to South Central Los Angeles;~~
- ~~• from the bustling city of San Juan, Puerto Rico, to the small towns of the upper peninsula of Michigan;~~
- ~~• from congregations with a handful of members and those where thousands gather.~~

~~Called by God and empowered by the Holy Spirit the Presbyterian Mission Agency of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) offers the world a viable witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. With congregations, mid councils, and other mission partners, we serve the church in mission.~~

~~B. Goals~~

~~Goals give shape and direction to our mission as a denomination and are reflected in the *PMA Manual of Operations* and can be found in the current Mission Work Plan (<http://www.pcusa.org/resource/game-manual-operations/>)~~

~~C. How Our Vision Unfolds~~

~~Embedded in our understanding of what it means to be Presbyterian is the conviction that the church is always being reformed under the judgment of God's reign. Our vision includes congregations and mid councils so aware of belonging to God in Jesus Christ that each day and each challenge are received as gifts from our Lord, who is the same yesterday and today and forever. In life and in death, we belong to God. Therefore, we look to the future with hope and confidence.~~

III II. Mission of the General Assembly
(*Book of Order*, G-3.0501)

G-3.0501 Composition and Responsibilities

The General Assembly is the council of the whole church and it is representative of the unity of the synods, presbyteries, sessions, and congregations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). It shall consist of equal numbers of ruling elders and ministers

of the Word and Sacrament elected by the presbyteries and reflective of the diversity within their bounds (F-1.0403 and G-3.0103), to serve as commissioners according to the following proportions:

8,000 members or less: 1 ruling elder and 1 minister of the Word and Sacrament
8,001–16,000: 2 ruling elders and 2 ministers of the Word and Sacrament
16,001–24,000: 3 ruling elders and 3 ministers of the Word and Sacrament
24,001–32,000: 4 ruling elders and 4 ministers of the Word and Sacrament
32,001–40,000: 5 ruling elders and 5 ministers of the Word and Sacrament
40,001–48,000: 6 ruling elders and 6 ministers of the Word and Sacrament
48,001 or more: 7 ruling elders and 7 ministers of the Word and Sacrament

Each person elected Moderator shall be enrolled as a member of the General Assembly until a successor is elected and installed.

The General Assembly constitutes the bond of union, community, and mission among all its congregations and councils, to the end that the whole church becomes a community of faith, hope, love, and witness. As it leads and guides the witness of the whole church, it shall keep before it the marks of the Church (F-1.0302), the notes by which Presbyterian and Reformed communities have identified themselves through history (F-1.0303) and the six Great Ends of the Church (F-1.0304).

In light of this charge, the General Assembly has responsibility and power to:

a. provide that the Word of God may be truly preached and heard. This responsibility shall include establishing a comprehensive mission strategy and priorities for the church; establishing and maintaining ecumenical relationships and correspondence with other ecclesiastical bodies; uniting with or receiving under its jurisdiction other ecclesiastical bodies consistent with the faith and order of this church, subject to the provisions of G-5.02 and G-5.03; and commissioning, sending, and support of such mission personnel as will spread the good news of the grace of Jesus Christ to the world and foster the growth and development of God's people.

b. provide that the Sacraments may be rightly administered and received. This responsibility shall include authorizing the celebration of the Lord's Supper at meetings of the General Assembly and other events and gatherings under its jurisdiction; authorizing the participation in the celebration of the Lord's Supper in ecumenical gatherings attended by authorized representatives of the General Assembly; and exercising pastoral care throughout the whole church in order that the Sacraments may be received as a means of grace, and the church may live in the unity represented in the Sacraments.

c. nurture the covenant community of disciples. This responsibility shall include providing those services, resources, and programs performed most effectively at a national level; communicating with the whole church on matters of common concern; warning and bearing witness against errors in doctrine or immorality in the church and in the world; providing such services of education and nurture as its presbyteries may require; providing encouragement, guidance, and resources to presbyteries in the areas of mission, prophetic witness, leadership development, worship, evangelism, and responsible administration; discerning and presenting with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, matters of truth and vision that may inspire, challenge, and educate both church and world; serving in judicial matters in accordance with the Rules of Discipline; deciding controversies brought before it and advising and instructing in cases submitted to it, in conformity with this Constitution; authoritatively interpreting the most recent edition of the *Book of Order* in a manner binding on the whole church, in accordance with the provisions of G-6.02 or through a decision of the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission in a remedial or disciplinary case, with the most recent interpretation of the *Book of Order* being binding; and establishing and maintaining an office of the Stated Clerk.

IV III. General Assembly Officers and Committees and the Office of the General Assembly

A. Moderator of the General Assembly

The Moderator of the General Assembly is an ecclesiastical officer, along with the Stated Clerk, of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The ministry of the Moderator is grounded in the ministry of baptized persons and in the particular ordained ministry of ruling elders and ministers of the Word and Sacrament.

1. *The Office of Moderator, with all rights and privileges thereof, may be shared by Co-Moderators. In this case, the Office of Vice Moderator will remain vacant until the next election of a Moderator.*

2. The title of the Moderator is "The Moderator of the (number) General Assembly (year) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)."

2- 3. The Moderator of the General Assembly is a commissioner of the General Assembly. When the Moderator presides at the assembly, it is to be a sign of the bond of unity, community, and mission in the life of the church. During the period between assemblies, the Moderator serves as an ambassador of the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace, telling the story of the church's life and upholding the people of God through prayer.

When the Moderator travels throughout the church, it is for the purpose of strengthening the mission of congregations and mid councils, encouraging officers and members, and their work. The Moderator listens for the joys and concerns of the church and ascertains the needs of the world and the gifts of the church's mission program.

When the Moderator serves as an ecumenical representative, s/he expresses the concern of Reformed churches for the visible unity of Christ's body and fuller communion among churches.

When the Moderator visits national and international mission sites, s/he encourages mission personnel, brings the prayerful concern of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to sister churches, and helps to proclaim the gospel of Christ to the world.

When the Moderator addresses the church and the society, s/he speaks pastorally and prophetically from within the standards of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), preserving the rights and responsibilities outlined in G-2.0105.

a. The Moderator shall preside over the General Assembly that elects him or her, and over the meetings of the next General Assembly until a successor is elected. "The Moderator possesses the authority necessary for preserving order and for conducting efficiently the business of the body" (*Book of Order*, G-3.0104).

b. The Moderator of the General Assembly is a ~~voting~~ *corresponding* member of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and a *voting member* of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. The Moderator of the General Assembly may attend and participate without vote in the meetings of all other entities of the General Assembly.

i. When the Office of Moderator is shared by Co-Moderators, at least one, shall serve on the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, while both Co-Moderators shall serve as voting members of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

c. The Moderator shall be the official representative of the church at gatherings and functions, both civic and ecclesiastical, at which the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is invited or expected to be represented, unless otherwise provided by the General Assembly. In the event that the Moderator is unable to attend, the Vice Moderator, or some other person designated by the Moderator in consultation with the Stated Clerk, may represent the church.

d. The Moderator and the Vice Moderator (*when filled*) shall submit a written report of their work to the session of the General Assembly at which their successors are installed.

3 4. Enabling the Moderator and Vice Moderator to Serve

a. It is incumbent upon the church to understand, respect, and remain accountable for the balance of the stewardship of time between the ministry of the Moderator and Vice Moderator and the larger vocation of the ones serving in these roles. That balance includes a commitment to respect the need for Sabbath by the Moderator and Vice Moderator of the General Assembly.

The church should expect the Moderator to ordinarily spend no more than half of her/his work time responding to invitations in attending meetings of General Assembly entities, in participating in other opportunities, and attending to constitutional functions. In assisting the Moderator in these activities, the church should expect the Vice Moderator to ordinarily spend no more than a third of her/his work time.

b. The Moderator, the Vice Moderator, and the Office of the General Assembly shall jointly develop a comprehensive plan for their travel based upon the mission of the church and the needs of ~~agencies~~ *entities*, mid councils, institutions, ecumenical partners, and other constituencies.

Each synod, in consultation with its presbyteries, will be invited to develop a plan for iteration of the Moderator or Vice Moderator. Ordinarily, a single invitation for a visit within a presbytery will be accepted during each term.

c. The Stated Clerk shall request the congregation or employer of the Moderator and Vice Moderator to grant a leave of absence for time appropriate to their commitments to permit the Moderator and Vice Moderator to fulfill the functions of their offices.

No later than three months following the election, the Stated Clerk, in consultation with the Moderator and Vice Moderator and representatives of the congregation or employer they serve, shall conduct an appropriate service of dedication and covenant between these leaders and their faith and/or vocational community, recognizing the unique demands and responsibilities placed upon these officers.

d. To prevent financial sacrifice to these leaders personally, or undue adverse effect upon the work in which they are engaged, the Stated Clerk, in consultation with the Moderator and Vice Moderator, shall propose appropriate financial arrangements to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

e. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall budget for the official travel of the Moderator and Vice Moderator and their spouses, and other expenses incurred in the performance of official duties.

f. An office for the use of the Moderator and Vice Moderator shall be provided within the office suite of the Office of the General Assembly.

4 5. Vice Moderator

a. The Vice Moderator represents the assembly at the request of the Moderator. When the Vice Moderator serves in this capacity, all those duties incumbent on the Moderator shall be expected of him/her.

b. The Vice Moderator shall serve as a corresponding member without vote on the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly ~~and the Presbyterian Mission Agency.~~

c. Should there be a Moderator's Conference, the Vice Moderator participates with the Moderator in planning the Moderator's Conference.

d. The Vice Moderator is expected to itinerate at the request of the Moderator.

e. The Vice Moderator shall consult with the Moderator and the Office of the General Assembly about the special emphasis for the Vice Moderator's itinerary.

f. The Moderator may request the Vice Moderator to preside and to assist in the performance of other functions of the Moderator during and following the General Assembly.

5 6. Regular Reporting: Accountability of the Moderator and Vice Moderator

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) shall assist the General Assembly in ensuring the accountability of the Moderator and Vice Moderator of the General Assembly by receiving and reviewing, at each of their stated meetings, a written report from the Moderator and Vice Moderator. The Moderator of the General Assembly shall also report at each stated meeting of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

B. Stated Clerk of the General Assembly

1. The title of the Stated Clerk is "The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.);" and may be used by the incumbent until a successor is elected and takes office.

2. Functions of the Stated Clerk {(For functions related to General Assembly meetings, see Standing Rule H.2.)}

a. In partial fulfillment of his/her role as the continuing ecclesial officer and Head of Communion for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Stated Clerk will offer constitutional and spiritual leadership for the life and witness of the church and exercise pastoral authority over concerns of the church in times of crisis. The Stated Clerk is the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s chief ecumenical officer and its primary representative in national and international interchurch and interfaith organizations and speaks to and for the church in matters of faith and practice in accord with the beliefs, policies, and actions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

b. The Stated Clerk shall conduct the general correspondence of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). In this connection, all items of correspondence directed to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), or to the General Assembly, shall be routed to the Stated Clerk.

c. As an officer of the General Assembly, the Stated Clerk shall preserve and defend the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and support the decisions, actions, and programs of the General Assembly. The Stated Clerk shall

give advisory opinions concerning the meaning of the provisions of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and shall give advisory opinions on the meaning of the actions of the General Assembly. When the Stated Clerk deems it necessary, after consulting with appropriate persons or bodies, the Stated Clerk may retain legal counsel and institute or participate in legal proceedings in civil and criminal courts.

d. The Stated Clerk shall publish the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and other materials as may be necessary to help the church understand and be guided by the Constitution. The Stated Clerk shall prepare editorial changes in the *Book of Order*, which should be reviewed by the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, provided the changes do not alter the substance of the text approved by vote of the presbyteries. The Stated Clerk shall be a member *ex officio* of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, without vote.

e. On receipt of the certified record and final decision in a case of judicial process from the clerk of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly, the Stated Clerk shall report the decision to the General Assembly if it is in session, or to its first session thereafter if it is not. When a decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission contains an order directed to another council, the Stated Clerk shall obtain from the council a statement of its compliance and make a full report to the next General Assembly.

f. The Stated Clerk shall provide staff services to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution and any other committees established to draft, consider, or amend *The Book of Confessions* or any of the documents it includes.

g. As the continuing ecclesial officer of the General Assembly, the Stated Clerk shall be a member of each committee that may be established to undertake discussion regarding organic union with another church or churches.

h. The Stated Clerk is the permanent ecumenical representative of the General Assembly and shall be a member of each delegation representing the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in ecumenical or interchurch bodies or Presbyterian Mission Agency Boards, and in faith and order bodies, including bilateral conversations and dialogues.

i. The Stated Clerk shall be a ~~corresponding member of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. He or she shall be~~ a member of any ~~other~~ body responsible for coordinating, formulating, or implementing the ecumenical and interfaith policies and programs of the General Assembly.

~~j~~ i. The Stated Clerk is the chief executive officer of the Office of the General Assembly. The Stated Clerk shall have available personnel to assist in performing the assigned functions.

~~k~~ j. The Stated Clerk, with the concurrence of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, may nominate to the General Assembly one or more persons to serve as Associate Stated Clerks of the assembly (Standing Rule H.2.d.).

~~l~~ k. The Stated Clerk, after consultation with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, may appoint one or more Assistant Stated Clerks. The term of the appointment shall be four years, subject to reappointment by the Stated Clerk, after consultation with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

~~m~~ l. The Stated Clerk shall submit to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, for its action and recommendation to the General Assembly, a proposed budget. This budget shall provide for the funding of the sessions of the General Assembly, the Office of the General Assembly and all bodies related to it, the funding of the participation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in ecumenical bodies, and other expenses deemed necessary.

~~n~~ m. The Stated Clerk is responsible for maintaining the archives and records management facilities of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), for the supervision of an agency for the preservation of the history of American Presbyterianism, and for the promotion of the study of Presbyterian history. The Stated Clerk shall assure the implementation of a records management program.

~~o~~ n. The Stated Clerk shall promote the harmony and efficiency of the General Assembly and its agencies in cooperation with the Presbyterian Mission Agency and its Executive Director, with special attention to relationships between General Assembly entities, and with synods, presbyteries, and sessions. The Stated Clerk shall have membership on or relationship to appropriate committees and commissions, and agencies of the General Assembly as it shall determine from time to time. The Stated Clerk shall serve *as ex-officio* on the ~~Board of Directors for~~ the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, the Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, and other agencies (identified in Chapter ~~VIII~~VII. of the Organization for Mission) including voice but not vote at all meetings while in either open or closed session. Furthermore, the Stated Clerk shall be consulted about any candidate before the candidate's name is brought to a board for election as the agency *or entity* executive (chief officer) or interim agency *or entity* executive (other than for a replacement for the Stated Clerk position).

~~p~~ o. The Stated Clerk shall receive all resignations from service on General Assembly entities and shall declare the

positions vacant in accordance with Paragraph ~~IV~~III.C.1. below entitled “Serving on Assembly Entities.”

¶ p. Serve as primary spokesperson for General Assembly actions, unless the General Assembly has directed otherwise”

3. The Office of the General Assembly

a. The Stated Clerk shall employ and supervise the personnel necessary to do the work of the Office of the General Assembly, and provide oversight of the personnel of all bodies related to the Office of the General Assembly who shall be accountable to the Stated Clerk unless other provisions have been made. Staff vacancies within the Office of the General Assembly (other than the appointment of Assistant Stated Clerks) may be filled by the appropriate supervisor (with the concurrence of the Stated Clerk).

The Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, shall delegate to the Stated Clerk, in coordination with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, subject to the Office of the General Assembly Budget; subject to Section 2.13 of the Bylaws of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation; in consultation with the Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) A Corporation; and consistent with the scope of any similar delegation to the President/Executive Director for staff assigned to the Presbyterian Mission Agency, authority: (i) to create, implement, and enforce personnel policies and procedures for staff assigned to the Office of the General Assembly, (ii) to prepare, maintain, and amend an Employee Handbook for staff assigned to the Office of the General Assembly; (iii) to retain and dismiss staff assigned to the Office of the General Assembly; and (iv) to promote, review, increase or decrease compensation, and otherwise manage staff assigned to the Office of the General Assembly. The Stated Clerk shall, in exercising such authority, make use of any human resources record keeping and expertise provided by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation. The Board of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation shall coordinate with the Office of the General Assembly to ensure that an adequate number of staff assigned to the Office of the General Assembly have or are delegated appropriate signature authority for relevant contracts and bank accounts related to the work of the Office of the General Assembly.

b. All equal employment opportunity and other uniform policies relating to employment and compensation of the personnel of General Assembly agencies shall apply also to personnel of the Office of the General Assembly and all bodies related thereto. All personnel appointments shall be in accordance with the personnel policies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation and the requirements of Book of Order, G-3.0103.

c. The Stated Clerk may designate a member of the staff of the Stated Clerk to be the budget officer of the Office of the General Assembly.

The following will be related to the Office of the General Assembly for staffing and budgeting purposes: Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, Permanent Judicial Commission, Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Historical Society, Committee on Representation, Advisory Committee on the Constitution, Advisory Committee on Litigation, General Assembly Nominating Committee, *Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations (staffed in partnership with the Presbyterian Mission Agency)*. Presbyteries’ Cooperative Committee on Examinations for Candidates, *Educator Certification Committee* and commissions and special committees of the General Assembly (see Standing Rule K.I.).

d. All income received by the Office of the General Assembly from sales, bequests, gifts, or from any other source, shall be transmitted to the treasurer of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation. These funds shall be separately accounted for by the treasurer. All payments related to the Office of the General Assembly shall be made by the treasurer upon the receipt of regular vouchered requests, or other adequate documentation, bearing the authorization of the Stated Clerk or a person designated by the Stated Clerk.

e. ~~The Presbyterian Historical Society Records and History~~ in the Office of the General Assembly shall be under the direction of a person appointed by the Stated Clerk and ~~headquartered in Philadelphia~~. The ~~general administration mission~~ of the Presbyterian Historical Society and Records and History shall be carried out from Philadelphia, ~~which will be the location of the office of the associate for Records and History.~~

~~All restricted and other funds contributed to the endowment of the former Department of History of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. or the former Historical Foundation of the Presbyterian Church in the United States are held by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Foundation, and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation. Funds secured after 1983 resulting from development efforts are also placed in accounts with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Foundation, and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation. All of these restricted and other funds are used for the support of the archival facility and program of the Office of the General Assembly.~~

C. Committees of the General Assembly

1. Serving on Assembly Entities

a. Each person nominated shall be an active member *in good standing* of a congregation, or a ~~continuing~~ *minister* member *in good standing* of a presbytery, of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) with the exception of nominees for election to the Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People.

b. A person may serve as a member-at-large of only one General Assembly entity at a time. Ordinarily, no more than one member-at-large from any one presbytery may serve on the same General Assembly entity at the same time. Members serving by virtue of office, ~~or~~ elected to membership on a second entity to fulfill the requirements of the *Organization for Mission* or other General Assembly actions, *or serving on a second entity by virtue of their position on an entity* are not affected by this provision.

c. Persons nominated for election by the General Assembly shall ordinarily be eligible to serve a four-year term, and be eligible for election to one additional term. No person may serve more than two consecutive terms, full or partial. At the conclusion of their term of service, a person shall not be eligible for nomination to a General Assembly entity until two years have elapsed.

d. Persons who serve as staff on any of the ~~six agencies~~ *entities* of the General Assembly, committees or commissions of the General Assembly, or persons employed by agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) may not serve as elected members of committees, commissions, or special committees and commissions unless otherwise designated by the General Assembly.

e. Consideration shall be given to the full requirements of full participation expressed in *Book of Order*, G-1.0401, and shall ensure that nominations are made by an entity broadly representative of the constituency of the council, and in conformity with the church's commitment to unity in diversity (F-1.0403) (see *Book of Order*, G-3.0111).

f. A member of a General Assembly entity who finds it necessary to resign shall send his or her resignation to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, who shall notify the entity and the nominating committee or other body that originated the person's nomination or election. When any member of an entity of the General Assembly (council, commission, unit, division, committee, task force, or any other body) ~~shall~~ resigns *ceases to be a member in good standing of a congregation or presbytery*, or becomes unable to serve because of chronic or permanent physical or mental illness or disability, the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly shall declare the position vacant.

g. When any member of the board of an entity of the General Assembly, a council, commission, unit, division, committee, task force, or any other body authorized by the General Assembly does not attend two successive sessions of that body and such absence is unexcused, the membership of that person shall be automatically vacated, and that person shall be notified by the Stated Clerk. The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly shall be notified of the vacancy by the chairperson of the entity, and the Stated Clerk shall announce the vacancy and shall notify the General Assembly Nominating Committee or other body that originated the nomination or election of the person who has been absent without excuse, in order that the vacancy may be filled in the manner by which the same position had been filled originally.

h. If a minister of the Word and Sacrament serving as a member of a General Assembly entity representing a synod or presbytery shall transfer his or her presbytery membership and thereby cease to be under the jurisdiction of the presbytery or synod that nominated her or him to serve on the assembly entity, the position shall be declared vacant by the Stated Clerk. If a member of a particular church serving as a member of a General Assembly entity representing a presbytery or synod shall transfer her or his membership to a particular church that is not under jurisdiction of the presbytery or synod that nominated him or her, the position shall be declared vacant by the Stated Clerk.

i. The Stated Clerk shall also notify appropriate entities and mid councils upon being advised of the death of any person holding membership on an assembly entity or who is unable to serve for any other reason. The Stated Clerk shall also declare vacant a position on any such entity held by a minister of the Word and Sacrament who ceases to be a minister of the Word and Sacrament member of a presbytery of this denomination, or a position held by a member of a particular church who ceases to be a member of a congregation of this denomination.

All such vacancies shall be filled by the same process under which the former incumbent was elected. If a vacancy shall occur during the first term of service of an incumbent, then the original source of the nomination shall propose a nominee for election to complete the unexpired term, and such nominee shall be eligible for renomination and election to an additional full term. If a vacancy shall occur during the second term of service of an incumbent, and the position vacated is one designated for a representative of a presbytery or synod, then the privilege of proposing a nominee for the unexpired term shall pass to the next appropriate presbytery or synod under any rotation system that may be in use, and the nominee so proposed shall be eligible for nomination and reelection to an additional full term. Any vacancy in a position for which the General Assembly Nominating Committee makes nominations may be filled until the next succeeding General Assembly by appointment of the

Moderator of the General Assembly upon advice by the nominating committee that the committee has decided to present the name of the appointee to the next session of the General Assembly as its nominee for the position.

2. Committee on the Office of the General Assembly

a. The General Assembly shall elect a Committee on the Office of the General Assembly ~~composed of fifteen persons. This committee~~ which shall be empowered to carry out the assembly's oversight of the Stated Clerk and the Office of the General Assembly; to assure the accountability of the Stated Clerk to the General Assembly during the interim between sessions of the assembly; and to provide linkage with the Presbyterian Mission Agency. *The committee shall consist of fourteen (14) persons elected by the General Assembly in two classes of seven members each.* These members of the committee shall serve a four-year term, and be eligible for election to one additional term. No member may serve more than two terms, full or partial.

The Moderator (or Co-Moderator) of the General Assembly will serve as ~~an ex officio member(s) of the committee~~ with vote during his or her moderatorial service. *The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board shall designate a member to serve a two-year term without vote in consultation with the General Assembly Nominating Committee.* The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, *the Vice-Moderator of the General Assembly (if the position is filled), and the President/Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and the vice chair of the Presbyterian Mission Agency* will serve as corresponding members of the committee without vote.

b. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall elect its own officers and determine its structure, including any subcommittees (see Standing Rule I.4.a. for exception).

c. The committee shall be funded from the per capita apportionment and its financial activity shall be reported through a separate line in the General Assembly *per capita budget Commission and Committee Schedule*. The proposed budgets of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall be submitted to the General Assembly.

d. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall have the responsibility to do the following:

(1) Assist the General Assembly in assuring the accountability of the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly and of the Office of the General Assembly by reporting to each session of the General Assembly, including a report or summary of any evaluation of the work of the Stated Clerk and of the Office of the General Assembly that has been completed since the last session of the assembly.

(2) Review annually the work of the Stated Clerk and be responsible for an end-of-term evaluation (see Standing Rule H.2.b.(3)(f)) or exit interview.

(3) Review the budget requests submitted by the Stated Clerk for that portion of the per capita budget administered by the Stated Clerk, and to forward the requests to ~~Mission Support Services~~ *Administrative Services Group* with the comments of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly will also be responsible for approving proposed changes in the staffing design of the Office of the General Assembly presented by the Stated Clerk.

(4) Consult with the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly regarding any proposals to the General Assembly concerning persons being recommended for election to the office of Associate Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, and any proposals concerning the appointment of persons to the office of Assistant Stated Clerk (see Standing Rule H.2.d.).

(5) Meet annually with the ~~Executive~~ *Coordinating* Committee of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board to discuss items of concern and common interest.

(6) Be available to the Stated Clerk for consultation on all proposed amendments to the Standing Rules of the General Assembly and that such consultation shall occur prior to the Stated Clerk proposing any amendments to the Standing Rules of the General Assembly (see Standing Rule L.1.).

(7) Review the work of special committees and report to each session of the General Assembly a summary of the work being carried out by special committees, including recommendations to transfer the work assigned to a special committee elsewhere or to dismiss the committee (see Standing Rule K.1.e.).

(8) Review the evaluation of each General Assembly session secured by the Stated Clerk.

(9) Outline the programs for future General Assemblies sufficiently in advance to ensure an orderly progression of themes and emphases and to ensure the appointment of significant speakers and other program participants.

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- (10) Review and present to the Assembly Committee on Business Referral a recommendation regarding the Stated Clerk's proposed docket for the next session of the General Assembly (see Standing Rule C.4.a.).
- (11) Review and present to the Assembly Committee on Business Referral a recommendation regarding the Stated Clerk's proposed referral of each item of business to an appropriate assembly committee (see Standing Rule C.3.).
- (12) Assist the Moderator regarding the appointment of a commissioner to be the moderator of each assembly committee and a commissioner to serve as vice moderator of each assembly committee (see Standing Rule C.1.c.).
- (13) Consult with the Moderator regarding the planning of all worship at the General Assembly (see Standing Rule G.a.).
- (14) Coordinate the programmatic aspects of each General Assembly session, ensuring that adequate time is provided for the business that must be transacted.
- (15) Review requests from entities of the General Assembly, mid councils, other entities related to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in any way, or coalitions in which this denomination or any of its entities participate to schedule meetings, briefings, hearings, or other events of any kind during those hours when the General Assembly or its committees are in session.
- (16) Prepare a report, including recommendations on the docket and the referral of assembly business, to be ~~printed and~~ distributed with other materials provided to commissioners.
- (17) Review and present to the General Assembly for its action the date and place of meeting six years hence and any changes in dates and places of meetings previously set (see Standing Rule I.1.a.).
- (18) Review the recommendation of the Stated Clerk and set the amount of per diem for sessions of the General Assembly (see Standing Rule I.3.).
- (19) On behalf of the General Assembly, bring forward according to G-6.02 any such questions requiring an interpretation of the Constitution that may arise from the work of the General Assembly.

3. Advisory Committee on the Constitution

- a. The *Book of Order*, G-6.02, provides for the establishment of an Advisory Committee on the Constitution. The committee is composed of nine (9) voting members who shall be stated clerks or former stated clerks of synods or presbyteries, former members of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly, polity professors, or other qualified persons with knowledge of and experience with the Constitution and polity of the church.
- b. Except as otherwise specified in the Book of Order, the committee shall be funded through the per capita budget of the Office of the General Assembly and receive staff services as provided by the Stated Clerk.

4. Advisory Committee on Litigation

- a. The Advisory Committee on Litigation shall advise the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly in connection with instituting or participating in legal proceedings (see Functions of the Stated Clerk earlier in this section).
- b. The members of the committee shall ordinarily be attorneys, and the members shall be experienced in fields related to issues that may be the subject of legal proceedings in which the church is, or may become, interested. The committee shall be composed of six persons, elected by the General Assembly upon nomination by the General Assembly Nominating Committee. The advisory committee may invite other persons with special competency related to particular cases or situations to participate in the consideration of particular cases or issues. The members shall be evenly divided into three classes, shall serve six-year terms, and shall be eligible for election to one additional term. No member may serve more than two terms, full or partial. Members of this committee are exempted from the prohibition against service on more than one entity of the assembly set forth in Section ~~IV~~III.C.1.c. above.
- c. The committee shall elect its own moderator and ordinarily shall meet at the call of the Stated Clerk. The committee may carry on its work by correspondence, telephone consultation (including conference telephone calls), or meetings.
- d. The committee shall advise the Stated Clerk regarding participation in litigation related to matters of civil and religious liberty, relations between church and state, and any other matters related to the mission and interest of the church. The Advisory Committee on Litigation shall advise the Stated Clerk regarding the establishment and maintenance of a resource

file of legal documents as a means of assisting the mid councils and agencies of the church in initiating or participating in litigation in the areas within the concerns of the committee.

e. The committee shall be funded through the per capita budget of the Office of the General Assembly, receive staff services as provided by the Stated Clerk, and designate a representative to the annual session of the General Assembly (see Standing Rule B.3.).

f. The committee shall report to each session of the General Assembly.

5. General Assembly Committee on Representation

a. As provided for in the Book of Order, G-3.0103, council above the session shall establish committees on representation to fulfill the following function: 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.

b. The committee shall

(1) Advise the assembly and all entities created by and accountable to the General Assembly with regard to diversity and inclusiveness in its elected and employed leadership.

(2) Reflect in its membership the principles of unity and diversity in F-1.0403.

(3) Assist the Moderator regarding the appointment of a commissioner to be the moderator of each assembly committee and a commissioner to serve as vice moderator of each assembly committee (see Standing Rule C.1.c).

(4) Evaluate each General Assembly session and share that evaluation with the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

(5) Participate in any review and/or revision of the Churchwide Plan for Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action.

(6) Make recommendations to the assembly regarding inclusion of leaders for emerging communities and concerns as well as methods of decision-making that increase participation and representation, in accordance with the principles of unity and diversity in F-1.0403.

(7) Review the work and impact of committees on representation at councils below the General Assembly in accordance with the functions and commitments assigned in the *Book of Order*, G-3.0103.

(8) Assist the church to build an ethos of inclusion and involvement of all persons in the decision-making, sharing power across differences.

6. General Assembly Nominating Committee

There shall be a General Assembly Nominating Committee responsible for nominating persons to serve in positions requiring election by the General Assembly. The Moderator of the General Assembly, in collaboration with the General Assembly Nominating Committee, shall appoint persons to serve on special commissions and special committees. These nominations and/or appointments shall be made in accordance with the Book of Order, G-3.0111 and F-1.0403.

7. Board of Directors for the Presbyterian Historical Society

a. The board of directors exists to assure that the mission of the Presbyterian Historical Society ↓ to collect, preserve, and share our history ↓ is achieved in the most effective and efficient manner, in faithfulness to God's call and in support of the mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

b. The board of directors shall be composed of a minimum of eight and a maximum of twenty-four persons. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall elect and the General Assembly shall confirm the board. The members of the board of directors shall serve a four-year term and shall be eligible to serve one additional full or partial term.

c. The budget for the Presbyterian Historical Society shall be submitted as part of the Office of the General Assembly's regular budget process.

d. The responsibilities of the board of directors shall include:

- (1) Establishing the strategic direction for the Presbyterian Historical Society with the concurrence of the Stated Clerk.
- (2) Providing oversight of and accountability for the Presbyterian Historical Society to the church at large.
- (3) Ensuring the financial stability of the Presbyterian Historical Society.
- (4) Advocating for and promoting the work of the Presbyterian Historical Society.

8. Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations

a. The Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations shall function to give a high profile to the vision of the ecumenical and interreligious involvement and work as central to the gospel and key to the life of the church; plan and coordinate, in consultation with the agencies and councils of the church, the involvement of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in ecumenical and interreligious relations and work; connect the ecumenical and interreligious efforts of all council levels of the church; provide a common point for all ecumenical and interreligious efforts connecting us with those outside our church; keep a unity of vision that includes the ecclesiastical, programmatic, ecumenical, and denominational (organizational) parts of our ministries and commitments; articulate the Reformed and Presbyterian identity in the midst of our ecumenical commitments; and promote awareness of the role of the unity of all humankind in the search for the unity of the church; and promote the unity of the church as an exhibition of the kingdom to the world.

b. The Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations shall be composed of twenty members. Twelve shall be members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) nominated for at-large positions by the General Assembly Nominating Committee (GANC) and elected by the General Assembly in as nearly equal classes as possible. Four shall be members of four churches invited by the Stated Clerk to appoint one member each from their communion to serve as voting members of the committee. One of the four churches shall be one of our ecumenical church partners. The other three shall be our full communion partners. One member shall be appointed by the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. One member shall be appointed by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. The other members of the committee shall be the Stated Clerk or the Associate Stated Clerk for Ecumenical Relations and the Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency or designee.

In addition, the following PMA persons may be corresponding members: the ~~Deputy~~ *President/Executive Director for Mission* and up to three ministry directors appointed by the ~~Deputy~~ *President/Executive Director for Mission*.

c. Elected members of the committee shall be elected to a four-year term, and be eligible for election to one additional term. No member may serve more than two terms, full or partial. Appointed members from ecumenical church partners shall serve for four years and be eligible for appointment to one additional term.

d. The Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations will meet twice annually and shall have the responsibility to do the following:

(1) Envision, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, how the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) leads and participates in the search for the unity of Christ's Church within this nation and worldwide, and propose appropriate strategies to the General Assembly, its agencies, and other mid councils;

(2) Provide oversight to the implementation of the responsibilities given to the General Assembly in *Book of Order*, Form of Government, Chapter XV. Relationships, G-5.02; G-5.03; G-5.05;

(3) Act on and process recommendations and proposals addressing ecclesiastical ecumenical work of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.);

(4) Propose to the General Assembly, for election, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) members to serve on ecumenical delegations to the National Council of Churches of Christ (USA), the World Council of Churches, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, and the Caribbean and North American Area Council assemblies;

(5) Represent the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in negotiation and coordination of the search for Christian unity with other communions as authorized by the General Assembly;

(6) Select Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) representatives to serve on ecumenical dialogues, ecumenical negotiations on church unions, multilateral and bilateral dialogues, and representatives from the PC(USA) serving as PC(USA) ecumenical representatives to other church assemblies;

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(7) Oversee the implementation of “A Formula of Agreement” (Full Communion) with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, the Reformed Church in America, and the United Churches of Christ, and represent the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in planning and coordinating structures to carry this out;

(8) Give guidance to the nurturing of unity among Presbyterian and Reformed churches in the U.S.A., with one another and with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.);

(9) Empower all agencies of the General Assembly and mid councils to carry out their mission program with an ecumenical consciousness and in close coordination with one another and to model this consciousness in their own work;

(10) Propose and advocate to appropriate bodies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) that they share in funding ecumenical and conciliar ministry;

(11) Propose to the General Assembly names of churches to be invited to send ecumenical advisory delegates to the General Assembly meeting (see Standing Rule B.2.g.);

(12) Select three religious traditions to be invited to send representatives to the General Assembly as interfaith observers (see Standing Rule B.2.f.);

(13) Give guidance to the Stated Clerk and General Assembly agencies on ecclesial (church-to-church) ecumenical relations, helping to carry out the General Assembly’s G-3.0501c responsibilities;

(14) Give guidance to General Assembly agencies on new opportunities to strengthen the relationships with other faith communities and on strategies for fulfilling the General Assembly mandates on interreligious relationships;

(15) Give guidance to the Mission Agency on ecumenical mission opportunities in partnership with churches in the United States and around the world; and

(16) Give guidance to program entities on ecumenical formation of Presbyterians, both ministers of the Word and Sacrament and lay members.

e. The committee shall be funded through the per capita budget of the Office of the General Assembly. The co-chairs of the Ecumenical Staff Team will have primary staffing responsibilities. The Ecumenical Staff Team shall be a staff resource to the committee.

D. Review of Agencies and Committees

~~1. Based on a six-year schedule, the agencies of the General Assembly, as well as the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, will be reviewed on a regular cycle, as outlined in the “Standards for Review of General Assembly Agencies. In addition, there will be a review of the collective work of the agencies once all individual agencies have been reviewed. Unless otherwise instructed by the assembly, the General Assembly Nominating Committee will nominate three committees at the first two assemblies within the six-year cycle for election by the General Assembly. Each committee will be composed of nine: three commissioners from the previous three General Assemblies, three who have served on the board of a General Assembly entity other than the one being reviewed, and three at-large. The at-large members may include ecumenical partners. The Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly will be reviewed at the same time and those review committees will include three additional at-large members. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation will be reviewed by a combined subcommittee of the two review committees reviewing the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly. The review committees will use the “Standards for Review of General Assembly Agencies” in the Guidelines and Policies of the General Assembly. Each committee will report to the Stated Clerk who will present the report, along with any additional recommendations from the Stated Clerk, to the next General Assembly.~~

~~to evaluate the relationship of their individual ministry with the mission of the whole Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). On nomination of the General Assembly Nominating Committee, the General Assembly will elect two committees, each to review the work of one of the agencies of the General Assembly. Each committee will be composed of twelve members: four commissioners from the previous three General Assemblies, four who have served on the board of a General Assembly entity other than the one being reviewed, and four at large. The at large members may include ecumenical partners. The committee will use the Standards for Review of General Assembly Agencies in the Guidelines and Policies of the General Assembly. The committee will report to the Stated Clerk who will present the report, along with any additional recommendations from the Stated Clerk, to the next General Assembly following its election the results of the review and make recommendations based on its findings. COGA to look at this section~~

2. The permanent, advocacy, and advisory committees and commissions of the General Assembly will be reviewed to evaluate their processes to fulfill the mandates given to them by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The General Assembly will review the work of the permanent, advocacy, and advisory committees and commissions based on a six-year schedule. A committee at the General Assembly will be assigned the review. The assembly committee will use the Standards for Review of General Assembly Permanent, Advocacy, and Advisory Committees and Commissions in the Guidelines and Policies of the General Assembly. The assembly committee will report to the General Assembly the results of the review and make recommendations based on its findings.

E. Proposed amendments to this Section ~~IV~~ of the Organization for Mission from related bodies or from within the Office of the General Assembly, shall be submitted to the Committee on the General Assembly (COGA). The COGA shall review these proposed changes and forward those it approves as part of its report to the General Assembly.

~~V~~ IV. The Presbyterian Mission Agency

Mission, God's mission, is at the heart of the work to which God calls us. As the *Book of Order* reminds us:

... In Christ, the Church participates in God's mission for the transformation of creation and humanity by proclaiming to all people the good news of God's love, offering to all people the grace of God at font and table, calling all people to discipleship in Christ. (F.101)

The Presbyterian Mission Agency is the body of the General Assembly in which are lodged the following responsibilities to implement the mission of the General Assembly domestically and internationally²:

- a. to cultivate and promote the spiritual welfare of the whole church;
- b. to provide resources to support equal employment opportunity and affirmative action for members of people of color groups, for women, for various age groups, for persons regardless of marital condition (married, single, widowed, or divorced), and for persons with disabilities;
- c. to develop and propose a Mission Work Plan for the Presbyterian Mission Agency consisting of the mission directions, goals, objectives, and priorities of the Presbyterian Mission Agency; doing so by taking into account the mission work being done by sessions, presbyteries, and synods, and to propose for General Assembly approval a comprehensive Presbyterian Mission Agency Budget and program, including a budget to implement the Mission Work Plan;
- d. to act in those specific matters assigned to the Presbyterian Mission Agency by the General Assembly or the Constitution, acting always according to previously enacted General Assembly policies, reporting fully to each subsequent General Assembly its actions;
- e. to perform such additional responsibilities and duties as may be assigned by the General Assembly.

In service to the Presbyterian Mission Agency as it fulfills its place in this, the Church's calling, the primary purpose of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board is to lead and coordinate the mission program of the General Assembly. In order to steward this function, the Board and the Agency shall understand this mission based on the Constitution and General Assembly actions, an accounting of denominational resources, and the interpretation of our times and national context.

Standing between the General Assembly and the staff of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Board's work is to advise the General Assembly regarding mission priorities, programs and strategies; to lead the Agency in implementing the directives of the General Assembly; and then to report back to the General Assembly with results and additional advice. It is the Board's responsibility to make the vision for mission become reality, helping to manage the practical problems those visions and dreams might face.

The Board's work will move in a flow from General Assembly to General Assembly. It begins by advising the General Assembly on mission priorities, programs, and strategies. At a General Assembly, the Board receives guidance and direction. The Board then leads staff in the agency to fulfill those General Assembly directives. The Board oversees and aligns assets toward the fulfillment of those directives in the context for mission, discerning potential shifts in God's calling. The Board then responds to General Assembly directives, providing advice on revised priorities at the next General Assembly. This process is inclusive, multi-layered and cyclical, continuing from each General Assembly to the next. The Board should engage a broad array of stakeholders to strengthen the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s ability to respond faithfully to the Holy Spirit and align its life with God's mission. Setting strategy and guiding policy in this way necessitates that the Board employ theological, intercultural, corporate, and legal knowledge all enveloped in prayer.

² These responsibilities were part of the *Book of Order* until 2011, when the new Form of Government was approved, and they were moved to the *Organization for Mission*.

In performing this role, the Presbyterian Mission Agency shall report directly to the General Assembly. (See also Rule A.2. of the Standing Rules of the General Assembly.)

A. Policy Responsibility

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board may recommend churchwide policies to the General Assembly. ~~and is responsible for implementing policies established by the General Assembly.~~ The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board shall establish overall procedures for the mission and ministry of the Presbyterian Mission Agency to implement the policies established by the General Assembly.

B. Planning and Priority Setting

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board is responsible for carrying out *mission* planning and priority-setting processes. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board is responsible for instituting ongoing *mission* review processes.

C. General Assembly Budget

It is the responsibility of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board to recommend to the General Assembly a comprehensive ~~Presbyterian General Assembly~~ Mission Agency Budget and program. The ~~Presbyterian Mission Agency~~ Board develops the ~~General Assembly~~ Mission Agency Budget, which includes a budget to implement the Mission Work Plan as well as a budget for all other costs and expenses of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. In preparing these budgets, the ~~Presbyterian Mission Agency~~ Board has the responsibility for ~~developing~~ *approving* its own revenue and expense projections, ~~but shall consult after consulting~~ with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, and the ~~Foundation of the~~ Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) *Foundation* in doing so. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly jointly have responsibility for developing a Per Capita Budget and apportionment *recommendation to the Assembly*.

All income received by the Presbyterian Mission Agency from sales, bequests, gifts, or from any other source, shall be transmitted to the Treasurer of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, as is income received by the Office of the General Assembly pursuant to Section ~~IV~~ *III.B.3.d.* of this Organization for Mission. These funds shall be separately accounted for by the Treasurer. All payments related to the Presbyterian Mission Agency shall be made by the Treasurer only upon the receipt of regular vouchered requests, or other adequate documentation, consistent with the Presbyterian Mission Agency Budget and bearing the authorization of the President/Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency or a person designated by the President/Executive Director. ~~{All restricted and unrestricted funds (principal or income) that support the programs or functions for which the Presbyterian Mission Agency is responsible, are allocated by the Presbyterian Mission Agency pursuant to budget and other procedures established by the General Assembly including those arrangements with respect to funds held by the Board of Pensions and the Presbyterian Foundation.}~~

D. Personnel Responsibilities

Regarding the staff assigned to the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, shall, subject to Section 2.13 of the Bylaws of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, delegate to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board responsibility for the following:

a. The President/Executive Director shall employ and supervise the personnel necessary to do the work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and provide oversight of the personnel of all bodies related to the Presbyterian Mission Agency who shall be accountable to the President/Executive Director unless other provisions have been made. Staff vacancies within the PMA may be filled by the appropriate supervisor.

b. All equal employment opportunity and other uniform policies relating to employment and compensation of the personnel of General Assembly agencies shall apply also to personnel of the PMA and all bodies related thereto. All personnel appointments shall be in accordance with the personnel policies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation and the requirements of Book of Order, G-3.0103.

1. Approval of personnel procedures.

2. ~~Approval, annually, of a staff rationale that determines staff commitments for the year. Any staff deployed regionally must be approved as part of the annual staff rationale.~~

3. ~~Election of the President/Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency subject to confirmation by the General Assembly.~~

2. 4. Annual performance reviews of the President/Executive Director as specified in the *Presbyterian Mission Agency*

Manual of Operations, and in concurrence with the Presbyterian Mission Agency personnel policies.

3. 5. Approval and monitoring of the “Churchwide Plan for Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action.”

4. 6. Approval of compensation guidelines recommended by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, within which salaries may be administered by the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

Members of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board are not eligible for election or selection as staff during the period of their term of service.

E. Reporting

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board is responsible for submitting a report to the General Assembly. The Presbyterian Mission Agency will report regularly to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, keeping the Board fully informed about its work. Matters that involve an exception or a proposed change in Presbyterian Mission Agency procedures, a major shift in program emphasis, or a major budget adjustment, require action by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. Issues of social witness policy, advocacy for people of color and women’s concerns, and those related to Presbyterian theological institutions are reported to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and General Assembly. To support this reporting requirement, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board has the right to full access to all information related to the Presbyterian Mission Agency maintained for it by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, including the accounting and financial records of the Presbyterian Mission Agency; information about donors, funds, and fund restrictions for funds that have been designated to support the programs or functions for which the Presbyterian Mission Agency is responsible; external audit reports with respect to such funds and the Presbyterian Mission Agency itself; and, to the same extent as any other agency of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), access to the corporate minutes of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation.

F. Elected Leadership

1. Organization of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board

The work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency is a direct expression of the planning and mission understanding of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, which is accountable to the General Assembly in this regard. Direction and oversight of the Presbyterian Mission Agency is accomplished by Presbyterian Mission Agency Board members ~~servicing as members of Program and Administrative Committees. The number and makeup of the committees and assignments are adjustable to accomplish the work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency in its mission and to allow flexibility to meet changing emphases in Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) mission. The committees are to be policy, strategy, and planning committees as specified in its Manual of Operations.~~

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board ensures advocacy functions for women and people of color, and advisory functions for social witness policy by providing direct access to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and General Assembly. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board also provides for the development of social witness policy.

The Stated Clerk shall have membership on or relationship to appropriate committees and commissions, and agencies of the General Assembly as it shall determine from time to time. The Stated Clerk shall serve as ex-officio on the of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, the Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, and other agencies (identified in Chapter VII. of the Organization for Mission) including voice but not vote at all meetings while in either open or closed session. Furthermore, the Stated Clerk shall be consulted about any candidate before the candidate’s name is brought to a board for election as the agency or entity executive (chief officer) or interim agency or entity executive (other than for a replacement for the Stated Clerk position).

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board ensures the continuation of a committee that includes representatives of each Presbyterian theological institution, and that will review the effectiveness and stewardship of the schools on behalf of the church, will exercise the governance responsibilities of the church to the schools, and will encourage and enhance cooperation among the church’s theological schools. The committee will be provided direct access to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and the General Assembly.

2. Membership of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board

The membership, terms of office, and officers of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board shall be provided for in the Manual of Operations of the Presbyterian Mission Agency and approved by the General Assembly.

G. Staff Leadership

1. President/Executive Director

Election and Review—The President/Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency is elected by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, subject to confirmation by the General Assembly. The President/Executive Director is accountable to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. Upon election, the President/Executive Director serves with the full authority of the office until confirmed by the next General Assembly following election. Should the General Assembly refuse to confirm any President/Executive Director, the position becomes vacant immediately. Periodic in-depth reviews of the *President/Executive Director* are the responsibility of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. The President/Executive Director is elected for a term of four years and may be reelected for additional terms. Initial four-year terms start on the date that work commences following election. Subsequent four-year terms commence on the day following expiration of the prior term. The President/Executive Director may be dismissed ~~upon the recommendation of~~ by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board in conformity with the relevant Employee Handbook and then-current personnel policies and procedures.

Responsibilities—The responsibilities of the President/Executive Director include:

- 1) Enabling the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board to fulfill its responsibilities to the General Assembly;
- 2) Nurturing relationships between the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the other General Assembly agencies, mid councils, and people of color caucuses (see Covenant of Understanding);
- 3) Directing the work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency;
- 4) Providing leadership to, and administrative oversight of, the staff assigned to the Presbyterian Mission Agency;
- 5) Leading the personnel decision-making processes of the Presbyterian Mission Agency delegated by the Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, including but not limited to implementing policies and procedures related to inclusiveness, affirmative action, and equal employment opportunity;
- 6) Coordinating, with the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, the budget planning process of the Presbyterian Mission Agency;
- 7) Serving a major role in all Presbyterian Mission Agency efforts, including funds development; and
- 8) Serving as primary spokesperson for Presbyterian Mission Agency program and policies.
- 9) When resolution of a particular legal dispute has been delegated by the Board of Directors of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, the President/Executive Director may, after consulting with appropriate persons or bodies, retain legal counsel and institute or participate in legal proceedings in civil and criminal courts.

2. Staff

All staff assigned to the Presbyterian Mission Agency are accountable to the President/Executive Director. Mission personnel have shared accountability both to the overseas partner church to which they are assigned and to the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

The Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, shall delegate to the President/Executive Director, subject to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Budget; subject to Section 2.13 of the Bylaws of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation; in consultation with the Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation; and consistent with the scope of any similar delegation to the Stated Clerk for staff assigned to the Office of the General Assembly, authority: (i) ~~to create~~, to implement, and enforce personnel policies and procedures for staff assigned to the Presbyterian Mission Agency; (ii) ~~to prepare~~, to maintain, and ~~recommend~~ ~~amend~~ ~~amendments~~ to an Employee Handbook for staff assigned to the Presbyterian Mission Agency; (iii) to retain and dismiss staff assigned to the Presbyterian Mission Agency; and (iv) to promote, demote, review, increase or decrease compensation, and otherwise manage staff assigned to the Presbyterian Mission Agency. The President/Executive Director shall, in exercising such authority, make use of any human resources recordkeeping and expertise provided by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation. The Board of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) A Corporation shall coordinate with the Presbyterian Mission Agency to ensure that an adequate number of staff assigned to the Presbyterian Mission Agency have or are delegated appropriate signature authority for relevant contracts and bank accounts related to the work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

3. Board Meetings

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board holds regular meetings (~~no less than one per quarter~~) with the appropriate and invited Presbyterian Mission Agency staff in order to build collaboration, collegiality, coordination, and trust, while also discussing finances, investment results, and any pertinent legal matters.

~~VI V.~~ Presbyterian Mission Agency Relationships

The Presbyterian Mission Agency works in partnership with synods, presbyteries, and sessions to enable the various councils to join together in churchwide expression of the life and mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). This means that, as is the case with all agencies of the church, that the Presbyterian Mission Agency, its officers, directors, *board members* and its staff, must consider in all matters the church as a whole ahead of any individual benefit or detriment to the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

~~The Presbyterian Mission Agency shares responsibility with the Office of the General Assembly for the joint office of Mid Council Relations. In addition,~~ The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly will cooperate in the preparation and presentation of the Per Capita Budget and apportionment and other opportunities for joint endeavors.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency is responsible for carrying out the mission program for the General Assembly. The ministries of the Presbyterian Mission Agency are linked together and with the church on behalf of that part of the mission entrusted by God to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

The principal legal corporation that provides direct support to the Presbyterian Mission Agency is the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, which receives, holds, and transfers property, and facilitates the management of the church's corporate affairs. Its role with respect to the Presbyterian Mission Agency is to work with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Mission Agency in support of its mission as directed by the General Assembly.

Both the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation and the Presbyterian Mission Agency are subordinate to the General Assembly. Thus, the Presbyterian Mission Agency is not subordinate to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, with regard to the mission directives of the General Assembly to the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, is not subordinate to the Presbyterian Mission Agency with respect to the matters for which the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, is authorized by its Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws. As both organizations and their leaders recognize that Jesus Christ is Lord, and that none of them has any authority but in Him, they are charged to work together to realize the mission and great ends of his church in this and all respects. Consistent with this, the Board of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, delegates specific authority, as set forth in its Bylaws, this Organization for Mission, and resolutions of its Board of Directors, to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board or the President/Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency with respect to personnel, contracting, finance, and legal issues so that the Presbyterian Mission Agency may better accomplish the mission goals of the General Assembly. As the disbursing agent under the 1986 Deliverance of the General Assembly that authorized the Plan of Division for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, it also disburses for the Presbyterian Mission Agency the amounts authorized by the General Assembly in the Presbyterian Mission Agency Budget and the Per Capita Budget for mission. It therefore defers to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board's mission decisions to the fullest extent permitted by those budgets, fund restrictions, and applicable law.

Other relationships include the following committees:

1. Advocacy and Advisory Committees

The Executive Director has the responsibility for the advocacy and advisory committees. All three groups have direct access to the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC) shall assist the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to give full expression of the rich diversity of its membership as specified in the *Book of Order*, F-1.0403. The Committee shall be a prophetic voice for involving people of color in the formation of public policy, particularly where race is a factor that negatively impacts the quality of life of people of color. The committee will also monitor the implementation of policies adopted by the church that impact the quality of life of people of color in the church and in the world.

The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns shall assist the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to give full expression of the rich diversity of its membership as specified in the *Book of Order*, F-1.0403. The committee shall monitor and evaluate policies, procedures, programs, and resources regarding the way in which they impact the status and position of women in the church and the world; and shall advocate for full inclusiveness and equity in all areas of the life and work of the church in society as a whole.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, in consultation with the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, is responsible for the process of developing and recommending social witness policy to the General Assembly. The term “social witness policy” refers to the positions adopted by the General Assembly to express its stance on and guide response to issues in the public order, including their relation to the church’s own life and mission. These positions may take the form of policy statements, resolutions, study papers, or social involvement reports, as defined in the Manual of the General Assembly, p. 65, Forming Social Policy, 2.a.

2. Committee on Theological Education

The Committee on Theological Education has direct access to the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, and their work is coordinated through the Theology, Formation, and Evangelism Ministry with staff accountability to the director of the Theology, Formation, and Evangelism Ministry. The purpose of the Committee on Theological Education is to provide an effective linkage between the General Assembly and the theological seminaries of the PC(USA) by: providing a forum through which the church-at-large can express its concerns to the seminaries; interpreting the mission of the denomination’s theological seminaries to the whole church; overseeing the interpretation and administration of the Theological Education Fund (1% Plan); serving as a means for cooperation among the church’s theological seminaries; implementing suggestions made by the Special Committee to Study Theological Institutions as approved by the 205th General Assembly (1993); serving as an agency of the denomination for relating to theological seminaries other than those of the PC(USA); and working in partnership with mid councils and agencies of the General Assembly to provide for leadership in local congregations, the denomination, and the world.

~~VII~~ VI. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation is ~~a corporate entity~~ *principal corporation* of the General Assembly. It holds funds and title to property in accordance with the 1986 Deliverance of the General Assembly, its Articles of Incorporation, and its Bylaws. Among other things, it provides accounting, reporting, and financial services for the General Assembly, *the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Office of the General Assembly and Administrative Services Group, and its entities*, and employs the staff assigned to the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency. It is funded, subject to overall budget approval by the General Assembly, ~~from unrestricted funds held by it; from restricted funds designated to it; from the portion of the various budgets of the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly needed for employees, facilities, and services provided by it; from management fees; and from other fees with respect to its activities and services.~~ Pending revision of the budgeting process in Appendix A to reflect the new governance structure of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, in 2018, its expenditures for the fiscal years 2018 through 2020 are limited to no more than the amount expended by the corporation in fiscal years 2016 through 2018.

No agency of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), unless otherwise directed by the General Assembly, is obligated to purchase or use any facilities or services provided by or through the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, other than those for which they have contracted or, with respect to the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency for a transition period through 2022~~4~~, those that as of December 31, 2017, had been provided to such agencies, including but not limited to office space and facilities services. ~~The Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, shall work together and with the other agencies and entities it serves. of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to help determine what facilities and services the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, may best offer or cease to offer to the them. Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Office of General Assembly, and other agencies of the church in the future.~~

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation’s role is to work with the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency in support of the ecclesial and missional purposes as directed by the General Assembly. Like all General Assembly agencies, the Office of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation are subordinate to the General Assembly. Neither the Office of the General Assembly, nor the Presbyterian Mission Agency is subordinate to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation with regard to the ecclesial and/or mission directives of the General Assembly to them, and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation is not subordinate to the Office of the General Assembly or the Presbyterian Mission Agency except as defined in the 1986 Deliverance in Section 2(d) as revised. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation’s functions as relate to Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation are defined in the 1986 Deliverance in Section 3(d) including, but not limited to, Section 3.(d)(4).

The Stated Clerk shall have membership on or relationship to appropriate committees and commissions, and agencies of the General Assembly as it shall determine from time to time. The Stated Clerk shall serve as ex-officio on the of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, the Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, and other agencies (identified in Chapter VII. of the Organization for Mission) including voice but not vote at all meetings while in either open or closed session. Furthermore, the Stated Clerk shall be consulted about any candidate before the candidate’s name is brought to a board for election as the agency or entity executive (chief officer) or interim agency or entity executive (other than for a replacement for the Stated Clerk position).

The officers of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, their terms, and their election are defined in its Bylaws. The Treasurer of the corporation shall commission the preparation of an audit report or reports by an independent public accountant of the financial position and operations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, and, to the extent not otherwise separately commissioned and prepared, the financial position and operations of the General Assembly and its other entities.

VIII VII. Other General Assembly Corporations

A. Board of Pensions

The Board of Pensions is the legally responsible corporate body established under a civil charter for the purpose of administering the pension and benefits program of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). It is required by law to administer these programs for the sole and exclusive benefit of its participants and members.

The relationship between the Board of Pensions and the Presbyterian Mission Agency of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is set forth in an official “Memorandum of Understanding” to provide the necessary and desirable cooperation between these bodies, while respecting and reflecting the special needs of the Board of Pensions as it carries out its ministry to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) within an ecclesiastical structure.

The Stated Clerk shall have membership on or relationship to appropriate committees and commissions, and agencies of the General Assembly as it shall determine from time to time. The Stated Clerk shall serve as ex-officio on the of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, the Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, and other agencies (identified in Chapter VII. of the Organization for Mission) including voice but not vote at all meetings while in either open or closed session. Furthermore, the Stated Clerk shall be consulted about any candidate before the candidate’s name is brought to a board for election as the agency or entity executive (chief officer) or interim agency or entity executive (other than for a replacement for the Stated Clerk position).

In view of the close relationship between compensation, benefits, pensions, and financial assistance, there is need for a close continuing relationship between the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Board of Pensions. Consistent with the “Memorandum of Understanding” between the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Board of Pensions, the chairperson of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (or designee) serves as a corresponding member of the Board of Pensions, ~~while the chairperson of the Board of Pensions or designee serves as corresponding member of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.~~ The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board proposes to the General Assembly Nominating Committee one of its members to be elected to the Board of Pensions. This person also represents the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board in regard to churchwide personnel and compensation policies. *The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly and the President of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation has privilege of the floor at the meetings of the Board of Pensions without vote. At the staff level, the Board of Pensions’ president has the privilege of the floor at the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board meetings but without vote. and is included as part of the Expanded Staff Leadership Team through the Office of the Executive Director.* The Board of Pensions reports directly *and is accountable* to the General Assembly.

B. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation (the Foundation) is a corporate entity that acts as a “fiduciary” for the General Assembly, providing investment services, holding title on behalf of the church to the investment assets of the church, providing a deferred giving and wills emphasis program, and otherwise assuring that there is strict adherence to the wishes and restrictions of donors and others who have entrusted funds to its care. The Foundation holds title to property in accordance with the 1986 Deliverance. In addition to its work on behalf of the General Assembly, the Foundation offers similar services to churches and church organizations as well as to individuals who wish to use such programs as an expression of their Christian faith and stewardship. The board of the Foundation is elected by the General Assembly through the normal nominating processes. It reports to the General Assembly with a definitive copy to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, which may comment on the report. The Foundation provides information about its work to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, *the Committee on the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation* on a regular basis. The total budget of the Foundation is made available for review by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, *the Committee on the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation.* The Foundation reports directly *and is accountable* to the General Assembly.

In view of the close relationship between stewardship, mission funding, and deferred giving, there is need for a close continuing relationship between the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Foundation. A future appendix will define such a relationship. The joint report of the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Foundation, as reported to the 208th General Assembly (1996), provides agreements and understandings regarding restricted funds. The chairperson of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (or designee) sits with the trustees of the Foundation with voice and without vote, for purposes of coordination. ~~This person also represents the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board in regard to churchwide personnel and compensation policies.~~ *The President of the Foundation serves on the* ~~The board of the Foundation appoints one member to serve on the~~ Presbyterian Mission Agency Board as a corresponding member.

The Stated Clerk shall have membership on or relationship to appropriate committees and commissions, and agencies of the General Assembly as it shall determine from time to time. The Stated Clerk shall serve as ex-officio on the of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, the Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, and other agencies (identified in Chapter VII. of the Organization for Mission) including voice but not vote at all meetings while in either open or closed session. Furthermore, the Stated Clerk shall be consulted about any candidate before the candidate's name is brought to a board for election as the agency or entity executive (chief officer) or interim agency or entity executive (other than for a replacement for the Stated Clerk position).

At the staff level ~~and the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly~~ the President/Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency ~~are is a~~ trustees of the Foundation³; the Foundation's president has the privilege of the floor at Presbyterian Mission Agency Board meetings, but without vote. In addition, the Foundation's president is included as part of the Expanded Staff Leadership Team through the Office of the Executive Director. *The President of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation has privilege of the floor at the meetings of the Board of Pensions without vote.*

C. Presbyterian Publishing Corporation

The Presbyterian Publishing Corporation is a legally independent, self-supporting corporation dedicated to the mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). It is responsible for publishing books and educational materials for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and for a broad ecumenical audience around the world. The publishing program strives to extend the mission of the church to the widest possible audience, representing a wide range of religious, social, and cultural points of view.

In view of the dynamic interrelationship between the printed word and the mission of our church, there is need for a close continuing relationship between the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation. The corporation is governed by its board of directors, *which includes the corporation's President and Publisher, the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly and the President/Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency as ex-officio members without vote.*⁴ *The President of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation has privilege of the floor at the meetings of the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation without vote. one of whom is the corporation's president and publisher, and one of whom is the Executive Director.* The remaining directors are nominated by the General Assembly Nominating Committee and elected by the General Assembly for four-year terms and shall be eligible for reelection to one additional term. No member may serve more than two terms, full or partial. The board of directors elects officers of the corporation in accordance with its corporate bylaws.

The Stated Clerk shall have membership on or relationship to appropriate committees and commissions, and agencies of the General Assembly as it shall determine from time to time. The Stated Clerk shall serve as ex-officio on the of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, the Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, and other agencies (identified in Chapter VII. of the Organization for Mission) including voice but not vote at all meetings while in either open or closed session. Furthermore, the Stated Clerk shall be consulted about any candidate before the candidate's name is brought to a board for election as the agency or entity executive (chief officer) or interim agency or entity executive (other than for a replacement for the Stated Clerk position).

The chairperson ~~(or designee)~~ of the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation is a corresponding member of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board with voice and without vote. At the staff level, the president and publisher of the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation has the privilege of the floor at the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board meetings but without vote, ~~and is included as part of the Expanded Staff Leadership Team through the Office of the Executive Director.~~ The Presbyterian Publishing Corporation reports directly *and is accountable* to the General Assembly.

D. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is a great commission community. It tells and retells the story of salvation in Jesus Christ to successive generations. It does so in buildings that are shaped to meet the needs of worshipping, witnessing, serving congregations. Generating capital to build and rebuild church buildings is the work of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc., (the Program) is incorporated in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The Program offers unsecured, interest bearing investments in various states, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia. In general, any individual and any organization related to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) may invest. The funds generated by investments become mortgage loans that are used by congregations, mid councils, and related entities for building church buildings and rebuilding existing facilities.

³ 1986 Deliverance, Section 3.(b)(2)

⁴ 2006 Deliverance, Section 2.(e)

Close relationships of cooperation exist among the Program, Foundation, and Presbyterian Mission Agency. Both the Foundation and Presbyterian Mission Agency have significant investments commitments with the Program.

The Board of Directors consist of fifteen (15) members. All members are elected by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, subject to confirmation by the General Assembly. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board elects two members from among its membership. The General Assembly Nominating Committee nominates six at-large members, one member from among the synods, and one member from among the presbyteries. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation nominates two members and the Corporation's Personnel/Nominating Committee nominates three at-large members.⁵ *The President of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation has privilege of the floor at the meetings of the Program without vote.* The Program reports to the General Assembly through the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board⁶ and is accountable to the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board⁷

The Stated Clerk shall have membership on or relationship to appropriate committees and commissions, and agencies of the General Assembly as it shall determine from time to time. The Stated Clerk shall serve as ex-officio on the of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, the Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, and other agencies (identified in Chapter VII. of the Organization for Mission) including voice but not vote at all meetings while in either open or closed session. Furthermore, the Stated Clerk shall be consulted about any candidate before the candidate's name is brought to a board for election as the agency or entity executive (chief officer) or interim agency or entity executive (other than for a replacement for the Stated Clerk position).

~~The Chair of the Program's Board of Directors and its President and Chief Executive Officer have privilege of the floor without vote at Presbyterian Mission Agency Board meetings. They are corresponding members of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.~~ In addition, the President participates in the ~~Expanded Staff Leadership Team plus~~ Synod Executives Forum.

Endnote

~~1. See Appendix A of this document for additional procedures related to budgets and funding.~~

~~IX~~**VIII. Corporations Related to the General Assembly** Presbyterian Women in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc.

Presbyterian Women in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc. (PW), is organized and operated to be an inclusive, caring community of women, forgiven and freed by God in Jesus Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit, that strengthens the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (the Church) and witnesses to the promise of God's kingdom by nurturing faith through prayer and Bible study, supporting the mission of the Church worldwide, and working for justice and peace. Members of Presbyterian Women are first and foremost members of the Church. The organization is structured at the congregation, presbytery, synod, and national levels in order to support the Church at each level.

PW is an integrated auxiliary of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). PW is not subordinate to the General Assembly. PW's Certificate of Incorporation includes a Statement of Faith which provides that PW holds to the doctrines and principles of the Reformed tradition as expressed in the Church's Constitution. PW is related to the Presbyterian Mission Agency through an agreement that is reviewed and approved by the General Assembly every four years.

~~X~~**IX. Amendments**

~~Proposed amendments to the Organization for Mission that are submitted by overture shall be submitted to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.~~

~~Except as provided in Section IV.E., proposed Proposed amendments to the Organization for Mission from General Assembly corporations or entities related bodies or from the Presbyterian Mission Agency shall be submitted to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation Board. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall review these proposed changes and forward those it approves as part of its report to the General Assembly. All changes to Section VI. or to provisions concerning the relationship between the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, and any agency or entity shall also be submitted to the Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, for review and approval, amendment, or rejection before any such changes are forwarded to the General Assembly.~~

⁵ 1995 Deliverance, Section 2.(b)

⁶ 1995 Deliverance, Section 2.(g)

⁷ 1995 Deliverance, Section 2.(a)

APPENDIX A
Financial Issues
[Approved by the 218th General Assembly (2008)]
OUTLINE OF APPENDIX A

Outline of Appendix A

Glossary of Terms Related to Financial Issues

Values Statement

Churchwide Mission Support

- a. Forms of Giving in Churchwide Mission Support
- b. Roles and Responsibilities of Mid Councils
- c. Special Offerings and Other Specific Appeals
- d. Validation of Mission
- e. Accounting Definitions and Standards: Designated, Restricted, and Unrestricted
- f. Collection, Reporting, and Audits

General Assembly Budget Development

- A. ~~A. Mission~~ Budget Cycle
- B. ~~B. Budget~~ Scope
- C. ~~C. The General Assembly Per Capita~~ Budget
- D. ~~BD. Basic Budget~~ ~~Mission Direction~~ Design
- E. ~~E. The Administrative Services Group~~ Budget
- F. ~~CF. The General Assembly Proposed~~ Budget
- ~~G. D. The Detailed~~ Budget
- ~~H. E. Budget~~ Monitoring
- ~~I. G. Roles and Responsibilities in~~ Developing Budgets

~~Shared Services~~ *Administrative Services*

GLOSSARY OF TERMS RELATED TO FINANCIAL ISSUES

Adopted Budget—The formally approved budget of a session, presbytery, synod, or General Assembly.

Consultations—Ordinarily, face-to-face experiences between duly selected representatives of mid councils to exchange information, perspectives, opinions, and advice regarding mission planning, funding, and personnel staffing for the health of the whole church.

Contributor—An individual, agency, or council that transfers control of a gift to another tax-exempt agency or council. See Donor.

Designations—Budget categories as described or determined by a council. Only mid councils may make designations. See Restricted Giving.

Division of Committed Dollars—Agreements among mid councils giving concrete expression to the sharing of Mission Support Commitments for the church’s mission.

Donor—An individual or other taxable entity (e.g., an estate or trust) making a gift for charitable purposes eligible for favorable tax treatment. When mid councils are nontaxable entities, they cannot be donors. See Contributor.

Emergency Appeals—Properly authorized and approved calls for an immediate response to emergency needs through an Emergency Relief Alert.

Equalization—The use of unrestricted funds to fulfill the commitments and/or agreements that have been made by a council.

Funding for General Mission—Gifts and contributions received with no restrictions for the overall support of the adopted budgets of mid councils.

Funding for Specific Mission—A form of restricted giving for designated budget categories or projects within adopted budgets.

Ministry Areas—The primary areas of work within the Presbyterian Mission Agency staff structure.

Mission—For the purposes of Appendix A, ‘mission’ is understood in its broadest sense: proclaiming the Gospel in word and deed, locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally.

Mission Support Commitment—A specific dollar figure or a percentage of total dollars adopted by a council to be given in a specified year to support the mission and ministry of other councils.

Mission Support Consultation—A face-to-face event among duly selected representatives of mid councils to (1) establish shared ownership of the church’s total mission, (2) advocate recommendations of Mission Support Goals, and (3) agree upon means for the division of committed mission dollars.

Mission Support Goals—Specific dollar figures for mission support projected as goals for some subsequent year or years.

Other Specific Appeals—Requests for support of specific validated mission projects or programs, which may not be included in adopted budgets.

Per Capita Apportionment—A means for all members to share in the costs of coordinating and evaluating mission, and performing the ecclesiastical, legislative, and judicial functions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Projects Beyond the Budget—Approved projects not included in the adopted budgets.

Restricted Giving—Gifts that are restricted by a contributor or donor for use in support of a validated project, budget category, or appeal. The processing of restricted gifts will comply with the standards established by the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB).

Special Offerings—Planned, organized, and approved supplemental offerings for specified causes that may or may not be included in approved budgets.

Taxable Entity—For the purposes of Appendix A, individuals, partnerships, estates and trusts, or corporations who may be taxpayers under the federal income tax law.

Unrestricted Giving—Unrestricted gifts received for the overall support of the adopted budget of a presbytery, a synod, or the General Assembly.

Validated Mission—Any project or program within the bounds of and approved by formal action of a session, presbytery, synod, or the General Assembly, whether or not it is funded from the adopted budget of the council.

VALUES STATEMENT

The funding of the mission and ministry of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) rests on the following principles:

Faithfulness to Jesus Christ—because God loves the world and Christ gave his life, we are called, as individuals and groups, to respond with our lives and resources.

Flexibility—because we believe that the Holy Spirit informs the missional instincts of all God’s people honoring the promises of the past and preparing the promise of the future, we will accommodate regional differences, historical practices, and changing realities.

Respect—because we seek to have the same mind in us that was in Christ Jesus, who looked not to his own interests but to the interest of others (Phil. 2:4–5), we will acknowledge the passion of donors through accountable systems and transparently open, informed and inclusive decision-making, acknowledging the many views of mission designed and enacted in every part of the church. We recognize the tension that exists between respecting the passions of donors and encouraging support of our connectional nature, but confess that “the earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it” (Ps. 24:1–2).

Communication—because we are servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God (1 Cor. 4:1); we will commit ourselves to frequent interaction with mid councils and individuals, for the purpose of mutual clarification and unity of experience and hope across diverse boundaries.

Therefore, a design for funding Christ’s work throughout the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) will be consistent with the following core values:

1. A design for funding Christ’s work will recognize stewardship as integral to Christian discipleship:

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- promoting the biblical concept of tithing,
 - encouraging stewardship education that is understood as the faithful response of discipleship to God's gifts in all of life,
 - requiring the development of stewardship education materials that are creative, attractive, clear, and affordable.
2. A design for funding Christ's work will appeal to the passions and values of members, pastors, mid councils, and benefactors:
- communicating to the head and heart of the people of God
 - engaging the donor in the mission of the church
 - recognizing that everyone is a beneficiary of God's grace, and everyone benefits from joyful stewardship.
3. A design for funding Christ's work will be transparent and accountable:
- honoring donor intent,
 - offering easily understood opportunities for giving,
 - meeting clear standards of accountability for pastors, sessions, and potential donors.
4. A design for funding Christ's work will utilize our connectionalism, recognize our interdependence, and demonstrate our partnership in mission:
- emphasizing the value of interpersonal relationships,
 - encouraging the more inclusive council to facilitate the mission of its constituent members,
 - encouraging the less inclusive council to participate in the mission of the church beyond its bounds,
 - encouraging mutual investment of time and resources among mid councils and constituent members recognizing that Presbyterians are the primary base of support for Presbyterian missions, and affirming the importance and priority of funding Presbyterian validated mission.
5. A design for funding Christ's work will emphasize information sharing between mid councils leading to a dynamic mission and vision:
- placing mid councils in structural and interactive relationships,
 - valuing the wisdom of other mid councils,
 - recognizing the need for consultation prior to engaging in ministries beyond one's bounds.
6. A design for funding Christ's work will encourage two-way communications:
- welcoming and encouraging a flow of information and feedback,
 - recognizing that information sharing benefits the whole church,
 - encouraging face-to-face communication when possible.
7. A design for funding Christ's work will honor historic relationships:
- recognizing that previous funding systems had value and may continue to inform the development of new funding systems,
 - requiring careful investigation of current funding partnerships before altering or eliminating those partnerships.

CHURCHWIDE MISSION SUPPORT

A. Forms of Giving in Churchwide Mission Support

Churchwide Mission Support is the funding system used by all mid councils to plan and implement the mission of the whole church. Churchwide Mission Support has three overall forms of giving.

1. Basic Mission Support—There are two components of mission support:

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- a. Funding for General Mission—gifts, with no restrictions, for the overall support of the adopted budgets of a session, presbytery, synod, or the General Assembly.
 - b. Funding for Specific Mission—gifts, with restrictions, for use within the adopted budgets of a session, presbytery, synod, or the General Assembly.
2. Churchwide Special Offerings—gifts, with restrictions, for General Assembly planned, organized, and approved offerings for specified purposes that may be included in approved budgets.
 3. Other Specific Appeals—gifts, with restrictions, for specific use in support of validated mission that ordinarily are not included in the budget of a session, presbytery, synod, or the General Assembly. Such appeals may be ongoing, time-limited, or responsive to emergency needs.

There are additional forms of giving that are distinct from Churchwide Mission Support. These include giving through Presbyterian Women, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation, Validated Mission Support Groups, and other organizations. Some of these gifts may be applied to adopted budgets. These gifts are and may be increasingly important to support the work of the church.

B. Roles and Responsibilities of Councils

To encourage openness and accountability in all financial matters, the following roles and responsibilities will be observed.

1. Roles Held in Common by All Councils

- a. Select representatives who will participate in inter-council consultations on mission support goals and the division of Mission Support Commitments.
- b. Share mission priorities, budget projections, funding needs, and mission support goals.
- c. Provide information for, support of, and participation in an annual season of interpretation
- d. Consider other councils' mission priorities and funding needs.
- e. Adopt mission support commitments and honor these commitments in budgets for which the council is directly responsible.
- f. When changes in mission support commitment are contemplated, promptly communicate with other affected councils.
- g. Thank leaders and donors.
- h. Hold receiving sites accountable to accepted churchwide standards.
- i. Provide full financial reports annually to other councils and congregations on the receipt and expenditure of funds and of a council's assets, and liabilities.
- j. Collect and transmit mission support from donors, congregations, and organizations within 60 calendar days from the date of receipt.
- k. Provide General Assembly, and as appropriate, synods and constituent presbyteries, a regular accounting of church-by-church giving and any relevant data requested by a council, while maintaining the right to privacy by individual donors.

2. Role of the General Assembly

- a. Assist the development of mission support goals at every council level.
- b. Adopt a mission budget and a per capita budget.
- c. Annually provide full financial reports and program assessments to sessions, presbyteries, and synods.

d. Disseminate industry standards in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP), and in compliance with applicable accounting pronouncements and regulations specific to the not-for-profit industry as best practices for council treasurers and financial officers.

e. Approve the purposes and beneficiaries of the four churchwide special offerings, upon recommendation of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

C. Special Offerings and Other Specific Appeals

1. Churchwide Special Offerings

a. Criteria for Receiving Special Offerings Funds

The Special Offerings provide important bonds for the connectional church, and are a critical resource for the long-term mission of the whole church. The following criteria outline ways of discerning whether a particular ministry is eligible for funding by one of these special offerings.

(1) Special Offerings ministries will provide valuable mission interpretation opportunities within the overall funds development and communications strategy of the whole church.

(2) Special Offerings ministries will enable the church to meet historical and ongoing needs in relationship to the total mission priorities of the church, always proclaiming the name of Jesus.

(3) Special Offerings ministries will have potential for churchwide donor support.

(4) Special Offerings ministries will specify the needs to be met, provide plans for ministry implementation, set measurable goals, and demonstrate impact, effectiveness, and accountability to the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

b. Operating Guidelines for Special Offerings

The following principles and practices will guide the churchwide special offerings of the PC(USA):

(1) Review

(a) On an annual basis, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Executive Director, or designee, will review Special Offerings ministries' impact, effectiveness, and accountability against stated goals. The review will also include the appropriateness of Special Offerings ministries' reserves. Funds development expense and staffing will also be reviewed annually with respect to goals, effectiveness, and strategies. All review findings will be forwarded to the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

(b) On a four-year cycle, the Presbyterian Mission Agency will provide a task force for the review and evaluation of the Special Offerings and the recipient ministries and the consideration of new Special Offerings purposes in light of established criteria, for recommendation to the General Assembly.

(2) When allocating funds, the Presbyterian Mission Agency will align Special Offerings ministries with its strategic vision and mission.

(3) Each Presbyterian Mission Agency Special Offerings ministry will maintain financial reserves of not more than two years of that ministry's annual budget. Understanding the particularity of Presbyterian disaster response ministries, with commitment to long-term recovery, it is understood that disaster response funds are exempt from this requirement, provided that the Presbyterian Mission Agency has approved and annually reviews a plan for disbursement.

(4) Churchwide Special Offerings promotions will occur in the Presbyterian Mission Agency Funds Development ministry area rather than within programmatic entities.

(5) Costs of promoting and receiving each churchwide Special Offerings will be paid from receipts of the offering. After deducting each offering's costs from total receipts, restricted and unrestricted, of that offering, all receipts will then be considered permanently restricted to the purpose of the Offering. Each Offering's costs will be determined by the Presbyterian Mission Agency through its regular budget process.

(6) Start-up costs for new or significantly revised Special Offerings will be expensed as incurred.

(7) Promotion materials for a Special Offerings will relate to the liturgical season in which the Offering is received.

(8) Any change in the pattern of distribution of a churchwide Special Offerings will allow for an eighteen-month time period before becoming effective to allow adequate time for development and distribution of interpretive and promotional materials.

(9) There will be no more than four churchwide Special Offerings in any given calendar year. The General Assembly will identify times for the promotion and receipt of Offerings.

(10) The ministries receiving churchwide Special Offerings funds will prepare an annual report concerning the receipt and distribution of those Special Offerings funds for review by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. This report will be made available to churches and other councils.

(11) All ministries receiving funds from churchwide Special Offerings will work with Communications staff and Funds Development staff to identify and develop networks of interpreters throughout the church.

(12) All churchwide Special Offerings will develop interpretive materials that are well-grounded in Reformed theology and appropriate to the Offering's recommended liturgical season.

(13) To advance mission and acknowledge generosity, congregations are asked to submit Special Offerings receipts directly to the Presbyterian Mission Agency and presbytery as designated by each Offering. The Presbyterian Mission Agency will record and notify presbyteries of congregational donations and thank congregations in a timely manner.

2. Other Specific Appeals

a. Other specific appeals include the Theological Education Fund, special campaigns or gifts (national, regional, or local), Emergency Relief Alerts (national, regional, or local), and additional giving opportunities.

(1) The Theological Education Fund is a unique type of an annual specific appeal to sessions through the 1% Plan as approved by the 198th General Assembly (1986).

(2) Special time-limited campaigns approved by one or more councils are essential for meeting capital needs and achieving other mission purposes. These require council approval and may include needs across council lines with advance concurrence of other appropriate councils. In the case of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board may approve time-limited campaigns between sessions of the General Assembly.

(3) Emergency Relief Alerts enable persons to respond compassionately to emergency needs, such as natural disasters of large proportion or other crises. The Presbyterian Mission Agency will authorize a process for issuing national Emergency Relief Alerts, providing timely information indicating how church funds are being used to meet the emergency and how individuals and sessions may contribute additional funds to meet such needs. There may be occasions when sessions, presbyteries, or synods will issue Emergency Relief Alerts in response to more localized emergencies.

(4) Additional giving opportunities provide a way for contributors or donors to support mission not funded by adopted budgets.

(a) A validation process that maintains the integrity of the church's mission will be used to identify such opportunities. Whenever possible, such opportunities will be promoted jointly by mid councils beyond the session through a program of additional giving opportunities.

(b) Contributors or donors desiring to support validated mission beyond established budgets may do so through additional giving opportunities up to whatever limits have been set by a more inclusive council. Concurrence in the purpose of the gift by the receiving council or agency is required.

(c) An effective additional giving program depends on significant sharing of information about adopted budgets and additional giving opportunities.

b. All campaigns for other specific appeals shall identify in advance the anticipated administrative costs that may be charged to receipts. A council that designates an other specific appeal may apply a charge, not to exceed an agreed upon percentage, against other specific appeals receipts to cover actual costs of promoting, receiving, and disbursing funds. Contributors and donors will be informed of the actual percentage. The Presbyterian Mission Agency shall determine the cost of communicating national Emergency Relief Alerts and may authorize a charge against receipts with this charge being reported for each specific appeal.

c. Acknowledgment of receipt of gifts to all validated projects or agencies will be made to the contributor or donor by the receiving council or validating agency in a timely manner, including concurrence in the purpose of the gift (see further at Appendix A, Churchwide Mission Support, Item E.2.).

d. All recipients of validated mission funds are responsible for reporting all gifts received directly from Presbyterian contributors or donors to the validating council.

D. Validation of Mission

1. Validated mission is any project or program within the bounds of and approved by formal action of a session, presbytery, synod, or General Assembly that is consistent with the responsibilities assigned by the Form of Government, whether or not it is funded from the adopted budget of the council. Validated mission should cohere with the great ends of the Church (Book of Order, F-1.0304) and is determined in accord with the following provisions of the Book of Order:

- a. F-1.00 The Mission of the Church
- b. G-3.0106 Administration of Mission
- c. G-3.0113 Finances
- d. G-3.0201 Composition and Responsibilities (Sessions)
- e. G-3.0301 Presbytery Responsibilities
- f. G-3.0401 Synod Responsibilities
- g. G-3.0501 General Assembly Responsibilities.

2. Each and all councils serve the mission of the whole church and thereby appropriately validate mission. Such validated mission may be commended to others but does not require their concurrence or support.

3. Validated mission may be within or beyond council budgets.

a. Validated Within Budget—projects or programs included in the adopted budget of a session, presbytery, synod, or the General Assembly, including projects that will be funded with Funding for General Mission and Funding for Specific Mission.

b. Validated Beyond Budget—projects or programs not included in adopted budgets, but validated by action of a session, presbytery, synod, or the General Assembly. The validating council may specify dollar and/or time limitations.

E. Accounting Definitions and Standards: Designated, Restricted, and Unrestricted Giving

1. For accounting purposes, the following definitions of designators, contributors, and donors are observed.

a. Designations may be made only by councils. A designator has received funds from a contributor or donor and applies such funds to designated categories or items. A designator must be a council.

b. Contributors can be donors, councils, or other sources of income. Contributors may make unrestricted or restricted gifts.

c. The term donor applies to persons or entities whose gifts are eligible for a tax deduction. Donors may make restricted gifts consistent with IRS regulations and acceptable to the receiving entity. Restrictions must be agreed to prior to the completion of the gift.

2. For accounting purposes, unrestricted giving and restricted giving are defined as follows:

Restricted giving refers to gifts with restrictions by a contributor or donor for use in support of a particular project, budget category, or appeal. The processing of restricted gifts will comply with the standards established by the Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and Internal Revenue Service regulations. Unrestricted giving refers to gifts made without restriction and subject to the use and discretion of the receiving council.

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a. Unrestricted giving remains foundational in the System of Giving. Through unrestricted giving, individuals and councils share in support of the whole mission and ministry in which the church engages.

b. Restricted giving, such as churchwide special offerings and other specific appeals, is a valuable and important method of adding to unrestricted giving. Contributors wishing to use restricted giving are encouraged first to choose projects or categories within adopted budgets. Special offerings and other specific appeals are always restricted by their stated purpose.

(1) Each council must handle funds according to the donor's intention in giving the gift. If the intent cannot be honored, the gift must be returned.

(2) Clarity in this regard may on occasion require conversation and/or negotiation with donors even beyond the council where the gift is first received.

c. Restrictions on the use of gifts may come from a donor or a council making the gift but always require concurrence by the council or validated not-for-profit agency receiving the gift.

(1) A donor must relinquish control of a gift or it does not qualify for tax preference treatment and the receiving organization jeopardizes its tax-exempt status.

(2) When restricted gifts are accepted, they will always be used for the restricted purpose within designations approved by the council.

The obligations of designators are to:

a. honor restrictions that have been accepted or to consider permitting additional support of a project beyond its approved budget;

b. ensure conformity with all applicable civil law;

c. report back to all donors and contributors;

d. contact all donors or contributors if restricted giving cannot be used according to its restrictions—if restrictions cannot be met and the donors or contributors do not agree to the use of funds for other purposes, the gifts are to be returned to the donor.

4. Budgeting and Equalization

a. Funding of approved budgets is accomplished as follows:

(1) First, restricted funds are applied to the appropriate budget items.

(2) Then, unrestricted funds are applied toward fulfillment of all budget items.

(3) This use of unrestricted funds provides for equalization within a council's budget. This process supports the orderly planning and budgeting decisions of councils while honoring appropriate restrictions and designations.

b. Sessions are encouraged to follow the division of mission support commitments adopted by their presbyteries. If a session does not follow these division agreements, a presbytery may seek to fulfill agreements through use of unrestricted funds—provided that such a policy is communicated to its sessions. This use of unrestricted funds provides for equalization among councils. Churchwide special offerings and other specific appeals shall not be used to fulfill mission support commitments and are not subject to equalization.

F. Collection, Reporting, and Audits

1. Collection and Transmittal of Funds

a. The General Assembly will maintain financial records in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP), and in compliance with all applicable accounting pronouncements and regulations specific to the not-for-profit industry. Software and systems will be appropriate to support compliance with the requirements stated above.

b. The General Assembly will observe the following minimum standards for its operations. It is expected that presbyteries and synods will also adopt and adhere to these same standards:

- (1) Provide a detailed receipt to a contributor or congregation for all money received.
- (2) Close monthly.
- (3) Utilize the Federal Reserve system to expedite the transfer of funds whenever and wherever possible.
- (4) Use a standardized, detailed transmittal format for transmitting data and funds electronically between presbyteries, synods, and the General Assembly.
- (5) Establish and follow cash management policies and procedures that are designed to maximize cash management earnings.”

2. Reporting

The General Assembly will provide financial information quarterly for receipt of funds from all sources, and this information will be posted to the PC(USA) Web site on the financial page.

a. Each presbytery and synod will be responsible for obtaining with remittances the detailed information required for disbursement.

b. Each presbytery and synod will report all giving on an approved information transmittal form to the General Assembly site no later than sixty days after receipt of funds.

c. The General Assembly will furnish to every presbytery and synod an annual information report on a church-by-church basis. This annual report will provide information for churches within a synod or presbytery bounds on all funds received by it for presbytery, synod, and General Assembly.

d. The General Assembly will furnish, in cooperation with the presbyteries, at least quarterly and not more often than monthly, an information report to every presbytery showing the agreed upon distribution of dollars (including the presbytery's mission support commitments) between the presbytery, synod, and the General Assembly as compared to the actual funds received. Should discrepancies exist, the General Assembly site will work with the reporting site to clarify and to effect the necessary changes and/or corrections.

3. Internal Audit

The Presbyterian Mission Agency will establish an internal audit function involving a broad variety of audit services. Included among these are:

a. reviewing the reliability and integrity of financial information and how that information is identified, measured, classified, and reported;

b. reviewing the effectiveness and efficiency of particular financial management functions;

c. reviewing established internal control systems for efficiency and compliance;

d. reviewing compliance with internal policies and procedures;

e. reviewing financial statements contained in the annual report with management and the independent auditors to determine that the independent auditors are satisfied with the disclosure and content of the financial statements;

f. reviewing and recommending to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Audit Committee, the independent auditors to be selected to audit the financial statements of the corporation; and

g. reporting directly to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Audit Committee.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY BUDGET DEVELOPMENT

A. ~~Mission~~ Budget Cycle

The ~~Mission~~ General Assembly Budget will be developed in budget cycles. Each budget cycle will consist of two consecutive calendar years, where the first year is the year following a biennial General Assembly meeting (e.g., 2008 General Assembly, 2009/2010 budget cycle) and the second year is the year of the next General Assembly. A separate budget will be developed for each year within the cycle.

B. Budget Scope

The General Assembly Budget consists of three interlinked budgets, developed individually and presented to the General Assembly as a consolidated budget proposal:

a. The General Assembly Per Capita Budget

The General Assembly Per Capita Budget is used to share, mutually and equitably, the costs of Presbyterians coming together to discern the Spirit's leading for the future. (G.3.0106 – "Each council above the session shall prepare a budget for its operating expenses, including administrative personnel, and may fund it with a per capita apportionment among the particular congregations within its bounds.")

b. The General Assembly Mission Budget

The General Assembly Mission Budget fund the total mission and ministry program of the General Assembly. (G.3.0113 – "Each council shall prepare and adopt a budget to support the church's mission within its area.")

c. The Administrative Services Group Budget

The church corporation provides services the General Assembly, the Office of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency and others through the Administrative Services Group. The Administrative Services Group is funded, subject to overall budget approval by the General Assembly, from a portion of the various budgets of the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly, and other entities it serves.

C. The General Assembly Per Capita Budget

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) jointly have responsibility for developing a per capita budget and apportionment for recommendation to the General Assembly.

D. The General Assembly Mission Budget

1. Basic Budget ~~Mission Direction~~ Design

The basic budget is designed through a dual track process.

a. Identification of Priorities

1) Following the General Assembly, staff will prepare an analysis and list of the top ten priorities from previous General Assemblies.

2) The list of priorities will be presented to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board for consideration and refinement at its midyear retreat in the year before the next General Assembly. During this refinement process, the Board will consult with synod executives (where no synod executive exists, the stated clerk of the synod) and the presbytery leader from the two largest, two mid-size, and the two smallest presbyteries (with no more than one presbytery representative per synod.)

3) The consultation and refinement process will result in a list of no more than five priorities.

b. Identification of funding streams

02 RECOMMENDED REFERRALS TO THE 225TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2022)

- 1) *After the mid-year retreat of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, staff will prepare an analysis of the funding streams available to advance General Assembly mission.*
- 2) *The analysis will include all available restricted and unrestricted revenue sources.*
 - a) *First, restricted funds are applied to the appropriate budget items.*
 - b) *Then, unrestricted funds are applied toward fulfillment of all budget items.*
 - c) *This use of unrestricted funds provides for equalization within the budget. This process supports orderly planning and budgeting decisions while honoring appropriate restrictions and designations.*

c. *Mission Work Plan*

- 1) *The five identified priorities, the revised budget and staffing rationale and the funds development plan, with a theological framework, collectively constitute the Mission Work Plan.*
- 2) *The Mission Work Plan prepared by staff will be submitted to a task force of the Board for review to ensure alignment with the identified priorities.*
- 3) *At the February meeting in a General Assembly year, the Board will consider the non-financial elements of the Mission Work Plan for adoption.*
- 4) *Between February and April of a General Assembly year, the financial elements of the Mission Work Plan will be finalized, as guided by the identified priorities*
- 5) *At the April meeting in a General Assembly year, the Board will consider the remaining elements of the Mission Work Plan for adoption and submission to the General Assembly for approval.*

d. *Budget Monitoring*

- 1) *Following approval by the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board will monitor the accomplishment of the Mission Work Plan and the appropriate expenditure of funds throughout the budget cycle.*
- 2) *The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board will report to each biennial General Assembly on the results of the work undertaken during the previous two budget years. (Note: These two budget years will not be within the same budget cycle.)*

~~1.—The Mission Work Plan is adopted by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and provides the framework for the two-year budget cycle.~~

~~2.—The Presbyterian Mission Agency will develop proposals that will advance the Mission Work Plan.~~

~~3.—The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board will recommend a budget to the General Assembly that will provide the funding to fulfill the goals in the Mission Work Plan for the budget cycle.~~

E. *The Administrative Services Group Budget*

The budget development process for the Administrative Services Group (ASG) begins in the fall. ASG departments prepare their budget requests, and consultations are held with client partners regarding new needs. The ASG budget is reviewed and approved by the A Corporation Board. The ASG funding request is then sent to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Board, for their approval and inclusion in their budget planning for per capita and mission. The final ASG budget is approved in April, coincident with the approvals of the per capita and mission budgets.

F. C.—~~The Proposed Budget~~General Assembly

~~1.—At the second Presbyterian Mission Agency Board meeting of the year prior to the budget cycle, (e.g., May of 2008 for the 2009/2010 budget cycle), the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board will review the budget presented by the Deputy Executive Director for Shared Services and recommend to the General Assembly a proposed budget for the budget cycle that embodies the~~

~~Mission Work Plan and describing the work to be added or deleted as part of the recommendation. The Executive Committee will recommend a budget if, for any reason, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board does not make a recommendation.~~

~~2. 1. At the General Assembly during the year before the budget cycle (e.g., 2008 General Assembly for the 2009/2010 budget cycle), the appropriate assembly committee of the General Assembly will receive the consolidated budget proposal report of the Mission Work Plan and the proposed budget for approval and recommendation to the full assembly.~~

~~3. 2. The appropriate assembly committee of the General Assembly will recommend a balanced budget for each year in the budget cycle, incorporating work from the proposed budget and overtures, commissioners' resolutions, and other actions of the General Assembly, for approval as the outline of work for the budget cycle. The General Assembly may make decisions to add or subtract any element to or from proposed budgets. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board will then make appropriate adjustments to the General Assembly Mission Budget.~~

~~D.—The Detailed Budget~~

~~1. Detailed Budget Development~~

~~a. Following the General Assembly and under the leadership of the Executive Committee, detailed implementation of the Mission Work Plan as approved by the General Assembly will be outlined, and work responsibility assigned.~~

~~b. Under the management of Shared Services and with specific involvement by the ministry areas, a detailed budget proposal that encompasses the work approved by the General Assembly will be developed for each year in the budget cycle.~~

~~2. Approval of the Detailed Budget~~

~~At its third meeting of the year prior to each budget cycle (e.g., September 2008 for the 2009/2010 budget cycle), the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board will review both the detailed budget for the following year and the most up-to-date financial information. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board will review the adequacy of the Executive Committee's response to the General Assembly directives in the adopted budget and, after any necessary changes, approve the detailed budget for the following year with particular expenditures by organizational entity displaying both budget offices and relatedness to the basic Mission Work Plan.~~

~~E.—Budget Monitoring~~

~~1. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board will monitor the accomplishment of the Mission Work Plan and the appropriate expenditure of funds throughout the budget cycle.~~

~~2. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board will report to each biennial General Assembly on the results of the work undertaken during the previous two budget years (e.g., 2008 General Assembly for budget years 2006 and 2007), including full disclosure of the financial results of each year and other information related to the financial condition of the church. These two budget years will not be within the same budget cycle.~~

~~F. G. Roles and Responsibilities in Developing Budgets~~

~~1. The General Assembly does the following:~~

- ~~a. Determines churchwide mission goals priorities upon which budget development will be based.~~
- ~~b. Has the authority to institute and terminate programmatic emphases and activity.~~
- ~~c. Upon recommendation from the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, approves both the General Assembly Mission Budget and Program and the Per Capita Budget. Approves the consolidated budget proposal, consisting of~~
 - ~~1) The General Assembly Mission Budget, upon recommendation from the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board~~
 - ~~2) The General Assembly Per Capita Budget upon recommendation from the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board~~
 - ~~3) The Administrative Services Group Budget, upon recommendation from the Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation.~~

2. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board does the following:
 - a. Implements General Assembly decisions regarding (1) Mission Work Plan goals and objectives and (2) programmatic activity.
 - b. Recommends a Mission Work Plan for each budget year to the General Assembly, after appropriate consultation.
 - c. Presents the budget to the General Assembly.
 - d. Approves detailed budgets based upon General Assembly action.
 - e. Oversees programmatic activity funded through the General Assembly Mission Budget and Program and Presbyterian Mission Agency Board related work from the Per Capita Budget.
 - f. *Has authority to revise the General Assembly Mission Budget in the light of changes in anticipated revenue streams and emerging needs*
3. The *Administrative Services Group* ~~Deputy Executive Director for Shared Services~~ is responsible for the following:
 - a. Manages the process for budget development.
 - b. Prepares budget presentations for both the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and the General Assembly.
4. The *Committee on the Office of the General Assembly* ~~Deputy Executive Director for Mission~~ is responsible for the following:
 - a. *Provides guidance during the development of the Office of the General Assembly's portion of the per capita budget and designated budget. In conjunction with the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and the Board of the Presbyterian Church (USA), A Corporation, the committee approves the final per capita budget, the apportionment rates and the OGA designated budget.*

~~Prepare descriptions of programmatic activities in appropriate form for budget consideration, reflecting the adopted Mission Work Plan goals.~~

~~b. Develop detailed budgets based on budget allocations made by the General Assembly and as instructed by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.~~

~~G. Per Capita Budget~~

~~The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) jointly have responsibility for developing a per capita budget and apportionment for recommendation to the General Assembly. The per capita budget will be prepared using timelines similar to those for the General Assembly mission budget.~~

SHARED SERVICES ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

~~Shared Services is accountable to the Executive Director and carries out the following responsibilities. Administrative Services is accountable to the President of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation.~~

- ~~A. 1. To p~~Provides accounting and reporting services for
 - ~~1~~a. the Presbyterian Mission Agency, its ministry areas, and certain related bodies and committees;
 - ~~2~~b. the Office of the General Assembly;
 - ~~3~~c. other entities as requested on a fee-for-service basis; and
 - ~~4~~d. synod, presbytery, and session finance officers, as appropriate.
- ~~B. 2. To p~~Performs and establishes policies and procedures for the following functions of

02 RECOMMENDED REFERRALS TO THE 225TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2022)

- 4a. controller/financial accounting controls, general ledger maintenance, general accounting, financial reporting, accounts payable, accounts receivable, church and student loans, payroll, budgeting, fixed asset management, overseas accounting, inventory control, and project accounting;
 - 2b. treasury/central receiving service, bank relations and services, overseas treasury service (as appropriate), foreign exchange, short-term investments, working capital/cash management, and endowment and revenue accounting;
 - 3c. financial planning, capital planning and economic forecasting, and financial modeling;
 - 4d. property maintenance and management including acquisitions, gifts, leases, and dispositions, purchasing and print services, and mail services;
 - 5e. establishing standards for receiving sites throughout the church in consultation with other parts of the church;
 - 6f. distribution management services, including order processing, customer services, warehousing, and shipping.
- €3. ~~To e~~Ensures that no payment of any expenditure is made in excess of the total budget approved by the ~~Presbyterian Mission Agency Board~~ management of entities of A Corporation. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of each ~~Deputy Executive Director~~entity to ensure that expenditures for their respective areas are within the approved budget before commitments are made.
- Đ4. ~~To m~~Maintain all financial records and prepare quarterly reports to the ~~Presbyterian Mission Agency Board~~ and monthly reports to the executive staff leadership of the ~~Presbyterian Mission Agency~~entities.
- E5. ~~To p~~Prepares and presents the annual report of the Statement of Financial Position, Statement of Activities and Changes in Net Assets, and Statement of Cash Flows of the General Assembly that will be audited by a certified public accountant and presented to the General Assembly.

APPENDIX B

The following documents related to various organizational structures can be viewed at (<http://www.presbyterianmission.org/>). These were formerly Appendixes B–J.

- B. 198th General Assembly (1986) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Deliverance Implementing a Design for the Corporate Structure of Certain Agencies of the General Assembly [Adopted June 17, 1986, modified by the 199th General Assembly (1987)* and the 214th General Assembly (2002)]
- C. Deliverance Concerning Corporate Structure of Certain Agencies of the Presbyterian Mission Agency
 - Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation
 - The Publishing Corporation - Amended by 217th General Assembly (2006)
- D. Memorandum Defining the Relationship Between the Board of Pensions and the Presbyterian Mission Agency
- E. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc. Establishment of a Corporation and Related Matters [(Approved by the 207th General Assembly (1995) and amended by the 209th General Assembly (1997)]
- F. Joint Report—Presbyterian Mission Agency and Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation (*Minutes*, 1996, Part I, pp. 617–18)
- G. Ratification of Establishment of New Covenant Trust Company, N.A. A Subsidiary of The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation and Related Matters [Approved by the 211th General Assembly (1999), amended by the 212th General Assembly (2000) and the 214th General Assembly (2002).] [*Minutes*, 1999, Part I, pp. 492–94; *Minutes*, 2001, Part I, p. 339]
- H. Establishment of New Covenant Annuity Insurance Company and Related Matters [Approved by the 211th General Assembly (1999).] [*Minutes*, 1999, Part I, pp. 500–502]

*[From *Structural Design for Mission*]

I. Ratification of Foundation Participation in Formation of New Covenant Funds [Approved by the 211th General Assembly (1999).] [*Minutes*, 1999, Part I, p. 505]

J. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Mortgage Corporation [Approved by the 213th General Assembly (2001).] [*Minutes*, 2001, Part I, pp. 173–75]

Rationale

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) took several actions that changed the organization of mission within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Over the past eighteen months, staff from the Administrative Services Group (ASG), the Office of the General Assembly, and the Presbyterian Mission Agency have reviewed the *Organization for Mission*, the authoritative document that describes the interconnected functions of the General Assembly agencies (but which is primarily focused on the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency). The changes being recommended at this time reflect the results of that review.

None of the changes brought by staff introduce new reforms, but rather they seek to document the current realities in the post-223rd General Assembly (2018) context.

In addition, as staff have worked in collaboration with the Moving Forward Implementation Commission, several additional changes have been requested by the commission. In the overview that follows, these changes will be specifically noted.

Overview of changes to the *Organization for Mission*

1. Updated “I. History of the Structure for Mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)”

The original text was written in 1993 and then revised in 2006. History, as it were, stopped in 2006. Rather than culminating in 2006, those historical details were smoothed out so that the document references history, but it isn’t dated to a single point in time. Terms were also updated so that the document was less PMA-exclusive and more focused on PMA, OGA, and ASG working together.

2. Deleted “II. Statement of Vision and Priority Goals for Mission”

The original text reflected realities from the 1993 (“Shape and Form”) restructure and focused on the work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

3. Updates within the OGA Chapter

Originally Chapter IV dealt with the Office of the General Assembly (OGA), Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA), and General Assembly (GA) concerns. With the deletion of Chapter II, this is now found in Chapter III. Changes to this section were done in consultation with a task group of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. Revisions include:

- Updates for “Co-Moderators” rather than simply “Moderators.”
- Clarification on the “Co-Moderator”/“Moderator” and “Vice-Moderator” status within the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.
- Delegation clauses for the Stated Clerk (from PC(USA), A Corporation) similar to those granted to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board President/Executive Director.
- Allowing PMAB to designate whom it sends to serve as a corresponding member of COGA, rather than assigning that responsibility to the vice-chair.
- Nomenclature updates.
- In coordination with the Presbyterian Historical Society Board, update and provide for succinct language regarding the Presbyterian Historical Society (PHS).
- Clarifying the necessary ecclesial status of “in good standing” for those nominated for and elected to committees of the General Assembly.

02 RECOMMENDED REFERRALS TO THE 225TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2022)

- In cooperation with the Moving Forward Implementation Commission, update the schedule and requirements for the review of agencies and entities of the General Assembly.

4. *Updates in the PMA/PMAB Chapter*

What is now Chapter IV contains information regarding the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB). Updates include:

- Clarifications to the budget process.
- Clarify authority to dismiss a President/Executive Director rests with PMAB, not PC(USA), A Corporation.

5. *Updates Regarding COTE*

As part of a multiyear process, the Committee on Theological Education is requesting amendments to the *Organization for Mission* regarding its purpose, structure, and form. These changes are being carried to the General Assembly separately and are not part of this motion.

6. *Clarifications on the Role of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation (A Corp)*

Chapter VI (formerly VII) deals with the role of the PC(USA), A Corporation. Changes here include:

- Clarifying the responsibilities, accountabilities, and relationships among the A Corporation, the Office of the General Assembly, and the Presbyterian Mission Agency.
- At the request of the Moving Forward Implementation Commission, revised the date at which PMA and OGA may reconsider using ASG services to 2024, so as to align with the proposed agency/entity review process.

7. *Updates to the Sections Regarding Other Corporations*

Added language to clarify that each corporation is accountable to the General Assembly. In addition, there were specific revisions within each corporation's section:

a. The Board of Pensions (BOP)

- Clarify BOP service on the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.
- Clarify the role of the Stated Clerk and the President of A Corp on the BOP.

b. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation (FDN)

- Add the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly and A Corp to the list of bodies for whom the Foundation will regularly provide information.
- Clarify that the PMAB representative on the Foundation Board is not responsible for churchwide personnel and compensation issues.
- Clarify FDN service on the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.
- Clarify the role of the Stated Clerk and the President of A Corp on the FDN Board.

c. Presbyterian Publishing Corporation (PPC)

- Clarification of the role of the Stated Clerk, President/Executive Director, and the President of A Corp on the PPC Board of Directors.
- Clarification of the role of the PPC President on the PMAB.

d. Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program (PILP)

- Clarification of the role of the President of the PC(USA), A Corporation, on the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program (ILP) board.
- Clarification of the role of the ILP president on the PMAB.

8 *Updates to the Amendment Process*

Designed to demonstrate the collaboration between OGA, PMA, and ASG and their boards.

9. *Updates to the Budget Process*

ASG, OGA, and PMA have updated the budget process to align with PMAB budget practices. Changes for a prospective “unified budget process” have not been incorporated as they are still being articulated and explored in the lead-up to the 2020 General Assembly (2020).

Item 02-069

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 305.]

Report from Special Offerings Review Task Force (SORTF)—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020):

1. Suspend the goal of \$20 million by 2025 and establish a new goal of increasing the percentage of Four for Four congregations by 10 percent by 2025.
2. Affirm the current interpretation and distribution of Special Offerings:
 - a. CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING: interpreted and received during the Advent season in gratitude for God’s gift of Jesus Christ. Causes:
 - i. Assistance programs to meet identified and emerging needs for professional church workers and spouses through the Board of Pensions, 50 percent;
 - ii. Racial ethnic education and leadership development through Racial Equity and Women’s Intercultural Ministries, 50 percent.
 - iii. Recommends that funding to the Presbyterian Schools and Colleges Equipping Communities of Color, eligible to receive funding through the Christmas Joy Offering, be maintained at current percentages, as long as the Institutional Standards for Participating in the Christmas Joy Offering are met, and that any funds received beyond what are allocated to these schools and colleges be designated for Presbyterian Mission Agency leadership development programs for people of color.
 - b. ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING: interpreted and received during Lent and on Easter Sunday in response to Christ’s call to ministries of compassion and justice on a continuum from disaster and poverty relief to development among the marginalized and oppressed. Causes administered through the Compassion, Peace, and Justice Ministry. Causes:
 - i. Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, 32 percent;
 - ii. Presbyterian Hunger Program, 36 percent;
 - iii. Self-Development of People, 32 percent.
 - c. PENTECOST OFFERING: interpreted and received in relation to Pentecost Season in response to the coming of the Holy Spirit and the birth of the Church in support of ministries with youth and young adults and in response to the needs of children-at-risk. Causes:
 - i. 25 percent for Ministries with Youth (Theology, Formation and Evangelism);

02 RECOMMENDED REFERRALS TO THE 225TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2022)

- ii. 25 percent for Young Adult Volunteer Program (World Mission);
- iii. 10 percent for Educate a Child Transform the World Initiative, National (Compassion, Peace, and Justice);
- iv. Retained by congregations, 40 percent. Congregations are encouraged to use this 40 percent for local ministries for children, youth, young adults, and child advocacy.

d. PEACE & GLOBAL WITNESS OFFERING: interpreted and received in relation to World Communion Sunday, recognizing the call to bring Christ's peace to all creation. Causes: Ministries that specifically include Peacemaking as well as global witness

- i. Presbyterian Mission Agency, 50 percent (for Peacemaking and Reconciliation);
- ii. Synods and presbyteries, 25 percent (12.5 percent presbytery/12.5 percent synod);
- iii. Congregations, 25 percent.

3. Encourage the continuing development of non-English resources promoting Special Offerings to reach out to the whole church.

4. Recommend that a six-month study group be formed in 2020 to clarify cost recovery and cost allocations. It is further recommended that the study group membership be six persons comprised of equal numbers from A Corp and PMA [for PMA: Finance and Accounting representative, PMA Board member, PMA President and Executive Director], plus the director of Special Offerings as ex officio, to clarify these issues (members are appointed by the president of each entity.) It is further recommended that members report back to their respective agencies prior to the end of 2020 and that PMA ensure that all program staff are aware of any actions or recommendations regarding cost recovery and cost allocations.

5. Recommend that Item 2.C.g. in the PMA Reserve Policy be revised as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“The restricted fund reserve balance will be approved by the ~~Chief Financial Officer~~ Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency with concurrence of the ~~Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency~~ Chief Financial Officer.”

Rationale

Mandate

On a four-year cycle, the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) is required to provide a task force for the review and evaluation of the four Special Offerings and the recipient ministries and for consideration of new Special Offerings purposes, in light of established criteria, for recommendation to the General Assembly (Organization for Mission, Appendix A)

SORTF has been given several specific tasks by the Organization for Mission and the 223rd General Assembly:

1. Review progress toward attaining the \$20 million by 2025 goal
2. Align offering recipients with the strategic objectives of the Presbyterian Mission Agency
3. Examine the timing and programmatic emphases within each offering based on theological soundness, the liturgical calendar, and the mission engagement strategy
4. Evaluate progress on the aforementioned recommendations

MEMBERSHIP

Ruling Elder Linda Badger Becker, chair, Presbytery of Genesee Valley The Rev. Steve Marsh, Presbytery of Los Ranchos

Ruling Elder Vince Patton, Presbytery of Mid-Kentucky The Rev. Raul Santiago-Rivera, Presbytery of San Juan Ruling Elder Tamara Williams, Presbytery of Charlotte

Staff support provided by Bryce Wiebe and Margaret Boone (Special Offerings, PMA)

PROCESS

The Special Offerings Review Task Force (SORTF) approached this assigned task with the conviction that God has called us to this important work of stewardship on behalf of our Church. As disciples of Christ and servants of our Church, scripture, prayer, and sharing have been fundamental to our work together.

In developing recommendations, the SORTF reviewed pertinent data and records regarding the Special Offerings. Of particular interest is the Special Offerings 2016-2017 Review conducted by Research Services. The process included:

- Video conference calls in May, June, September, November, and December 2019

• Two face-to-face meetings, August 7-8 and November 6-7, at the Presbyterian Center which included interviews with the following leaders:

*Diane Givens-Moffett, President/ Executive Director of Presbyterian Mission Agency

* Presidents/ Representatives of Schools and Colleges Equipping Communities of Color: Dr. Cynthia Warrick, President, Stillman College

Mr. Kim Warner, interim President, Presbyterian Pan American School Melanie Davis, Director of Institutional Advancement, Menaul School Mr. Lindsey Gilbert, President, Menaul School

*Sara Lisherness, Director, Compassion Peace & Justice; Interim Director, World Mission

*Tamron Keith, Associate Director of Administration, World Mission

*Philip Woods, Associate Director, Program, Strategy and Recruitment, World Mission

*Ellen Sherby, Coordinator, Equipping for Mission Involvement, World Mission

*Carl Horton, Mission Coordinator, Presbyterian Peacemaking Program

*Andrea McNicol, Manager Budgets and Accounting

*Barry Creech, Director for Policy, Administration, and Board Support

*John McFayden, Executive Vice President and Chief of Church Engagement, PC(USA) Board of Pensions

*Rhaskell Hunter, Director of Racial Equity and Women's Intercultural Ministry

*Tim McCallister, Associate for Mission Program Grants

*Ray Jones, Director of Theology Director of Theology Formation and Evangelism and *Simone Adams Andrade, Coordinator for Budget and Mission Effectiveness

*Laurie Kraus, coordinator, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance

*Jennifer Evans, associate, Presbyterian Hunger Program

*Alonzo Johnson, Self-Development of People

- Prepared and presented reports to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board in September 2019 and February 2020.

RATIONALE FOR SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS:

"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me." Matthew 25:35-36 (NIV).

What a simple and profound manner to understand the connection between the Lord's love, compassion and grace for us, his people, and our own response to such mercy that to hear Jesus own words saying: "...whatever you did for one of the least

of mine, you did for me.” Those words resume the direct relationship between the abundance and overflowing grace of the Lord, and our gratitude while sharing such grace with others.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) is a church that lives the Matthew 25 teaching daily. We Presbyterians live our lives understanding that the Lord overflows us with his grace, his love and his mercy. Even when

we may not understand the individual reasons for such mercy and love, we do know, that all what we have, our talents, abilities and resources are gifts from the Lord. We are a blessed church and a grateful church.

The Four Special Offerings, *the One Great Hour of Sharing; the Pentecost Offering; the Peace & Global Witness Offering; and the Christmas Joy Offering*, provide an opportunity for disciples of Christ to participate in the call of Matthew 25 in meaningful and tangible ways. The programs supported by these offerings provide a living testimony to the words of Matthew 25, addressing systemic issues of racism and poverty and demonstrating congregational vitality.

In general, the SORTF affirms that the offering program recipients are indeed aligned with the strategic objectives of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. As the SORTF reviewed data and practices, it became apparent that certain areas of administration would benefit by more clarity, intentional adjustments, and/or further examination.

The Task Force encourages ongoing and deliberate collaborative work among staff in the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) to develop initiatives which advance the church wide Matthew 25 vision in the areas of the four special offerings. The PMA board and staff are encouraged to be prayerful, courageous, united, serving and alive in their collaboration, interpretation, and implementation of the Christmas Joy, One Great Hour of Sharing, Pentecost and Peace & Global Witness offerings.

REFLECTIONS REGARDING RECOMMENDATION #1

In 2012, the 220th General Assembly approved an action instituting the goal of \$20 million dollars in receipts for Special Offerings by the year 2020. In 2016, at the recommendation of the SORTF, the 222nd General Assembly revised the \$20 million by 2020 goal for Special Offerings receipts to \$20 million by 2025 as the aspiration of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

The SORTF has observed that, while the original goal was well intended, and while such a monetary goal is achievable under ideal circumstances, this effort has lacked clear mission goals, the necessary strategies and infrastructure for achieving the goal, and unified ownership of the goal by the church.

The expectation is that the Presbyterian Mission Agency will make this happen through the work of the Special Offerings staff team. New initiatives, such as the Giving Catalog and the Fight Famine Campaign, have successfully provided new income streams. The good news is that, over the last three years, receipts have increased, despite the obvious decline in church membership. Perhaps more significantly, per member giving has increased. Nevertheless, receipts for Special Offerings are hovering around \$13 million (2018) which is about where it was in 2012 when the \$20 million goal was set. It is no small feat to have maintained this level of commitment over a period of six years of observable decline in church membership.

	2012	2018	
Churches	10,262	9,161	- 10.73%
Members	1,849,496	1,352,678	- 26.86%

It is important to recall that the Presbyterian Mission Agency has faced many challenges since the establishment of this goal in 2012, not the least of which has been the absence of consistent leadership. It is understandable that the “\$20 million by 2020” or “\$20 million by 2025” might not have been a high priority for the efforts of our church. While quantitative monetary goals can be inspiring, they are rarely the true measure of success or of failure.

Over many conversations and deliberations, the SORTF has consistently maintained that a better measure of growth and of congregational vitality is to promote increased participation in the Special Offerings.

Rather than focusing on a monetary goal, the focus could be on our call to partnership in Christ’s mission and on the congregational vitality objectives of the Matthew 25 Initiative. Four for Four congregations are those who receive all four of the Special Offerings, declaring their connection with the ministries of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Promoting, celebrating, and recognizing “Four for Four” congregations is an example of how increasing participation increases congregational vitality and partnership in mission.

REFLECTIONS REGARDING RECOMMENDATION #2

1. One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS)

For over 70 years, One Great Hour of Sharing has provided Presbyterians an opportunity to make a tangible difference in the lives of neighbors world-wide. Typically received during the season of Lent, each gift to One Great Hour of Sharing supports efforts to relieve hunger through the Presbyterian Hunger Program, promote development through the Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People, and provide support through Presbyterian Disaster Assistance. It is the largest and most widely known of the Special Offerings, benefitting from the season, church traditions, and causes that appeal to givers.

The programs of OHGS clearly promote the Matthew 25 initiative.

In meeting with recipient staff program leaders, the SORTF was pleased to learn of the intentional efforts of collaboration among these leaders and their recognition that such collaboration provides a more unified vision and enhances opportunities for mission interpretation. The SORTF encourages the leaders of these programs to continue to enhance their collaborative work.

It is notable that in 2020, the Self-Development of People (SDOP) program will be celebrating 50 years of ministry. While not the most widely known of the recipient ministries, SDOP seeks to address some of the most complex issues of poverty and oppression.

2. Pentecost Offering

The offering supports ministries with children and youth in local churches and communities, especially programs for at-risk children and youth. The Pentecost Offering also affirms and supports all those who

work and/or volunteer with children and youth. It continues to lift up and support new Christian formation initiatives for children as well as the highly successful Presbyterian Youth Triennium. Congregations 40% retain of raised funds to initiate or support programs for young people in their communities. The remaining 60% is remitted to the Presbyterian Mission Agency. In this way, the offering promotes partnership and supports the Matthew 25 vision of congregational vitality.

While printed resources and the use of technology and social media have somewhat increased awareness of the ministries and programs that are supported by the Pentecost Offering, it is still the smallest and least known of the offerings. While it may be generally accepted that congregation members care about ministries for youth, there is a disconnect about how participating in this offering promotes such ministries. One example is that while the Presbyterian Youth Triennium is widely celebrated by participating congregations and presbyteries, there may be little awareness that the Pentecost Offering is the primary funding source.

The name 'Pentecost' Offering does not truly indicate the focus of youth and young adult ministry in a way that connects with the local congregations. The SORTF recognizes this as a mission interpretation challenge. Pentecost, as a season to celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit, is the appropriate season for this offering, connecting with spiritual formation of the young. However, it coincides with the ending of the school year when opportunities for focusing on youth ministries may be limited.

The SORTF has taken note that while the Young Adult Volunteer (YAV) program is a recipient of the Pentecost Offering, it is currently a program of World Mission. Yet, there are 9 national program sites and only 6 international sites. Many of the young adults that serve in the YAV program seek to further their vocational discernment after their year of service by attending seminary or engaging in other ministries.

The SORTF sees the potential partnership and guidance provided under Theology, Formation, and Evangelism (TFE) as a more natural fit for this program. Transferring the YAV program to TFE opens avenues of collaboration with other program recipients of the Pentecost Offering.

3. Peace & Global Witness Offering

The Peace & Global Witness Offering, traditionally received on World Communion Sunday, promotes the biblical call to disciples of Christ to be peacemakers. The offering draws Presbyterians together to stand in support of our global brothers and sisters because the peace of Christ belongs to people everywhere, in all times, in all ways.

The offering seeks to equip the Church to accompany those who have experienced violence, beginning by building awareness and solidarity through educational resources and through relationships with active peacemakers, expanding to advocacy in support of those who suffer, and deepened through the 25% mid councils retain and the 25% a local congregation commits to use on the efforts to which God is most strongly calling them. This distribution of offering receipts, which is intended to promote partnership and faith in action, is unique to this offering though the formula can prove to be complicated to some.

Formerly known as the Peacemaking Offering, the offering was renamed the Peace & Global Witness Offering beginning in 2014, with the hope of a more focused collaboration between peacemaking and global witness ministries, especially in the area in promoting reconciliation and cross-cultural understanding. It was also hoped that this would increase participation in the offering. At the time of the previous SORTF report in 2014, it was unclear how funds might be distributed differently with this new identity with the expectation of an influx of new funds.

The SORTF considered the possibility of dividing the offering by percentages designated for peacemaking and global witness but decided that there is no clear line between these two ministries that would warrant such a division. The Task Force believes that collaboration is a better model for this offering.

In reality, many of the ongoing PC(USA) peacemaking ministries, such as the International Peacemaker program and the Mosaic of Peace, had already demonstrated partnership and collaboration with world mission and this has continued. It is worth noting that there are also domestic peacemaking ministries such as educational efforts to address gun violence.

There is no clear evidence that changing the name of this offering has resulted in the anticipated outcomes. While this is a natural partnership, it is unclear what new initiatives will be the result. This makes the work of mission interpretation challenging. New donors need to see that something new is happening that could inspire their participation.

The SORTF encourages ongoing and intentional collaborative work between peacemaking and global witness staff to develop initiatives which advance the church wide Matthew 25 vision of peacemaking and reconciliation.

4. *Christmas Joy Offering*

During the season of Advent and Christmas we celebrate the joy of the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Such joy is shared in the receiving of Christmas Joy Offering.

The Christmas Joy Offering began at reunion in 1983, combining offerings from two predecessor denominations. The offering is an invitation to Presbyterians to show their support for past, present, and future leaders. One-half of offering proceeds are used to support retired and existing church workers through the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions. The remaining 50% is used to support education for communities of color through the Historically Presbyterian Racial Ethnic Institutions (HPREI), now referred to as Presbyterian Schools and Colleges Equipping Communities of Color (SCECC), and through leadership development for people of color programs of the Presbyterian Mission Agency what is currently Racial Equity & Women's Intercultural Ministries.

Feedback from focus groups and research consistently reveal that the PC(USA) has deep appreciation for the work of the Board of Pensions in providing assistance to retired and existing church workers. The Board of Pensions provides more than 1500 grants per year through its Assistance Program which is funded by this offering. No pension dues are used for this purpose. Many of these grants are emergency grants for retired church workers who have an unexpected financial need due to medical expenses or another family emergency.

Since reunion much of the attention of the Christmas Joy Offering has been focused on the 50 percent of the offering allocated for education and leadership development of communities of color. There were nine Historically Presbyterian Racial Ethnic Institutions at reunion. Several of these institutions have since closed, and currently, Stillman College (Tuscaloosa, Alabama), Menaul School (Albuquerque, New Mexico) and the Presbyterian Pan American School (Kingsville, Texas) are the only schools and colleges eligible to receive funding through the Christmas Joy Offering. All three schools currently meet the Institutional Standards for Participating in the Christmas Joy Offering. For many years, educational institutions for people of color were the primary way in which leaders of color for the church were developed. The three Presbyterian Schools and Colleges Equipping Communities of Color continue to provide many people of color from difficult socioeconomic circumstances with a quality education that reflects the Reformed tradition while developing them into leaders for the church and society.

The SORTF reviewed the work of past General Assemblies, the reports of previous Special Offering Task Forces, and the recommendations of the Historically Presbyterian Racial Ethnic Institutions Task Force (HPREI), which completed its work in 2015 (now referred to as Historically Presbyterian Institutions Equipping Communities of Color). By action of the 221st General Assembly, funding for these schools and colleges would be discontinued in 2024 and the funds received from the offering would be redirected to the Presbyterian Mission Agency for other efforts in the education and leadership development of people of color.

While affirming the important work that previous these task forces have done, the SORTF believes that changes in the current context, leadership, and circumstance of the remaining schools and colleges warrants a revision in this previous action.

An opportunity exists to explore possible areas of synergy between the mission of these educational institutions and some of the areas of focus in the Matthew 25 initiative, which include congregational vitality, dismantling systemic racism and eradicating systemic poverty.

02 RECOMMENDED REFERRALS TO THE 225TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2022)

The SORTF believes that it is important that the schools and colleges continue to be in relationship with the PC(USA). While such a relationship is assumed, the SORTF believes that it needs to be ensured as an expectation for receiving offering funds.

Offering funds that exceed distributions to the Presbyterian Schools and Colleges Equipping Communities of Color, are designated for leadership development for people of color programs of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, administered by Racial Equity & Women's Intercultural Ministries. These programs provide people of color, who have demonstrated gifts for church leadership, with opportunities to enhance existing skills, to network with their peers and senior leaders across the church, and to gain additional skills to prepare them for leadership and service in the church. Such Leadership Institutes help people of color in leadership roles understand change management, leadership theory and practice, and the dynamics of being a person of color in leadership in a predominantly white denomination, while also providing opportunities for worship, Bible study and fellowship. Feedback from focus groups and research has indicated that providing leadership for the church from communities of color is a cause the church will support.

The SORTF is hopeful that the church will continue to grow in its support of these vital ministries in gratitude for God's Gift of Jesus Christ.

REFLECTIONS REGARDING RECOMMENDATIONS #3

While particular programs may be generally valued, potential donors may not connect that the source of funding is a Special Offering. It is important to maximize opportunities for the interpretation and promotion of projects and causes. This includes brothers and sisters for whom English is a second language.

REFLECTIONS REGARDING RECOMMENDATIONS #4 AND 5

There remains a lack of clarity and specificity around cost recovery and cost allocations. The cost recovery process institutes monthly charges that come out of program funding and are applied exclusively to offering receipts. This complicated approach has the unfortunate side effect of encouraging programs to avoid working through Special Offerings. Coordinators often do not really know what their support costs are. While it is important to be realistic about program costs, it is difficult to interpret this to donors.

This was a concern of the previous SORTF as well. That SORTF specifically suggested that the next SORTF reporting to the 224th General Assembly (2020) pay close attention to how the ratio of overhead to program dollars is evolving. It was also suggested that Financial Services educate program staff on how cost recovery decisions are made.

The SORTF is concerned about the lack of clarity regarding the institution of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Reserve Policy in 2016. With the decline of resources, the Presbyterian Mission Agency was concerned that funds would not be available to implement planned programs. In order to ensure a safety net, the policy requires that any funds received in excess of annual allocations, including Special Offerings, be held in a reserve fund that has restrictions access. This means that if an offering joyfully exceeds the expected receipts, the balance goes into the reserve fund rather than into program growth.

The policy currently empowers the Chief Financial Officer to set reserve amounts in consultation with the Executive Director of the Mission Agency rather than ensuring the final say over the expenditure of mission dollars is authorized by the President and Executive Director, in consultation with both the programmatic staff as well as the administrative staff.

Such a change is especially important in light of the actions of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) which moved such administrative functions outside the direct supervision of the President and Executive Director of the Mission Agency. Clear processes to access reserve funds over the established amounts should also be established, so that all gifts given for ministry, especially when the Church responds over and above budgeted expectations, can be made available for that ministry's current work. The SORTF understands that having a safety net is wise, but also believes it is equally important to cast a hopeful vision of increased funding to the programs for which people are giving.

GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 02-069

General Assembly Committee on Representation Comment on Item 02-069: Report and Recommendations of the Special Committee on Per Capita and Financial Sustainability.

This item has been recommended to be referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). However, should the assembly determine that this item of business needs to be considered by the 224th General Assembly (2020), GACOR provides this comment.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation commends to the assembly Standing Rule K.1.c, which lists GACOR with the General Assembly Nominating Committee (GANC) as consulting partners to the General Assembly Moderator (Co-Moderators) in appointing special committees and bodies created by General Assembly action.

The GACOR stands ready to advise new bodies and advocate to ensure the widest participation, diversity, and representation so that God's diversity is seen throughout the process and within the resulting nominating pools and finalized slates. The GACOR reminds the Assembly that the GANC and the GACOR work together to fulfill F-1.0403 and that relationship is reflected in the Standing Rules and the Organization for Mission.

The GACOR stands ready to partner with and assist the Moderator (Co-Moderators), PMA, and OGA. GACOR evaluates the impact of inclusion practices and advises and consults with bodies and agencies to ensure the widest participation of all persons in our denomination.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation is made up of sixteen persons, elected by the General Assembly, who are drawn from members and elders, ruling and teaching, from across the church in accordance with F-1.0403. Its constitutional mandate and central functions are described in G-3.0103 of the Book of Order (Form of Government).

Item 02-070

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 307.]

Women of Faith Award Nominees to the 224th General Assembly (2020)—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) recognize the following Women of Faith award recipients at the 224th General Assembly (2020): Ruth Azar, Joyce Hamilton, and Ana D. Torres de Jiménez.

Rationale

The Women of Faith Awards were established in 1986 to honor women in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) whose lives exemplify their Christian commitment through witness, service, and leadership.

Each year a theme is chosen. Nominations are received from throughout the church and honorees are selected by a committee of representatives from various groups.

Awards are presented at the Women of Faith Breakfast during the General Assembly. This breakfast is a biennial celebration of God's activity in the lives of women and their response to God's presence.

The theme for this year's awards is "Women Who Disrupt Systemic Poverty" and it recognizes clergywomen who work for transformative change and seek an end to poverty and injustice.

The 2020 selection committee included Pam Snyder, chair; Marcella "Marci" Glass, Presbyterian Mission Agency Board; JyungIn Lee, moderator, Presbyterian Women; Theresa Durham, Racial Equity & Women's Intercultural Ministries-Women's Leadership Development & Young Women's Ministries; Carolyn Smith, Racial Equity & Women's Intercultural Ministries-Women's Leadership Development & Young Women's Ministries; and Courtney Steininger, Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns.

The selection committee members were instructed to consider the following criteria in reviewing nomination forms and in making their selection of the four women who receive this award:

- Selection of the Women of Faith awardees are based on the theme.
- How has this woman sought to address the root causes of poverty?
- How has this woman helped others to move toward economic empowerment?
- How has this woman fought unjust economic systems that perpetuate destitution?
- Three nominees will be selected.

- Strive for racial ethnic diversity.
- Strive for geographic diversity.
- Awardees will be women.
- Awardees will be Presbyterian.
- Current staff serving the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) are ineligible for nomination.
- Previous award recipients are ineligible to be nominated again for the Women of Faith Award (one-time recipients; no duplications).

The election of the three honorees was approved by the Leadership Committee and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

Biographical sketches of these three women are as follows:

Ruth Azar, Detroit, Michigan, Detroit Presbytery, Synod of the Covenant.

Azar is the Founder and Director of the Second Mile Center of Detroit. The Second Mile Center of Detroit provides services and develops partnerships to empower and strengthen people through charitable and educational means without discrimination based on race, color, national, or ethnic origin. The Second Mile Center of Detroit was founded in 2006 by Ruth following God's call.

Joyce Hamilton, Harlingen, Texas, Mission Presbytery, Synod of the Sun.

Hamilton is one of the co-founders of the group Angry Tias y Abuelas (Angry Aunties and Grandmothers) based in Brownsville, Texas. It is a group of women who have single-handedly made a difference for refugees and immigrants at the Texas-Mexico border. The Angry Tias and Abuelas provide basic necessities for health and safety and support for human dignity and justice to individuals and families seeking asylum at our borders and as they embark on their journeys to designated destinations in the US.

Ana (Annie) D. Torres de Jiménez, San Juan, Puerto Rico, San Juan Presbytery, Synod of Boriquen.

As part of her life mission work, *Torres de Jiménez* and her late daughter co-founded and organized a program that invited children and teens from a nearby public housing project to visit the Presbyterian Church in Hato Rey, providing transportation and breakfast every Sunday. For more than three decades, she has helped children and teens encounter Christ and hopefully become lifelong Christians.

Item 02-071

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 305.]

A Resolution on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two Spirit People¹ (MMIWG2S)—From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee and the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns.

The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee and the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns recommend that the 224th General Assembly (2020):

1. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through the Office of Public Witness and the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations, to advocate boldly and equip Presbyterians to advocate to:
 - a. Hold all federal and state justice systems accountable for their failure to provide justice for missing and murdered indigenous women, girls, and two spirit people (MMIWG2S) by minimizing the severity of the violent acts.
 - b. Hold federal and state justice systems accountable for failure to make sentencing reflect the negative impact violent crimes against MMIWG2S have on Indigenous individuals, families, and communities.

- c. Ensure that federal and state justice systems are taking victim-based approaches to each case to ensure that victims are heard, believed, and supported.
- d. Ensure reporting of statistics on MMIWG2S to tribal Nations so Indigenous communities are given access to the data regarding their tribal citizens.
- e. Require the review, revision, and development of law enforcement and justice protocols to address MMIWG2S as defined in Savanna's Act.²
- f. Require all federal law enforcement agencies to modify their guidelines to incorporate the guidelines developed by the Department of Justice and provide training to law enforcement agencies on how to record tribal enrollment for victims in federal databases.
- g. Expand the jurisdictional power of tribal governments and organizations to prosecute non-native criminals in border town situations.
- h. Ensure standards and protocols to decrease the amount of violent language used by media and add more Indigenous staff at media outlets while building more substantive relationships with the Indigenous communities on which media is supposed to be reporting.
- i. Conduct outreach to Indigenous tribes regarding the ability to enter information through the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System or other public portal and provide emergency services, amber alert, counseling, and family services for tribal nations.

2. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to include in all future printings and distributions of the *Planning Calendar* a Day of Awareness for MMIWG2S.

3. Direct all PC(USA) agency media, news outlets, curriculum, and other publication creators to decolonize their approach to Indigenous cultures by consulting with the Native American Consulting Committee and the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee prior to publication in order to accurately and authentically represent Indigenous culture, history, and stories.

4. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, in consultation with those directly impacted, to provide support for Indigenous individuals, families, and communities that have been impacted by the epidemic of MMIWG2S.

Rationale

The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC) and the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC) learned about the silenced tragedy of Indigenous women, girls, and two spirit people from our Indigenous Presbyterian siblings whose lives, families, and communities are directly impacted. These siblings have each experienced firsthand the loss and trauma of having people in their own lives disappear; this is a tragedy directly impacting the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

In consultation with ministry partners serving on the Native American Consulting Committee (NACC), REAC and ACWC learned of our indigenous siblings' deep desire for the PC(USA) to advocate for the appropriate law enforcement agencies to take care in collecting consistent data among state and federal agencies, as well as between tribal governments when missing indigenous women, girls, and two spirit people are reported, investigated, and located.

Native peoples are legally considered domestic dependent nations. If a citizen of a nation is identified or reported missing, then pertinent information should be noted, and this action should rightly trigger the formal mechanism to initiate an alert to that Tribal Nation and appropriate law enforcement agencies.

Violence against women, girls, and two spirits dates back to the original invasion of white settlers. Historian Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, in *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the US*, calls U.S. policies and actions related to Indigenous peoples "classic cases of imperialism. ... Settler colonialism as a genocidal policy."³

The attitude of settler colonialism remains alive and well today. It is found in the large numbers of MMIWG2S whose cases are never recorded as data, never made public, or become lost in the judicial system. Thus, indigenous women, girls, and two spirits disappear not only once, but three times—in life, in the media, and in the data.

The resulting lack of understanding about the violence perpetrated against Indigenous women, girls, and two spirits reinforces the historical and ongoing trauma Indigenous peoples have experienced for generations. Indigenous women, girls, and two spirits are the life bearers of Indigenous communities. They are an essential component in maintaining the strong culture

and traditional practices that sustain Indigenous communities generation after generation. There is a great need for more sustained and in-depth research on how and why Indigenous women, girls, and two spirits go missing and are killed, and enforceable data collection practices for local, state, and federal agencies. We must support Indigenous peoples in their fight to reclaim their power in a colonialism minded justice system.

From the Coalition to Stop Violence Against Native Women⁴:

- Native American women on reservations face murder rates more ten times higher than the national average.—U.S. Department of Justice
- Homicide is the third-leading cause of death among American Indian and Alaska Native women 10 to 24 years of age and the fifth leading cause of death for American Indian and Alaska Native women between 25 to 34 years of age.—Center for Disease Control and Prevention
- In 2016, though there were 5,712 reports of missing American Indian and Alaska Native women and girls, the federal missing persons database only logged 116 cases—National Crime Information Center
- Reasons for the lack of quality data include:
 - underreporting,
 - racial misclassification which favors the larger white race,
 - poor relationships between law enforcement and American Indian and Alaska Native communities,
 - poor record-keeping protocols,
 - institutional racism in the media, and
 - a lack of substantive relationships between journalists and Native American communities.
- Towns near reservations are economically dependent on Indigenous peoples yet recognizing who has jurisdiction over crimes is a complicated process that inhibits the ability of tribal governments and organizations to prosecute non-native criminals in border town situations.
- Though approximately 71% of American Indian and Alaska Natives live in urban areas and at least 51% of these urban Native Americans are women, because cases occurring in urban areas are not under federal jurisdiction, missing and murdered urban Native women and girls are not included in data and there is no research data on rates of violence.
- Of the urban perpetrators UIHI was able to identify, 83% were male and approximately half were non-Native. Only 28% of these perpetrators were ever found guilty or held accountable.
- The vast majority of MMIWG2S-related cases in urban areas are never covered by media creating a false perception that this issue does not affect off-reservation Native American communities.
- Though 4 out of 5 of Native women are affected by violence, media coverage is deeply biased. Using racist, victim-blaming, and criminalizing language, coverage tends to focus on drugs, alcohol, sex work, gang violence, and criminal history of missing and murdered native women and girls thus causing additional harm to anxious and grieving communities.
- The inability of communities, tribal nations, and policy makers to access law enforcement data severely impedes their ability to make informed decisions on how best to address violence against women and girls at policy, programing, and advocacy levels.

Endnotes

1. <http://www.dancingtoeaglespiritsociety.org/twospirit.php>.
2. Savanna's Act <<https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/senate-bill/227>> (01/31/2020).
3. Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2014), 2, 6.
4. Coalition to Stop Violence Against Native Women: <<https://www.csvanw.org/mmiw/>> (01/31/2020).

For more information, see also: <https://www.uihi.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Missing-and-Murdered-Indigenous-Women-and-Girls-Report.pdf>.

Item 02-072

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 305.]

A Resolution on Reproductive Justice: Black Maternal and Infant Mortality—From the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns and the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee.

The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns and the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee recommend that the 224th General Assembly (2020):

1. Request that the Presbyterian Mission Agency develop resources to bring to awareness the disproportionately large number of black women and black infants who have died due to racial disparities in their healthcare. These resources are to be updated each year and made available to mid councils and congregations for use on Mother's Day.
2. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through the Office of Public Witness, to advocate boldly to eliminate racial disparities in maternal and infant health outcomes by protecting the health of black mothers during pregnancy, childbirth, and

in the postpartum period, thereby ending preventable morbidity and mortality in maternal care as well as black neonatal and infant mortality. This effort shall include immediate advocacy for the passage of Senate Bill 3363 introduced by Kamala Harris and House Resolution 2092 introduced by Representative Alma Adams.¹

3. Urge PC(USA) entities and members to draw awareness to the racial disparities in maternal healthcare and especially to the critical need for scholarships for black pre-med and medical students.

Rationale

In May of 2019, Representative Alma Adams of North Carolina introduced House Resolution 2902—The Maternal Care Access and Reducing Emergencies Act (The Maternal CARE Act)². The resolution names one tragedy of racism’s effects on health care for black women and children: rates of mortality that are staggeringly higher than that of their white counterparts. The information provided by extensive data collection uncovers what is nothing less than a national health emergency and human rights violation.

Maternal mortality rates in the United States are amongst the highest in the developed world, and according to the most recent data from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, black women are 3.2 times more likely to die from pregnancy-related causes than white women.³ The data is controlled for factors one might be tempted to consider more prominent than race, such as educational level, socioeconomic status, and age. The result uncovers racism and its systemic, insidious nature as the culprit in the deaths of black mothers. From withheld access to quality healthcare, to being disbelieved or dismissed by doctors (see Serena Williams’ story⁴), to biological myths about racial differences, black mothers are not receiving the care they need. Pervasive racial bias and unequal treatment abound.

From the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report:⁵

TABLE 1. Pregnancy-related mortality ratios (PRMRs) (pregnancy-related deaths per 100,000 live births) and disparity ratios by age group, education, tertile of states, and race/ethnicity* — United States, 2007–2016†

Characteristic	Total PRMR	White PRMR	Black PRMR	Black: white disp. ratio	AI/AN PRMR	AI/AN: white disp. ratio	A/PI PRMR	A/PI: white disp. ratio	Hispanic PRMR	Hispanic: white disp. ratio
Total	16.7	12.7	40.8	3.2	29.7	2.3	13.5	1.1	11.5	0.9
Age group (yrs)										
<20	10.9	10.8	16.8	1.5	19.5	1.8	— [§]	—	6.7	0.6
20–24	12.2	9.6	26.3	2.7	11.6	1.2	7.2	0.7	7.0	0.7
25–29	13.3	9.3	37.0	4.0	25.2	2.7	9.5	1.0	9.6	1.0
30–34	15.8	11.3	48.6	4.3	41.2	3.7	12.5	1.1	12.6	1.1
35–39	27.7	20.5	80.7	3.9	104.2	5.1	18.8	0.9	22.6	1.1
≥40	65.2	51.5	189.7	3.7	—	—	36.6	0.7	44.0	0.9
Education completed										
Less than high school	21.6	25.0	45.6	1.8	50.8	2.0	18.7	0.7	12.6	0.5
High school	27.4	25.2	59.1	2.3	43.7	1.7	22.9	0.9	11.2	0.4
Some college	16.4	11.7	41.0	3.5	32.0	2.7	15.4	1.3	9.4	0.8
College graduate or higher	10.9	7.8	40.2	5.2	—	—	13.2	1.7	9.3	1.2
Period										
2007–2008	15.0	11.5	35.6	3.1	26.9	2.3	11.4	1.0	10.8	0.9
2009–2010	17.3	12.8	41.6	3.2	30.7	2.4	13.6	1.1	12.8	1.0
2011–2012	16.8	12.4	44.3	3.6	38.4	3.1	11.6	0.9	10.4	0.8
2013–2014	17.6	13.5	42.1	3.1	30.3	2.2	15.8	1.2	12.0	0.9
2015–2016	17.0	13.2	40.8	3.1	21.9	1.7	14.7	1.1	11.6	0.9
State-level PRMR tertile										
Lowest PRMR	10.7	8.7	26.0	3.0	28.9	3.3	11.9	1.4	9.7	1.1
Middle PRMR	15.4	11.0	36.9	3.3	33.9	3.1	14.2	1.3	11.7	1.1
Highest PRMR	21.9	16.6	45.9	2.8	28.8	1.7	15.8	0.9	13.2	0.8

Abbreviations: AI/AN = American Indian/Alaska Native; A/PI = Asian/Pacific Islander.

* Blacks, whites, AI/AN, and A/PI were non-Hispanic; Hispanic women might be of any race.

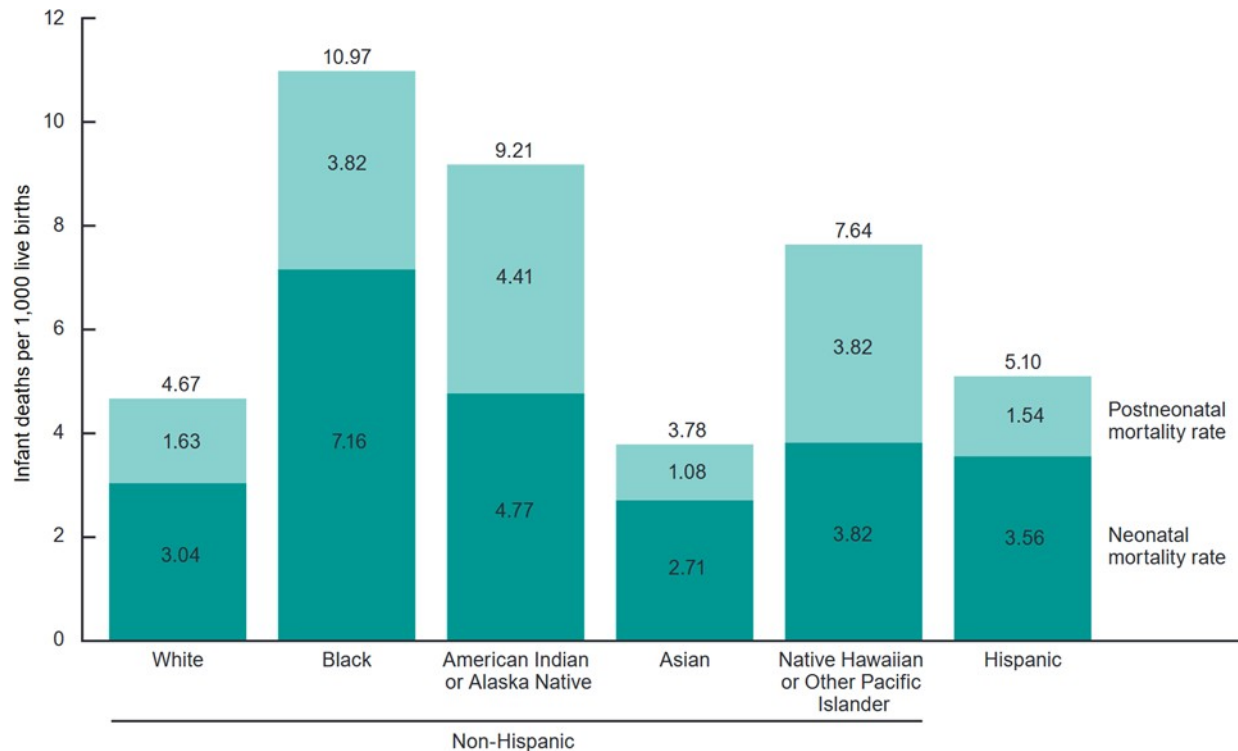
† 25 pregnancy-related deaths with unknown race/ethnicity were included in the total analyses but not presented in an individual column; two pregnancy-related deaths with unknown age were excluded from age analyses; 687 pregnancy-related deaths with unknown educational levels were excluded from education analyses.

§ Dashes indicate fewer than 10 deaths; these results were suppressed because ratios might be unreliable.

At the same time, black mothers are dying, the *New York Times* reports:

Black infants in America are now more than twice as likely to die as white infants—11.3 per 1,000 black babies, compared with 4.9 per 1,000 white babies, according to the most recent government data—a racial disparity that is actually wider than in 1850, 15 years before the end of slavery, when most black women were considered chattel. In one year, that racial gap adds up to more than 4,000 lost black babies. Education and income offer little protection. In fact, a black woman with an advanced degree is more likely to lose her baby than a white woman with less than an eighth-grade education.⁶

From the National Vital Statistics Report of the Centers for Disease Control, August 1, 2019⁷:



NOTE: Neonatal and postneonatal rates may not add to total infant mortality rate due to rounding.
SOURCE: NCHS, National Vital Statistics System, Linked birth/infant death file.

As people of faith we are responsible for being the hands and feet of the Creator in whose image we are made, for making God's love, justice, and mercy shine forth in a manner contagious to all around.⁸ Fortunately, much good work has already begun around this issue, work that we can make our own as the PC(USA). The Black Mamas Matter Alliance is one leading organization:

The policy solutions we propose are grounded in reproductive justice theory and human rights law. This approach is valuable because it recognizes the intersectionality of rights, issues and identities in ways that our domestic legal and policy framework does not. The human rights frame is also unique in that it emphasizes participation and transparency throughout decision-making processes. In the U.S. context, a human rights-based approach to maternal health policy cannot be implemented without the participation of Black women. Instead, it depends on recognizing Black women's leadership and scaling up the work that they are already doing in their communities.⁹

Along with advocating for the passing of H.R. 2902, which calls for evidence-based quality improvement in care and promotes a proven effective model for change from North Carolina, the PC(USA) has the ability to advocate for that which the leaders at The Black Mamas Matter Alliance have named as crucial:

- *Change Policy*: Introduce and advance policy grounded in the human rights framework that addresses black maternal health inequity and improves black maternal health outcomes
- *Cultivate Research*: Leverage the talent and knowledge that exists in black communities and cultivate innovative research methods to inform the policy agenda to improve black maternal health
- *Advance Care for Black Mamas*: Explore, introduce, and enhance holistic and comprehensive approaches to black mamas' care
- *Shift Culture*: Redirect and reframe the conversation on black maternal health and amplify the voices of black mamas.¹⁰

Appendix: The Care Act

Endnotes

1. The full text of The Care Act can be found appended to this resolution. <<https://www.congress.gov/116/bills/hr2902/BILLS-116hr2902ih.pdf>> (01/31/2020).
2. <<https://www.congress.gov/116/bills/hr2902/BILLS-116hr2902ih.pdf>> (01/31/2020).

3. EE Petersen, NL Davis, D Goodman, et al., “Racial/Ethnic Disparities in Pregnancy-Related Deaths—United States, 2007–2016,” *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* 2019, 68:762–765. <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/68/wr/mm6835a3.htm?s_cid=mm6835a3_w> (01/31/2020).
4. Maya Salam, “For Serena Williams, Childbirth Was a Harrowing Ordeal. She’s Not Alone,” *The New York Times*, 11 January 2019. <<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/11/sports/tennis/serena-williams-baby-vogue.html>> (01/31/2020).
5. Ibid. Idem.
6. Linda Villarosa, “Why America’s Black Mothers and Babies Are in a Life or Death Crisis,” *New York Times Magazine* (11 April 2018). <<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/11/magazine/black-mothers-babies-death-maternal-mortality.html>> (01/31/2020).
7. Danielle M. Ely, and Anne K. Driscoll, “Infant Mortality in the United States, 2017: Data from the Period Linked Birth/Infant Death File,” *National Vital Statistics Report*, Vol. 68, No. 10, (1 August 2019): 4. <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr68/nvsr68_10-508.pdf> (01/31/2020).
8. From the Presbyterian Mission Agency’s Matthew 25 Initiative: <<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/matthew-25/>> (01/31/2020).
9. Katrina Braxton, Pilar Herrero, “Black Mamas Matter! Building a Human Rights Movement for Maternal Health in the U.S.” *Maternal Health Task Force at the Harvard Chan School* (15 January 2018). <<https://www.mhtf.org/2018/01/15/from-the-archives-black-mamas-matter-building-a-human-rights-movement-for-maternal-health-in-the-u-s/>> (01/31/2020).
10. <<https://blackmamasmatter.org/about/>> (01/31/2020).

Item 02-073

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 307.]

A Resolution for Transwomen of Color—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns and the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee.

The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee and the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns recommend that the 224th General Assembly (2020):

1. Direct the Moderator or Co-Moderators of the 224th General Assembly (2020) to read aloud on the floor of the assembly the names of all of the transwomen of color from the United States whose murders were recorded in 2019.
2. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through the Office of Public Witness, to advocate boldly for the rights of transgender women of color and for the passage of The Equality Act.
3. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through the Presbyterian Mission at the United Nations and the Office of Public Witness, to advocate for the rights of transwomen of color migrants and asylum seekers.
4. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to include Transgender Day of Remembrance on November 20th in all future printings and distributions of the *Planning Calendar*.
5. Direct the six agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Administrative Services Group of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to include the intersection of gender identity as a part of cultural humility trainings done around the denomination.
6. Direct the six agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Administrative Services Group of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to include in all job postings a commitment to being not only an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer as defined by the U.S. government, but with the inclusion of gender identity and sexual orientation as well.
7. Direct the six agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Administrative Services Group of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to ensure the provision of all-gender bathroom facilities in their offices and at every General Assembly.

Rationale

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) and the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC) learned about the silenced and ignored tragedy of the murders of transwomen¹ of color whose families and communities are also directly impacted. These siblings have each experienced firsthand the loss and trauma of having people in their own lives murdered; this is a tragedy directly impacting the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). With this resolution, we seek to raise awareness, to mourn, to repent of our complicity and silence, and to honor and celebrate our transgender sisters of color.

Rationale for Recommendation 1

The list of names of all the transwomen whose murders were reported around the world in 2019 can be found at <https://tdor.info/>. This is a United States' human rights issue as much as it is global one, so the names of the transwomen of color whose murders were reported in 2019 in the United States are appended to this resolution.

Rationale for Recommendation 2

The Equality Act², a landmark LGBTQ non-discrimination and civil rights bill, would specifically expand existing federal laws to protect people from discrimination based on their sexual orientation and gender identity.

On May 17, 2019, the House of Representatives passed the Equality Act with an overwhelming, bipartisan majority. It needs now to reach the Senate floor.³

From the 223rd General Assembly (2018):

Accordingly, the General Assembly empowers, authorizes, and directs the Stated Clerk and the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through its Office of Public Witness, to advocate for the rights of transgender people and for legal protections to ensure and protect the full humanity and dignity of people of all gender identities. Specifically, the Stated Clerk and the Presbyterian Mission Agency (Office of Public Witness) are authorized to support the right of transgender individuals to

- serve in the military, and every type of government and public service;
- full access to public accommodations, including gender-inclusive restrooms;
- full legal protection against discrimination, particularly with regard to employment, housing, education, and health care;
- title IX protections for transgender students against violence and bullying;
- other legal protections that guarantee and safeguard the full rights of transgender individuals.⁴

Rationale for Recommendation 3

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) directed the Presbyterian Mission Agency to give attention to issues faced by LGBTQIA+ immigrants and to support congregations wishing to welcome LGBTQIA+ asylum seekers.⁵ The 223rd General Assembly (2018) further affirmed this mandate:

The assembly calls on the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency (through its Office of Public Witness), and all who represent the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to actively work for the protection of human and civil rights, both in the United States and around the world, especially the rights of marginalized and oppressed groups, including people facing discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.⁶

Rationale for Recommendations 4–7

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) called for celebration of people of diverse gender identities. As a church we would be remiss to claim to celebrate a community without acknowledging and working for an end to the tragic violence committed against this community for the very identity we claim to celebrate.

Celebration means making visible and lifting up that which the world may have seen fit to ignore, demean, or destroy. Inclusion of gender identity as well as sexual orientation when working against discrimination, inequity, and violence displays intentionality in our work toward becoming an equitable and just people of God. There's no reason the church can't do more than the government requires and be a model for other employers of the radical inclusion and welcome of the One we serve.

Appendix

Reported Transwomen of Color Murders in the United States, 2019

Dana Martin
Montgomery, Alabama

Jazzaline Ware
Memphis, Alabama

Ashanti Carmon
Fairmount Heights, Maryland

Claire Legato
Cleveland, Ohio

Muhlaysia Booker
Dallas, Texas

Michelle "Tamika" Washington
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Paris Cameron
Detroit, Michigan

Johana Medina León ("Joa")
El Paso, Texas

Chynal Lindsey
Dallas, Texas

02 RECOMMENDED REFERRALS TO THE 225TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2022)

Chanel Scurlock
Lumberton, California

Layleen Cubilette Polanco Xtravaganza
Rikers Island, New York

Zoe Spears
Fairmount Heights, Maryland

Brooklyn Lindsey
Kansas City, Missouri

Denali Berries Stuckey
North Charleston, South Carolina

Tracy Single
Houston, Texas

Bubba Walker
Charlotte, North Carolina

KiKi Fantroy
Miami, Florida

Pebbles LaDime “Dime” Doe
Allendale County, South Carolina

Bailey Reeves
Baltimore, Maryland

Bee Love Slater
Clewiston, Florida

Ja’leyah Jamar
Kansas City, Kansas

Elisha Chanel Stanley
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Itali Marlowe
Houston, Texas

Brianna “BB” Hill
Kansas City, Missouri

Yahira Nesby
Brooklyn, New York

Endnotes

1. Transwomen are women who were assigned the gender “male” at birth but live their lives in alignment with their true gender identity as women.
2. The Equality Act: <<https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/5/text>> (01/31/2020).
3. National Center for Transgender Equality Website <<https://secure.transequality.org/site/Advocacy?cmd=display&page=UserAction&id=141>> (01/31/2020).
4. The 223rd General Assembly (2018), Item 11-12, *On Affirming and Celebrating the Full Dignity and Humanity of People of All Gender Identities*. <<https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000312>>
5. The 222nd General Assembly (2018), Item 12-09, *On Supporting the Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Regarding Protecting Individuals from Violence and Discrimination*. <<https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/6313>>.
6. The 223rd General Assembly (2018), Item 11-12, *On Affirming and Celebrating the Full Dignity and Humanity of People of All Gender Identities*. <<https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000312>>

GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 02-073

General Assembly Committee on Representation Comment on Item 02-073. A Resolution for Transwomen of Color—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns and the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee.

This item has been recommended to be referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). However, should the assembly determine that this item of business needs to be considered by the 224th General Assembly (2020), GACOR provides this comment.

General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) supports this item which encourages our denomination to become better educated on the nuances and complexity of gender as a socially constructed identity. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) must continually expand its partnerships with partners such as GACOR, REAC, the “Investigate the Need for an Advocacy Committee for LGBTQIA+ Concerns Task Force,” Covenant Network of Presbyterians, and More Light Presbyterians so that it neither operates nor makes decisions from a deficit of these perspectives.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation is made up of sixteen persons, elected by the General Assembly, who are drawn from members and elders, ruling and teaching, from across the church in accordance with F-1.0403. Its constitutional mandate and central functions are described in G-3.0103 of the Book of Order (Form of Government).

Item 02-074

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 305.]

On Renaming the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns recommends that the 220th General Assembly (2020):

1. Direct the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns to change their name to the Advocacy Committee for Women's Equity.
2. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns to edit in their manuals of operation the composition requirements for the membership of the committee as follows:
 - a. Remove "At least two members of the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns will be men, but no more than three members may be men," and insert "People of all genders are invited to serve on ACWC, but at all times there shall be no more than three members serving who do not identify as women."
 - b. Remove the requirement for "one woman church lay employee."
3. Urge the Presbyterian Mission Agency to expand the office of advocacy committee support and the role of advocacy in the PC(USA).

Rationale

Regarding Recommendation 1.

With gratitude to our siblings on the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee who have recently undertaken the task of renaming themselves, ACWC has seen value in considering the need to rename ourselves to better reflect the work to which we're called.

The term "women's concerns" does not accurately name the human rights and gender justice/equity work that we do, which is a concern for all humanity. By renaming the committee with the term "women's equity," we not only more accurately name that for which we advocate (equity for women), but we name the work in such a way that no longer insinuates that injustice against women is a problem or "concern" for women only.

By employing the term "equity," we name the justice advocacy work we do as that of seeking not merely equality, but that which is necessary for women to thrive in a world where the sin of sexism is still a reality. Advocating for equity takes into account the biases and injustices that need to be overcome before equality can be a reality.

Recognizing the complexities of gender and what it means to identify as a woman, ACWC intentionally takes an expansive view of "woman," respecting each person's right to identify their own gender identity.

Regarding Recommendation 2.

As the committee discussed its membership composition requirements, these two items seemed like holdovers from another time, and they no longer serve the work of the committee.

While ACWC values diversity of all types in its membership composition, the requirement to fill a particular number of seats with men implies that this work cannot be done without the presence of men. The revision recommended still welcomes the presence of men (or people of any gender identity) on the committee, but removes the restriction on these two seats of the committee. Further, the revision promotes an expanded view of gender that gets beyond the binary of women and men.

Over several nominations cycles, the General Assembly Nominating Committee has consulted with ACWC to determine what was meant and sought by the committee when they required "one woman church lay employee." Not only is this requirement exceedingly difficult to fulfill, but several iterations of ACWC have been unable to determine why the requirement was put in place nor why it would still be essential.

Regarding Recommendation 3.

In this day of claiming and reclaiming our identity as Christ's followers in the PC(USA), we have recognized the growing importance of the role of advocacy in the life of the church. From the Stated Clerk's "Hands and Feet" initiative to the Presbyterian Mission Agency's resourcing the denomination in becoming a "Matthew 25 Church," living the gospel by doing the work of seeking justice and equity for all people is central to our identity as Presbyterians.

At the time of the writing of this resolution, there are two advocacy committees (with another being proposed at this General Assembly) called to hold the church accountable to its commitments to gender and racial justice/equity and to be a

prophetic witness to and for the church on these issues. These committees work to address inequities both internal to the denomination as well as those in the broader world that our faith compels us to act upon.

With only two staff people (one associate and one administrative assistant) assigned to resource both of these committees of twelve elected members each, there are serious limitations to the work that can be accomplished. Broadening the scope of this office could allow for better collaboration with other programs, offices, and initiatives in the church. The good advocacy work done by the committees could be communicated and shared more broadly with resources to assist others in their own efforts, from the national level of the denomination all the way to the person in the pew who wants to live into their faith with action.

Item 02-075

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 305.]

A Resolution on Reproductive Justice—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020):

1. Commend Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) for its longstanding work on women’s rights dating back to 1971 and its pioneering work on reproductive justice.
2. Direct MRTI to continue its work toward one of its foundational goals of advancing women’s rights through shareholder advocacy as part of, but not limited to, the Reproductive Health Shareholders Campaign, and report back on its progress at the 225th General Assembly (2022).
3. Direct the Office of the Stated Clerk to send this resolution, emphasizing the rationale, to every synod, presbytery, and congregation in order to encourage Presbyterians to promote and advocate for reproductive justice in their specific context for women and persons assigned female at birth. Our greatest concern is for women and persons assigned female at birth experiencing poverty and homelessness.
4. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA), through the Office of Public Witness (OPW), to oppose legislative and judicial efforts that would make access to legal health-care services inaccessible, unaffordable, misleading, and overly burdensome, in particular for women and persons assigned female at birth experiencing poverty and marginalization.
5. Direct PMA to continue long-term, sustaining support of the Office of Gender and Racial Justice to inform and equip marginalized persons to make the best decisions about their bodies, their health and wellbeing, as well as that of their families.

Rationale

The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC) affirms that we have a duty to protect women and their reproductive rights. The Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) and the Office of Public Witness (OPW) have continued engagement with our corporate investments, applying the long-standing PC(USA) principles related to corporate engagement to the specific issues of reproductive justice. We commend MRTI for its history of corporate engagement, particularly the committee’s recent vote to work with partner denominations on reproductive justice issues through investment.

When MRTI was created in 1971, it had five goals, including one for the advancement of women. More recently, MRTI has worked with the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice and Reproductive Health Investor Advocacy (RHIA). With this initial work in mind, it is imperative that the work is continued with progress reported at the 225th General Assembly (2022) by MRTI.

ACWC acknowledges that our response must not be limited to corporate engagement, and that engagement also requires us to develop, advocate, and implement faithful actions that dismantle the patriarchy and its colonial hegemonic power that has too long been maintained by the church.

It is critical that the Office of the Stated Clerk send this resolution, emphasizing this rationale, to every synod, presbytery, and congregation. Presbyterians can no longer be uninformed of the needs of those in their specific context. Presbyterians are called to be the hands and feet of Christ, yet tools for implementation are needed to equip the saints for this good work.

The following are educational points to help Presbyterians understand what reproductive justice is and how to advocate for it:

02 RECOMMENDED REFERRALS TO THE 225TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2022)

1. Reproductive justice focuses on the lack of access, rather than the right, women and persons assigned female at birth have to things such as birth control, contraception, sexually transmitted infection (STI) prevention and control, abortion, prenatal and pregnancy care, and domestic violence assistance.
2. Although women and persons assigned female at birth may have the legal right to make their own decisions, their lack of access to professional healthcare is another restriction that prevents them from the ability to make an informed decision.
3. We recognize that poor, young, or homeless women of color are at a greater disadvantage for finding the proper resources and care needed.
4. Reproductive justice is focused on structural change, and we must recognize PC(USA)'s own complicity in creating power systems that continue to hurt marginalized women and those assigned female at birth. We need to help break the barriers that prevent access to reproductive justice.
5. Understand that reproductive justice intersects with many other issues like racial and gender justice, environmental justice, gender identity, and food security.
6. Important history: The reproductive justice movement was started by women of color and women with low income.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-075

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-075—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve this report.

This communication affirms the work of Mission Responsibility Through Investment as part of the church's support for reproductive justice, especially for those with limited personal and family resources, as part of their improved healthcare access overall.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) seeks to hold two values together: that God Alone Is Lord of the Conscience, particularly in matters of reproduction and health for females and those assigned female at birth. This means that they have the God-given ability to make the choices that are best for them and their families, with medical and pastoral consultation as requested. The second value is that God lives and works among the poor, a theme in scripture lifted up in The Confession of Belhar, for example. This resolution affirms where God is at work and affirms the work that people of color and people living in poverty are doing to ensure community health where they live. This resolution calls us to join God in advocating for healthy communities so that health care is not a luxury that only the wealthiest and most privileged can access.

Commissioners may be aware that the matter of freedom of conscience on matters of reproduction has been debated extensively in the church since the early 1970s, and was the subject of substantial reports on study processes in 1981 (PCUS), 1983, 1992, and 2006, with a resolution opposing arbitrary governmental restrictions on reproductive healthcare education and access (including to contraception) in 2012.

REAC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-075

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-075—From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee.

The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 02-075.

The Racial Equity and Advocacy Committee (REAC) supports this resolution. There are more women of color who experience poverty and homelessness and thus do not have equal access to health care to make an informed decision. The church's call is to stand up for the marginalized in all circumstances.

Item 02-076

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 305.]

A Resolution on Celebrating the Gifts of Women and Their Contributions to the Life of the Church—From the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC) recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020):

1. Affirm the contributions of women and women-identified people for their ministry, recognizing that all people, regardless of gender identity, are God's beloved children created in the imago dei.
2. Celebrate the numerous ways that women and women-identified individuals have faithfully and lovingly served the church in every service, doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with our God.
3. Lament the ways that women of color have disproportionately experienced mistreatment and mal-effect by the policies and practices of the PC(USA).
4. Express particular gratitude for those women of color who have persisted in their ministry despite the additional challenges they have had to endure.
5. Recognizing the above considerations, direct all six agencies of the PC(USA) to issue statements reiterating the above affirmation, celebration, lament, and gratitude.
6. Call on the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency (through its Office of Public Witness), and all who represent the PC(USA) to actively work towards gender justice, both in the United States and throughout the world, responding to issues of human rights, especially those that affect women.
7. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to explicitly state issues of gender justice as a focus of the Matthew 25 initiative.
8. Encourage all congregations and councils of the PC(USA) to continually celebrate the gender diversity in God's kingdom, and work towards gender justice in the church universal and on earth.

Rationale

It was Mary of Magdalene who proclaimed the news of the risen Lord. Today women continue to work for the good of the PC(USA), proclaiming and living out the good news. Women serve in all capacities in the PC(USA), from mid council executive positions to pastors to those who volunteer to keep the nursery, to teach Sunday school, to handle the arrangements for when presbytery comes to meet at the local congregation, to those who provide meals at birth and death. Unfortunately, as we've learned from the Gender and Leadership Report¹, the Living by the Gospel Guide², and as we know from our own lived experiences, women are still not treated with equity and justice in the PC(USA).

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) approved Item 11-03³ that has laid the foundation for the formation of the Matthew 25 Initiative. This plan was then presented to the 223rd General Assembly (2018) and was approved with comment, which led to the initiation and introduction of the Matthew 25 Initiative. Both ACWC and the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC) commented on the Presbyterian Mission Agency 2019–2020 Mission Plan that the gender justice lens had been omitted and should not be overlooked. From REAC (then called the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns):

[This comment addresses the Justice and Reconciliation portion of the Mission Work Plan.] While the item overtly names white supremacy and racist systemic structures, it does not name violence against women in a time when the United States of America society is grappling with the violence perpetrated against women. If not now, when? When violence intersects with poverty and racism, women have experienced hurt and harm. The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) supports the need for the PC(USA) to put into practice the PC(USA)'s confession and beliefs.⁴

From ACWC:

[The Mission Work Plan,] written in the form of worship, allows for repentance (confession) and a way forward. The focus on an intentional mission plan with specific areas of intention (Evangelism & Discipleship, Leader Formation, and Justice and Reconciliation) allows for a radical turn in the mission of the denomination. Addressing structured racism and white supremacy is emphasized, and yet the lens of gender justice is omitted.

The Gender and Leadership in the PC(USA) Report, written by Research Services of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, states:

Although male and female members are equally likely to be asked to serve in a leadership role, the nature of that role varies by gender. Men are more likely to hold an official leadership role, in which they have an official title and/or receive a paycheck, and women are more likely to be heavily involved in a voluntary capacity. Women still comprise only about 38% of all active PC(USA) teaching elders, and only 29% of teaching elders overall. These percentages are slowly increasing. If the rate remains the same, we won't achieve gender parity among active teaching elders until 2027.⁵

With this present reality as evidenced in the above-mentioned report, the delayed justice for women must be included in the overall fiber and ethos of the work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. To fail to intentionally include addressing known gender injustices in our denomination does a grave disservice to the recent findings included in the research of 2016.

For these reasons, the 223rd General Assembly (2018) would like to see an emphasis on support/leadership efforts (including mentoring) for women leaders in ordered ministries, as well as an overall acknowledgement of the need to address gender injustices via the work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency (from the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns comments).

ACWC calls upon the 224th General Assembly (2020) to direct the PMA to add gender justice as the 4th prong of the Matthew 25 Initiative.

Endnotes

1. Gender and Leadership in the PC(USA) (2016): <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/gender-leadership-pcusa/>.
2. Living By the Gospel: <http://www.pensions.org/file/our-role-and-purpose/the-connectional-church/living-by-the-gospel/Documents/pln-619.pdf> "Over the last twelve years, there has been a distinct gender disparity as to the provision of benefits in the PC(USA). Women outnumber men ordained, 1,855 to 1,694, but men have obtained benefits at a far greater rate—77 percent to 63 percent. Although there are areas of progress, the gender distinction in compensation is clear, as the salary study in the appendices of this document shows. While the Board cannot know the individual circumstances and choices of those seeking a call, the overall pattern cannot be ignored. As noted in the opening of this document, the 223rd General Assembly (2018) urged COMs to act decisively in this matter. It is therefore incumbent on COMs to embrace a goal of gender equity in reviewing and approving terms of call for all ministers" (9).
3. "On Choosing to be a Church Committed to the Gospel of Matthew 25" <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/6305>.
4. ACREC Comment on "On Choosing to be a Church Committed to the Gospel of Matthew 25" <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/6305>.
5. Gender and Leadership in the PC(USA), <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/gender-leadership-pcusa/>, 4.

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 02-076

Presbyterian Mission Agency Comment on Recommendation 7. of Item 02-076: Resolution on Celebrating the Gifts of Women and their Contributions to the Life of the Church.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency believes that the Matthew 25 invitation should remain clearly focused on the three areas of poverty, racism, and congregational vitality.

Gender justice is a priority for the work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. Lifting up the work of gender justice in the Matthew 25 invitation is consistent with multiple General Assembly actions:

- In 2008, the General Assembly called for the development of "an understanding of and ability to use a 'gender lens,' that is, to view issues, institutions, and actions through the lens of gender-specific needs and realities;" and recognized "the intersectionality of gender and race, along with other factors such as ethnicity and class, that contribute to unique or particular experiences of oppression and/or privilege."
- In 2018, the General Assembly urged committees on ministry "to embrace a goal of gender equity in reviewing and approving terms of call for all ministers." PMA holds that there is a direct connection between congregational vitality and gender equity. We can and will include emphasize the intersection of gender in the Matthew 25 vision.

Gender justice is an intersectional concern within each of the Matthew 25 areas (poverty, racism, and congregational vitality), however, we have concerns about making it one of the focal commitments of the Matthew 25 invitation.

The Matthew 25 Invitation was launched in April of 2019, based on the actions of the 222nd General Assembly (2016) and the 223rd General Assembly (2018). The invitation encompasses the three foci of the 2018 Mission Work Plan that was approved by the General Assembly in 2018. Using the emphases of the General Assembly-approved Mission Work Plan, congregations, mid councils and other groups were asked to accept the invitation by committing to act in one of three areas: Building Congregational Vitality, Dismantling Structural Racism, and Eradicating Systemic Poverty. As of late March 2020, one year into the effort, 440 congregations, 37 mid councils (representing 5,681 congregations), and 11 groups have responded to the invitation.

A major element of the progress made to embed the Matthew 25 invitation within the denomination is the clarity and focus of the vision. Congregations and mid councils have signed on to the invitation in full awareness of the components of the effort. Adding a fourth area to the invitation would disrupt its clarity and focus, which is important to mid council leaders and synod executives, some of whom the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board gathered last year to help us envision the direction of the

PMA's next budget cycle. In preparation for the gathering, a collection of General Assembly mandates from the past decade were reviewed and assessed for their potential to guide General Assembly mission over the next two years. The overwhelming consensus of the mid council and synod leaders gathered at that time of discernment was that PMA should hold to a vision for longer than two years. The practice of beginning again every two years was confusing to the church, and actually undermined opportunities for long-term focus. The sense was that the Matthew 25 vision, with its emphases on congregational vitality, racism, and poverty should remain the focus for the next budget cycle. PMA's reluctance to change the Matthew 25 invitation is rooted in that discernment.

It is our conviction that the Matthew 25 invitation should remain clearly focused on the three areas of poverty, racism, and congregational vitality, as we provide clear direction and a single vision that unites the church in mission. The President/Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency has initiated conversation with the leadership of the Advocacy Committee on Women's Concerns regarding PMA's commitment to incorporating gender justice within its overall emphases on poverty, racism, and congregational vitality.

Item 02-077

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 305.]

A Resolution on Preventing, Reporting, and Responding to Bullying, Harassment, and Assault—From the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC) recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020)

1. Direct the Office of the General Assembly (OGA), in consultation with the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) and the Administrative Services Group (ASG), to develop a comprehensive, transparent process for preventing, reporting, and responding to bullying, harassment, and assault offenses at General Assembly. This process shall include:

a. A response team who will immediately respond to the situation at the General Assembly. OGA, in consultation with PMA and ASG, shall appoint this response team, which is comprised of at least three members. The members of this response team must understand emotional and physical responses to bullying, harassment, and assault, coping strategies for the victim, and stages of trauma and recovery.

b. A trained victim advocate shall be part of the response team.

c. A presentation during the opening plenary meeting that clearly and fully establishes General Assembly as a safe space for vulnerable individuals, particularly women. This presentation shall explicitly state how to contact the response team as well as detail the process for reporting. This presentation shall also cover bystander intervention protocols.

d. Required boundaries training or equivalent for all commissioners, delegates, and corresponding members to the General Assembly, completed within twelve months prior to serving. (Similar to what is necessary under the Child Protection policy).

2. Direct OGA, in consultation with PMA and ASG, to develop a comprehensive and transparent process for preventing, reporting, and responding to bullying, harassment, and assault offenses at the meetings of committees and task forces of the General Assembly. This process shall include:

a. A reporting entity who understands emotional and physical responses to bullying, harassment, and assault, coping strategies for the victim, and stages of trauma and recovery. Furthermore, this reporting entity shall be knowledgeable about the reporting and response process and can initiate that process with the focus on the victim.

b. A victim advocate, who shall be available to the victim throughout the reporting and response process.

3. Direct the six agencies of the PC(USA) and ASG to have elected and appointed board and committee members participate in a boundaries training or equivalent each year in order to serve in their positions.

Rationale

We are called to ensure that the church is a safe space for all people. It is especially important that the space where the whole church gathers, i.e. General Assembly and Big Tent, is safe. We commend the work that has been done to ensure that children, youth, and vulnerable adults are protected. We commend the work that has been done and continues to be done to ensure that those who have been harmed by sexual predators are being cared for and protected. Yet within the structure of our

PC(USA) an environment exists that permits bullying, harassment, and assaults to occur, and there is no transparent process of reporting, investigating, and resolution when these issues arise. We acknowledge that if such incidents occur during the General Assembly, then the Stated Clerk, per our Rules of Discipline, has the authority to address such behaviors and incidents, but the process from incident to resolution is cloudy, and this lack of transparency is problematic for the victim and even the perpetrator. A transparent process that includes victim care is necessary for all to live into the Ethical Standards of Conduct as approved by the 201st General Assembly (1998) as cited below.

The 201st General Assembly (1998) approved the Standards of Ethical Conduct¹:

Life Together in the Community of Faith:

- a. Standards of Ethical Conduct for Members of the PC(USA)
- b. Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees and Volunteers of the PC(USA)
- c. Standard of Ethical Conduct for Ordained Officers in the PC(USA)

From the Stated Clerk's letter introducing the Standards of Ethical Conduct:

The General Assembly took several actions to implement the use of "Life Together in the Community of Faith." Though it was not the first action taken, the action that is perhaps of the most interest to you is that the General Assembly commended the Standards, as a model, to presbyteries and synods for study, approval, and inclusion in manuals of operations, and to congregations, as a model, for study, approval, and use with sessions, new member classes, adult education classes, personnel committees, and in contracts. In addition, the General Assembly commended the Standards to seminaries for inclusion in curricula. The General Assembly approved A and B as Standards of Ethical Conduct for those serving in General Assembly entities and instructed those entities to include the Standards in personnel policies.

Within all three standards the church, employees, volunteers, and ordained officers call on those involved on the national, synod, mid council, and congregational levels to²:

Be honest and truthful in my relationships with others;

Treat all persons with equal respect and concern as beloved children of God;

Refrain from abusive, addictive, or exploitative behavior and seek help to overcome such behavior if it occurs;

Refrain from gossip and abusive speech; and

Maintain an attitude of repentance, humility, and forgiveness, responsive to God's reconciling will.

These policies are already in place addressing bullying, harassment, and assault without naming them. We commend the work of the Special Committee on a Professional Code of Ethics that developed these standards of ethical conduct back in the late 1990s. We urge the 224th General Assembly (2020) to bring them to the forefront as a reminder to all attending General Assembly that we are to live into these standards.

We commend the work of all those who have contributed so diligently to the Child, Youth, Vulnerable Adults protection policies and who keep these policies current. We also commend the part of the policy that calls for a response team to be in place. It is from that policy that the response team that is within this resolution is patterned. The need for a victim advocate in addition to those that will be identified by OGA in consultation with PMA and ASG, is a common practice within secular organizations, to travel with the victim from reporting to resolution of the case as a person of support.

We further commend the work of the OGA, PMA, and ASG in their work prior to the 224th General Assembly (2020) in ensuring that a response team is in place in relation to the Child, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy, as well as ensuring that there is a response team for adults facing issues of concerns during the 224th General Assembly (2020).

Endnotes

1. *Standards of Ethical Conduct* (approved by the 201st General Assembly 1998): https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/publications/ethical-conduct.pdf
2. *Standards of Ethical Conduct*, pp. 1, 2, 3.

Item 02-078

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 307.]

A Resolution to Advocate for the Reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns recommend that the 224th General Assembly (2020) direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to advocate and lobby for the immediate Senate reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act, followed by required signing by the president of the United States.

Rationale

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has spoken out numerous times in powerful ways confronting violence against women. Currently, in Washington D.C., the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)¹ sits on the Senate side of the Capitol, after being passed with bipartisan support by the House of Representatives in April of 2019, with little to no action since its arrival on the Senate side of the Chamber.

The opposition to this reauthorization is that unlike the original act that was passed in 1994, the current version of the bill closes the “so-called boyfriend loophole by barring those convicted of abusing, assaulting, or stalking a dating partner or those subject to a court restraining order from buying or owning firearms.”²

The PC(USA) has taken a stand against violence against women for years, so advocating for the reauthorization of VAWA is consistent with our policy and parallel to our actions.³ Presbyterian Women introduced us to wearing orange on the 25th of each month to raise awareness of violence against women and girls.⁴ The PC(USA) has gone black on Thursdays in partnership with World Council of Churches.⁵ The Presbyterian Mission Agency should be affirmed for their work towards ending domestic violence and the resources that they have developed.⁶

Despite all this work, gun violence against domestic violence victims continues, and often others who aren’t victims are killed in connection to the ability of an abuser having a gun.⁷

Violence is contrary to God’s intentions for the world. This reality demands the response of the church in these days of increasing danger to vulnerable peoples—children, youth, women, disabled, and the elderly. Interpreting biblical teachings and responding to the leadership of Jesus Christ in our lives calls the church to a pastoral and moral response through an active program of advocacy and resourcing for transformation.⁸

We must all work to end domestic violence, as well as gun violence here in the United States. Reauthorizing the Violence Against Women Act would be an important step in the right direction.

Endnotes

1. Violence Against Women Act: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/1585/text> (01/31/2020).
2. Sheryl Gay Stolberg, “Why the N.R.A. Opposes New Domestic Abuse Legislation,” *The New York Times* (1 April 2019) <<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/01/us/politics/nra-domestic-violence-congress.html>> (01/31/2020).
3. “Turn Mourning Into Dancing: A Policy Statement on Healing Domestic Violence” <https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/resolutions/turn-mourning-into-dancing.pdf> Presbyterians Against Domestic Violence Network <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/phewa/padvn/> and <https://pres-outlook.org/2019/10/responses-to-domestic-violence-in-the-presbyterian-church-u-s-a/>.
4. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/take-action/> and https://www.presbyterianwomen.org/what_we_do/work-for-justice/violence/.
5. <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/get-involved/thursdays-in-black>.
6. <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/phewa/padvn/> and <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/legal-resources/creating-safe-ministries/helpful-resources/>.
7. <https://lawcenter.giffords.org/gun-laws/policy-areas/who-can-have-a-gun/domestic-violence-firearms/>.
8. Presbyterians Against Domestic Violence Network <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/phewa/padvn/>.

Item 02-079

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 305.]

A Resolution on Chartering Immigrant Fellowships—From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee.

The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC) recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020):

1. Direct the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) to develop standardized guidelines for chartering Immigrant Fellowships, Worshiping Communities, and New Church Developments.
2. Direct the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) to use the term “New Church Development” instead of Fellowship and include them in the national statistics of the PC(USA).

Rationale

Rationale for Recommendation 1

The PC(USA) is making efforts to become a more racially inclusive denomination while its membership is still approximately 90 percent white. More than half of the denomination’s new communities are comprised predominately of people of color and new immigrants from the global south. However, many presbyteries do not seem to have specific written guidelines for the chartering of new congregations in general. An informal survey shows that presbyteries seem to apply whatever processes they may have haphazardly and differently. Many have significant numbers of parishioners, at time more than many older standing congregations. Most importantly, delaying the chartering as churches of the ones comprising of people of color and new immigrants denies these communities full representation of voice and vote at presbytery meetings (except when those involved are members of a hosting congregation), thus maintaining a de facto systemic discrimination. Also, these congregations are not represented in the national statistics of the PC(USA) kept by the Office of the General Assembly since they are not chartered churches, thus skewing the numbers of the membership of color in the PC(USA). Developing standard guidelines would eliminate any semblance of discrimination, with the understanding that these guidelines are applied fairly and justly to all groups.

Rationale for Recommendation 2

Fellowship is the term used for groups of new immigrants that are formed with the intention of becoming a new congregation in the PC(USA). This term is currently not always included in the yearly statistics by all presbyteries, which makes it difficult to include them in the collection of data for statistical purposes. Including Fellowships as New Church Developments would ensure that Immigrant Fellowships are included in the PC(USA) annual statistics reports.

As of 2018, and reflecting only a 27 percent response from presbyteries, the figures are the following:

New worshiping communities 361

New church developments 28

Immigrant fellowships 35

Asian 10 percent

Black, African American, or African Immigrant 22 percent

Hispanic or Latino/a/x 15 percent

Middle Eastern 3 percent

Native American 1 percent

Multiracial 2 percent

COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 02-079

COGA has recommended that this item be referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). However, should the assembly determine that this item of business is core and critical to our governance and sustainability, and needs to be considered by 224th General Assembly (2020), COGA provides this comment.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recognizes that this overture raises a number of questions related to the church's understanding of membership, ordered ministry, and organization. Each of our 170 presbyteries has developed ways to nurture and organize new congregations and develop leaders for the church that fit their particular context. At the same time, the emerging context of 2020 and beyond requires that we as a broader denomination reexamine the assumptions that lie beneath these structures that were developed for a church at work in a different time and place.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly has identified this area as a place where we hope to foster conversation across the church, with a focus not on particular sticking points but rather the underlying challenges that keep coming up in questions of membership, ordered ministry, and organization. We recommend that this item be referred to COGA to help seed this conversation, first with mid council leaders and later with the broader church, with a report on these broader issues to be submitted to the 225th General Assembly (2022).

GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 02-079

General Assembly Committee on Representation Comment on Item 02-079. A Resolution on Chartering Immigrant Fellowships—From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee.

This item has been recommended to be referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). However, should the assembly determine that this item of business needs to be considered by the 224th General Assembly (2020), GACOR provides this comment.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation is aware of the often “higher bar” given to non-dominant culture worshipping communities. In a desire to be diverse, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) must discern the ways to best equip congregations from a variety of contexts and cultural settings. Ensuring the healthy establishment of an immigrant congregation can better solidify their full participation, voice, and vote at higher levels of the church.

When the assembly refers items to agencies for action, we remind commissioners that standing committees and commissions of the assembly are available for advice and counsel.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation is made up of sixteen persons, elected by the General Assembly, who are drawn from members and elders, ruling and teaching, from across the church in accordance with F-1.0403. Its constitutional mandate and central functions are described in G-3.0103 of the Book of Order (Form of Government).

OGA COMMENT ON ITEM 02-079

COGA has recommended that this item be referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). However, should the assembly determine that this item of business is core and critical to our governance and sustainability, and needs to be considered by the 224th General Assembly (2020), OGA provides this comment.

The Office of the General Assembly is grateful to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) in recognizing that this overture is raising broader questions related to membership, ordered ministry, and organization. These are extremely important issues for the church to be discussing. The Office of the General Assembly advises that the item be referred to COGA to help seed this conversation, first with mid council leaders and later with the broader church, with a report on these broader issues to be submitted to the 225th General Assembly (2022).

Item 02-080

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 303.]

Report and Recommendations of the Special Committee on Per Capita and Financial Sustainability.

The Special Committee on Per Capita and Financial Sustainability recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) do the following:

1. Instruct the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA), in consultation with other General Assembly (GA) agencies, the Administrative Services Group (ASG), and mid councils, to establish ongoing campaigns to resource and equip mid council leaders and elders to explain the “why” of making one’s local church a giving priority.

- a. Campaigns to be established with consideration of mid council context and cultural requirements.
- b. Campaigns to be simple, theological, compelling, repeatable, and scalable.

- c. PMA, in consultation with other GA agencies, the ASG, and mid councils, shall provide financial and human resources to mid councils for an ongoing campaign of engagement.
 - d. Led by staff already engaged in mission interpretation, they shall explain the results of congregational support of the councils above them (currently known as per capita) that reaches mid councils, congregations, and worshiping communities, including engagement at the mid council level that provide all members with basic information on theology, polity, and structure.
2. Direct the General Assembly Moderator(s) to appoint a Funding Model Development team to develop, recruit, implement, and provide oversight of possible funding model experiments (see Appendixes).
 - a. Funding Model Development Team to be made up as follows:
 - (1) Two members of the per capita team,
 - (2) Two commissioners from the 224th General Assembly (2020),
 - (3) Three mid council leadership,
 - (4) One member each from the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB) and COGA (Committee on the Office of the General Assembly).
 - b. Funding Model Development Team to receive support from staff of the OGA, PMA, ASG, and the Presbyterian Foundation (PF).
 - c. The Funding Model Development Team would develop and implement experiments that would fund councils of the church, above the session, that would be consistent with the identified values and adaptive challenges of the mid councils. (see Appendix A: Hand-off Handbook, and Appendix B: Adaptive and Technical Challenges).
 - d. Funding Model Development Team would provide oversight of possible funding model experiments (see Appendix A: Hand-off Handbook).
 - e. Funding Model Development Team would report back to the 225th General Assembly (2022) their progress and any recommendations for moving forward.
 3. Create a unified budget structure.
 - a. Instruct staff from the Office of the General Assembly (OGA), Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA), and Administrative Services Group (ASG), in consultation with staff of the Presbyterian Foundation, to collaborate to determine a unified budget structure.
 - b. Instruct staff from OGA, PMA, and ASG, in consultation with staff of the Presbyterian Foundation, to collaborate to determine a system for allocation of unrestricted funding and of restricted funding whose purposes may align with the mission and work of OGA that honors the donor's intent.
 - c. These systems include but are not limited to, consideration of combining, unifying, or consolidating efforts and funding needs between OGA and PMA.
 - d. Staff shall present recommendations to the 225th General Assembly (2022) for consideration.
 4. Form a commission to unify OGA and PMA into one agency, revise the *Organization for Mission*, and work to align the entities, boards, committees, and constituent bodies of the General Assembly toward long-term faithfulness and financial sustainability of its mission with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation (A Corp) remaining as the legal entity.
 - a. Form a commission (functioning as a governing board) to oversee and facilitate the unification of PMA and OGA.
 - b. The commission shall establish missional coordination and determine the strategies and priorities, across all entities, committees, and constituent bodies of the General Assembly where all available dollars, responsibilities, and charges are unified and evaluated to provide the best accomplishment of General Assembly goals.

c. The commission will consult with representatives of the other General Assembly agencies, committees, and entities and their boards, including the advocacy and advisory committees, and mid councils.

d. The commission will have the authority to review, adapt, align as necessary, and appropriate the role(s) and relationships of all committees of the General Assembly, entities, boards, committees, and constituent bodies toward long-term faithfulness, financial sustainability, and a unified new structure.

e. This commission shall have the power to combine, unify, eliminate, and/or create any necessary organizational structure, including personnel, to accomplish these missional strategies and priorities.

f. Commission shall review, address, and align the financial agreements among the Foundation, PMA, OGA, and A Corp to support the new *Organization for Mission* so that each area of mission has adequate funds to sustain its mission long term.

g. This commission shall not have the power to change the boards or bylaws of the Board of Pensions (BOP), the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation (PPC), the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc. (ILP), or the Presbyterian Foundation (PF), but may make recommendations to these agencies in an effort to better align the mission goals and priorities of General Assembly.

h. The commission recommendation for participation shall include:

(1) One member each from the Committee on the General Assembly (COGA), the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB), and the A Corp Board,

(2) Two members from the Special Committee on Per Capita and Financial Sustainability,

(3) A member of the Moving Forward Implementation Commission or its successor,

(4) Two commissioners from the 224th General Assembly (2020).

(5) To ensure representation, COGA, PMAB, MFIC, A Corp, and PC/FS will submit the names of four possible members to serve on the commission

(6) The Moderator of the 224th General Assembly (2020), after consultation with the General Assembly Nominating Committee and the General Assembly Committee on Representation, will name the commission.

(7) Staff from the Office of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and the Administrative Services Group of A Corp will provide support to the work of the commission.

i. Once the unification is finalized, the commission shall determine the structure moving forward and present the new *Organization for Mission* to the 225th General Assembly (2022).

5. Instruct agencies to determine a financial model by which overtures with financial implications whose mandates are inclusive of agencies beyond PMA/OGA to receive funding from other sources besides per capita.

Instruct staff from OGA, PMA, and ASG—in consultation with staff of the Presbyterian Foundation, Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., Board of Pensions, and the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation—and mid councils to create said model and present recommendations to the 225th General Assembly (2022) for consideration.

Rationale

Introduction

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) approved a committee to “provide a comprehensive resource projection analysis and summary assessment—in conjunction with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation and representatives of all other agencies—of national church assets and income for financial sustainability review;” and a committee to “review the current per capita based system of funding the ministry of councils higher than the session, for financial sustainability into the next ten years” (*Minutes*, 2018, Part I, pp. 45, 47, 355, 362). These two committees were combined into one and appointed in March of 2019, and split the work into two teams, one to address each of the charges.

The committee was guided by the underlying value of Holy Connection, giving preference to the way in which the church reflects the interrelatedness of the Holy Spirit, and how our polity depends upon shared values and trust between parties, reflected in our governing parity between ruling and teaching elders, and the layers of councils, from session to General Assembly. The committee sought to address the charge in such a way as to build upon our connectional church nature.

As stated in the *Book of Order* (G-3.0106), “The funding of mission ... demonstrates the unity and interdependence of the church. The failure of any part of the church to participate in the stewardship of the mission of the whole church diminishes that unity and interdependence. All mission funding should enable the church to give effective witness in the world to God’s new creation in Jesus Christ, and should strengthen the church’s witness to the mission of God.”

The committee discussed trends of mainline Protestant numerical decline, political and demographic reasons for decline, the impact of structural change in the United States on membership, and trends in American philanthropy, but determined they were either largely outside the scope of the charges approved by the General Assembly, or, given the very short timeline, would not allow the committee to complete its work by the deadlines provided by the assembly and, while important conversations to be had, were not central to the discussion.

The committee chose to focus on the current reality, understanding that there is diversity of experience, and a wealth of history that looks very different from the present.

Process

The financial sustainability team gathered audited financial statements from the six agencies and ASG, along with service and lease agreements and projections for per capita for ASG and PMA. This team met with staff from all stated agencies, with follow-up meetings with staff of the Foundation, and with the boards of PMA, OGA, and ASG (see Appendix C: Timeline of Meetings).

The per capita team invited mid council leaders of all 170 presbyteries and 16 synods to listening sessions. Over a period of six months, the team conducted listening sessions. Mid council leaders represented all 16 synods and 108 presbyteries (that could be identified). (For questions and responses, see Appendix D: Per Capita Questions and Responses). Those listening sessions were inclusive of local congregational pastors who were present at the gatherings that hosted the listening sessions. Local congregations were not surveyed systematically, since such a listening session effort would not be from a significant sample size nor would it reflect sufficient regional diversity due to the time restrictions of the mandate. We were intent on working from a genuine set of data that came directly from those most affected, as per capita giving to presbyteries is voluntary at the congregational level, but mandated to be paid to higher councils by presbyteries [*Book of Order*, 3.0106 states “Each council above the session shall prepare and adopt a budget for its operating expenses, including administrative personnel, and *may* [emphasis the committee’s] fund it with a per capita apportionment among the particular congregations within its bounds. Presbyteries are responsible for raising their own funds and for raising and timely transmission of per capita funds to their respective synods and the General Assembly”]. Additionally, mid council leaders represented regional differences among congregations and mid councils.

The team also listened to the heads of the agencies and ASG, along with senior staff and staff of mid council ministries, although with less rigor due to the time restrictions for the work and the focus on the donor bodies (see Appendix E: Summary of Agency Responses). The financial sustainability team had conversations with the board of A Corp/ASG, the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, and staff of the Presbyterian Foundation. Once we had the data and found a set of common values for any funding model, we set about looking at experiments that might benefit the whole church, not just the national council.

Sustainability

When diving deep into the sustainability issue, it has been easy to identify operational and structural changes that need to be made in order to maximize the funds and coordinate mission, ensure accountability by all associated, and monitor expected outcomes. The conclusion of this committee is that it is not simply the funding, but the separateness and organization of the national church that is not sustainable into the future. Reassessing funding is necessary, but this committee recommends a more thorough examination of the strategic utilization of the \$94 million annually received that funds A Corporation.

It is our recommendation to combine, unify, or eliminate duplicated efforts and funding needs in order to work as a unified church. We encourage both coordination and cooperation by all entities so all associated funding may become more unified moving forward. Our recommendations are based on our research that indicated there are significant differences, disparities, and inequalities between how different agencies are funded as well as the use and/or duplication of those funds for similar purposes.

Currently, there is no systemic instrument in place to ensure coordination and cooperation between agencies, particularly as it relates to PMA and OGA between assemblies. A-Corp only exists as a service provider, and there are no facilitators for the relationship (including finances or mission) at a structural level. The structure is not set up for the projected needs of a 21st century church. Additional challenges exist with separate agencies beyond PMA competitively engaging in missions. When each agency is distinct, confusion can be eliminated. However, with the current majority of the church unable to distinguish between agencies, the competition for attention means different priorities cause confusion. Additionally, the single entity that serves as an overseeing group (such as A-Corp) could minimize duplication of funding, promote accountability of outcomes, and ensure a more fair coordination of efforts that meet the needs of the whole church.

In our 200+ interviews, many in the PC(USA) are unaware of the four councils that make up the national church, and most do not understand the varying ministries and roles of the six agencies. In fact, in many responses, PMA and OGA were already seen as one entity.

Per the *Book of Order* (G-3.0501), we are charged to operate as one unified church constituting, “the bond of union, community, and mission among all its congregations and councils, to the end that the whole church becomes a community of faith, hope, love and witness.” Based on the dialog from 200 mid council leaders, we have fallen well short of this mandate and need to seriously rethink our national structure so our mission strategy and funding strategy serve the mission of the WHOLE church.

Experiments for Possible Funding Models

While receipts of per capita have been reasonably steady in the past five years, our research made it clear that at the presbytery level, per capita as a funding model has become a burden to presbyteries over the last several decades. Presbyteries that have lost a significant number of congregations and membership have struggled to pay what is due, since the amount due is set by membership data that is two years old.

Based on listening sessions with More than 200 mid council leaders in all sixteen synods, most pastors and many mid council leaders find themselves ill-equipped to explain what the impact of per capita is for our shared mission at the presbytery, synod, and General Assembly levels. This financial burden becomes even more alarming when some churches pay per capita and others do not with no apparent penalty for those that fail to pay. Sustainability, in whatever form, requires that ALL churches, presbyteries, and synods participate under the same guidelines. It is critical that campaigns are designed and tested to rebuild this important connection to the church and communicate giving benefits while increasing the potential for significantly improved financial support.

Many suggested looking at a percentage-based model as a system that would be “fairer,” less regressive, and would take the pressure off presbyteries. Alternative funding sources need to be considered. For at least twenty years, presbyteries have cut staff, programs, mission, office space, and, at the same time, used reserves, mission giving, or investments to make up the difference between collected per capita and per capita sent to the national church. Mid councils are as lean as they can be and still function. More and more presbyteries are determining they can no longer function under the current model.

Overview of Findings

Per capita began with the need to fairly share the cost of travel and lodging for commissioners to the annual General Assembly. Over the generations, use of the per capita funds has evolved without an in-depth review of its effectiveness in a new century.

Per capita is set by the General Assembly based on the recommendation of COGA and PMAB. At the congregational level, for most, it is inclusive of GA per capita (currently at \$8.95), synod per capita, and presbytery per capita. However, there is a great deal of variation as to how per capita is interpreted, collected from congregations, and paid for by presbyteries to higher councils of the church.

In the past generation, the culture of per capita and unified mission giving has shifted due to declining membership, loss of congregations, withholding of per capita or inability to pay per capita by individual congregations, and more focus has been placed on designated or directed giving.

Four agencies were found to be sustainable because of access to resources and the autonomy to make changes to ensure sustainability, namely, the Presbyterian Foundation, the Board of Pensions, the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., and the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation. The other two are funded quite differently. The Presbyterian Mission Agency gains its income through (1) fundraising (Basic Mission/Shared Mission (unrestricted), designated giving from congregations, special offerings from congregations, specific appeals primarily from individuals, gifts and bequests), (2) income from investments and endowments, and (3) sales of resources, and is able to engage in mission interpretation and fundraise. The Office of the General Assembly receives income from (1) unrestricted (Basic Mission or Shared Mission) and designated contributions

from congregations and individuals, (2) per capita income, (3) endowments, interest, and dividends, and (4) sales of resources and program services. However, OGA’s fundraising is restricted to the Presbyterian Historical Society, and the bulk of its income is derived from per capita. OGA is limited primarily to the will of the General Assembly—by requesting increases in per capita. This agency houses essential ecclesial functions of the church and the head of communion (see Appendix F: Financial Sustainability Report to the six agencies, ASG, MFIC, and Vision 2020).

While income to the PC(USA) (A Corporation), the legal corporation of the church that provides business and corporate services and receives all revenue for PMA and OGA, varies based on natural disasters and fundraising, it has been largely stable for the past four years as determined from available audited financials. Per capita income has been flat, overall, and more than 80 percent of per capita is received at the national level. This does not reflect a crisis at the General Assembly level.

The signs of an unstable future for per capita show up in internal projections of per capita income based upon a 4.5 percent decrease in membership (see Appendix G: Per Capita Projections), and in the listening sessions with leaders from all mid councils.

Listening sessions with leaders from all mid councils show that while national-level receipts seem like the system is working quite well, it appears that there is wide variance across the church, and presbyteries are bearing the brunt of making up any shortfalls in congregational per capita remittances (see Appendix D).

From the listening sessions they identified the common values of a Denomination Funding Model (see Appendix D) and also identified the Adaptive Challenges related to the work and funding of the councils above the session. From these listening sessions, Values and Adaptive Challenges were identified (see Appendix B).

Mid councils are required to pay per capita, regardless of their receipts, while per capita payments are voluntary for congregations. This causes many mid councils, in order to fulfill their obligations, to cut costs over time. Many did so because they are committed to the connectional nature of the church. Participants in the listening sessions shared their commitment to ensuring per capita, saying such things as (paraphrased):

- It is our shared responsibility to the church at large.
- [Per capita is] the glue that binds us together as a connectional church; helps to educate new Presbyterians on what it means to be connectional.
- Respondent relayed a story about helping a congregation get a transitional pastor, and using the opportunity to remind the congregation that that help is funded by their per capita giving—the whole church family supporting one another.
- Sign of hope, long-time members know that a portion of their giving funds the work of the wider church; goes to the greater good.

However, the feeling of being squeezed from both sides was expressed in such statements (paraphrased) as:

- Presbyteries are required to pay even when congregations don’t.
- Churches aren’t getting bigger, they’re getting smaller, which means everyone’s budgets are getting smaller.
- This constantly takes a hit on the presbytery staffing structures, their ability to give raises, etc. Meanwhile, OGA “sells” us on a method of growing our churches, and respondent hates seeing “our per capita at work” in the mid council newsletters because nothing in those uses does anything for their particular mid council nor their churches. They do get a high participation in per capita, but that lowers the amount of mission giving they receive. And they can no longer absorb the increases in per capita that they have to pay and that will cause them to pull back even more on the local presbytery level. Respondent is very upset that churches are not required to pay, but the presbyteries are.

Mid councils are left with a choice: reduce what they are able to offer and, along with member congregations, rely increasingly on the services provided by synod or General Assembly, or encourage the council to be out of compliance with the *Book of Order* and not pay full per capita.

The team concluded that other models of funding may be possible that could create cultures within the mid council communities that would help them to thrive, develop financial sustainability, and provide resourcing and ministry to the congregations.

02 RECOMMENDED REFERRALS TO THE 225TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2022)

Already OGA is feeling the burden of fewer fully functioning mid councils, additional phone calls and assistance for lower councils and congregations as a direct result of what have been necessary reductions. We believe that the way to interrupt this cycle is through a release of the pressure on mid councils.

Mid council leaders want to help. However, they find the current per capita system difficult to fully interpret, given the various and many missions of all six agencies. It is confusing and time consuming to interpret at the presbytery level. Overwhelmingly, leaders said, “Can’t we have ONE cohesive mission?” Believing that money follows mission, a unified agency, with unified mission and budget becomes more easily interpreted.

Mid councils feel financially squeezed between OGA and the congregations, which many expressed as both financially and structurally unsustainable.

Summary of Challenges

The appearance of relative stability and steady income hides the pressure on what is the actual donor to the national church. It is not the congregations, but the mid councils. While some regions pay per capita as a matter of tradition and commitment to the connectional nature of the church, others do not call it per capita, and others do not feel obligated or equipped to explain what per capita is or how it is an integral part of our shared ministry. Mid councils have adjusted the per capita they require to maintain their own budgets and ministries in order to cover the per capita that is owed, or they send on what they receive, leaving portions unpaid.

Per capita receipts do not include increases in costs, as costs do not necessarily pace with the membership levels of two years prior. The costs of doing business include salaries, events, travel, raises, Board of Pensions dues, special committees and commissions approved by the General Assembly, and materials. Per capita is also the only source of funding for costs that vary widely, such as all costs of special committees and commissions approved by the General Assembly, even if the scope of the mandate is inclusive of agencies or work external to agencies funded by per capita.

Additionally, OGA currently has only one way to raise funds: per capita. All other agencies have multiple ways to raise funds that do not require General Assembly approval. The one agency that provides ecclesiastically necessary services and functions is held captive to General Assembly and to what mid councils are able to provide.

Poor communication contributes to issues of lack of trust and collegiality with churches, and a lack of awareness among many about the ministries available to provide assistance for congregations.

Additionally, there is no systemic instrument or authority in place to ensure coordination and cooperation between agencies, particularly between PMA and OGA, or between assemblies. ASG only exists as a service provider, and there are no facilitators for the relationship (including finances or mission) at a structural level. Additionally, mission priorities are set by biennial assemblies comprised of elected commissioners who often have little understanding of the outcome and true financial implications of their votes. This leaves staff and boards scrambling to meet the discerned needs and priorities of the body.

Appendices

Appendix A: Handoff Handbook

Appendix B: Adaptive & Technical Challenges

Appendix C: Timeline of Meetings

Appendix D: Per Capita Questions and Responses

Appendix E: Summary of Agency Responses

Appendix F: Financial Sustainability Report

Appendix G: Per Capita Projections

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-080

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-080—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP)

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve this report with the following amendment:

Delete Recommendation 4.

Because social witness capacity is part of the mission of the church, ACSWP is concerned with the diagnosis and prescription developed by the Special Committee on Financial Sustainability and Per Capita. Quite simply, while a unified budget of the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA), the Office of the General Assembly (OGA), and the A Corp board and expanded Administrative Services Group is being done, the snap reorganization being proposed to merge the PMA and OGA is not grounded in a theological, historical, or current organizational analysis of their missions—no duplication is identified—and the A Corp, while working well, has been in place for less than two years, as is the new Director/President of the PMA. The goals of simplifying and economizing are certainly business priorities, but we should also, “seek simplicity but distrust it.” In Presbyterian terms, knowing that all organizations involve power, this means, “seek unity but distrust centralization.”

In this case, ACSWP strongly supports the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly’s advice that this report in its entirety be referred to the next assembly, but our largest concern is the potential impact of an unplanned merger of the PMA and the OGA on the mission, including social mission, of our church.

The special committee is to be commended on the scope of their conversations with mid council staff and review of past budgets of the recent past. The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy is itself funded by both per capita and general mission dollars and has evolved through past reorganizations (back to 1936 in both predecessor denominations), to bridge the traditional distinction between policy and program. This distinction followed the general distinction between form or process for decision-making, maintained by the General Assembly, and the development and administration of mission program now unified in the Presbyterian Mission Agency, but once embodied in a number of boards. As part of the whole system’s accountability, programs receiving the funds were kept an arms-length from the body structuring the discussion and review of those programs. In the layout of (usual!) General Assembly committee meetings, the leadership team maintains strict neutrality on the business from the front of the room, while the resource people and advocates are put in the back.

Similarly, on the presbytery level, the executive staff is often separate from the presbytery’s clerk, whose function was consistent with a line of clerks going up to the General Assembly’s Stated Clerk. Not all power was invested in a person who was also supposed to give the pastors some pastoring.

This Advice & Counsel memorandum briefly looks (A) at the value of theology and vision as a basis for any future reorganization, (B) the data that would be relevant, and (C) the kinds of expertise for elected and staff members of such a commission, lest it be a primarily political exercise.

A. *Theology and Vision*

Only in the fifth appendix, on financial sustainability, is the *Book of Order* quoted: “The General Assembly constitutes the bond of union, community, and mission among all its congregations and councils, to the end that the whole church becomes a community of faith, hope, love, and witness” (G-3.0501). Basically, the assembly is the symbolic centering of our church, which does not (officially) have regional cathedrals. As an event, it is a place of sometimes messy decision-making, but it is also a place of blessing and commissioning, where people and programs are lifted up and many of the most active and loyal members of the denomination are reconnected and energized. Right now, we have two leaders of vision; one who has confidently preached that our church is still being reformed, the other opening up the concept of a Matthew 25 church. This is fairly unquantifiable stuff, but it can be inspiring.

The assembly is a council of the church, and the Form of Government speaks mainly about functions and not much about structures, but we still get the Preliminary Principles and some of our ethos of mutual accountability in which all authority is delegated and representative. Other than “connectionalism,” there is little discussion of the purpose of our denomination in the Financial Sustainability and Per Capita report. Yet the assembly’s mission agency and its own administrative committee are meant to embody something of what our church is about beyond the congregational and mid councils.

Historically, after the reorganizations of 1920–23 and 1972 in the larger predecessor church, people’s loyalties to previous boards was always a bit uprooted. The “brands,” personnel, and traditions they knew were a bit disconnected. Certainly, as in the multiple reorganizations following the move to Louisville, staff get disrupted, but the claim in the report is that “no one” knows the difference between the OGA and the PMA already—despite the PMA’s changing its name partly to distinguish it from the General Assembly. Whether or not that is true for ministers, people are apparently able to distinguish among the other four, more sustainable (even wealthier?) boards of Pensions, Investment and Loan, the Foundation, and Westminster/John Knox Publishing. Is it the case that the PMA and OGA are so little known that few people’s networks and affections will be disrupted by reorganization?

In 1972, again for part of the church, the rallying cry was “mission” and Confession of 1967 was to be reflected in the active engagement of the church in the world. There was centralization in NYC, but decentralization of a lot of resources to synods—we were going to grow to be a 4 million-member church. That leaves now a very stretched mid council structure, also in competition for per capita, but the report says little about consolidation there, for all the conversations with mid council people—the primary data of the whole report.

There is information on kinds of change, but not direction, and a sense of hurry, named in why the report didn't look at the history of past restructuring or the theology of organizations. At the last General Assembly (2018), ACSWP asked Theology and Worship for some of their reflections on administration, one of our Presbyterian "notes of the church," put in the appendix of our Advice & Counsel memo on the Way Forward report (<https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000288>). So, what we see is a sense of acute financial worry, even before the Covid19 crisis, as the basis for all recommendations. Even a small congregation running out of money and people is usually advised not to start with the sense of lack. Yes, the budgets may not say wild abundance, but it is the per capita downturn that seems to wag the rest of the analysis.

B. *What Data and Conceptual Resources?*

The recommendation to merge the two agencies is based on budget projections: "*provide a comprehensive resource projection analysis and summary assessment*" for a ten-year period. Appendix F, the Preliminary Financial Sustainability Report, makes a number of valuable observations. At one place it suggests other kinds of analysis that are necessary for planning what the organization needs going forward:

"The real issue of sustainability is about far more than simply generating revenue. It is an operational issue that affects allocations and functionality outside the purview of this committee. When diving deep into the sustainability issue, the committee has identified operational, structural, and cultural changes that must be made in order to maximize the funds obtained." (p. 3)

Nearing its conclusion, Appendix F says:

"While the committee is unable to determine the level of duplication of efforts between programs, agencies, and entities, because there is no single body providing oversight for mission priorities between General Assemblies, there is a serious risk of duplication of efforts. The various agencies and entities, as well as the multiple mission priorities by different programs, agencies, and entities, are indistinguishable to the average member of a PC(USA) congregation, and, we believe, contribute to confusion and may even contribute to a false perception of duplication." p. 4.

So, the primary argument for consolidation is duplication, which is suspected, but it may also be a "false perception." This is actually a realistic and somewhat humble statement. Yes, the church has a complex ecology built over time with various forms of specialization. We would prefer our members know more about how they are saved in Jesus Christ. But it is also the case that one person's duplication is another person's coordination.

Without wanting to depend on consultants (or short-time special commissions), it would seem to us that a good merger plan would need some analysis about the strengths and weaknesses about how the programs function and interact and what needs they serve, directly and indirectly. And sometimes eyes from outside, and even contrasting sets of eyes, are good to have—the old "second opinion," or even "test the spirits." The Research Services office is a good office and can conduct opinion polling very well, but good comparative analysis should also be done of the experience of other denominations—including the costs of more centralization. Is it Presbyterian to put all of our mission leadership eggs in one basket, whether or not there is a shared budget?

The per capita decline has made Stated Clerks in the past chary about raising the number too high. There are periodic efforts to make it mandatory or raise its visibility: what if pastors' information forms had a box that indicated whether their congregation paid its per capita or not? In itself, from an economic analysis standpoint, the pattern of per capita shortfall is interesting information, and could be used for planning in itself, though it may be more relevant for presbytery and synod planning.

Restructuring in the church will require different things than restructure in a corporation or a charitable nonprofit. The motivation incentives and credibility of the exercise require careful understanding of what is broke, and what not to fix. The A Corp, still new, is perhaps that "single body providing oversight" that Appendix F desires. Why not give them a bit more time?

C. *What Personnel a Commission Would Need?*

Reorganization is not a pick-up game. With all deference to elected members of various bodies, there are professionals whose vocations involve reading and advising complex organizations. Representation of diversity is important, and representation of elected bodies. But we leave this question open. Say you have a public health disaster—who do you call? In our current structure—unlike the Church of Scotland, for example—there is no back-up General Council that can make decisions on a host of questions when the General Assembly cannot meet. There might be some good ideas from the past we would want to go back to—historians, theologians, someone who does demographic projections in program assessment. The point is, good planning will identify the expertise needs critical to the church, and the people needed may not be already sitting around our tables.

COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 02-080, RECOMMENDATION 4

COGA has recommended that this item be referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). However, should the assembly determine that this item of business is core and critical to our governance and sustainability, and needs to be considered by 224th General Assembly (2020), COGA provides this comment.

Beginning with the last review cycle of both OGA and PMA, as reported to the General Assembly in 2016, it was made clear that the current structure of the denomination's ecclesial and missional bodies was not sustainable. The review committees and then later the Way Forward Commission identified ministerial duplications and redundancies, which in another time made sense for a 3+ million member denomination. Our reality has changed significantly in the last decade, and new realities brought about by the recent Covid-19 pandemic have hastened those changes all the more.

A merger between the two agencies would ensure both clarity and collaboration in a time when the church needs to be more responsive and flexible than ever before. A unified structure would simply confirm what the great majority of the church already believes, that OGA and PMA are one entity. A merger would not only allow for greater long-term financial sustainability, but also free both PMA and OGA staff to cooperate creatively.

Neither is the separation between the two arms of the church into distinct agencies theologically tenable. The mission and ministry of the church is not separated from the order and office, as they inform and complement each other. We believe that Presbyterians across the denomination would welcome a realignment that more closely reflects our theology and polity.

COGA, which is well positioned to understand the scope of the work and the implications of this decision, looks forward to being a full partner in the work of a merger.

It is important for commissioners to have options for possible paths forward toward the merger of OGA and PMA. Below are two ways that would enable the assembly to pursue merger.

A. A Commission: Recommendation 4 outlines a process for a Commission of the General Assembly (a body given permission by the General Assembly to take action on its behalf) with special powers to merge OGA and PMA. COGA affirms the majority of PCFS's proposed Commission structure. Specifically, sub-recommendations a–g are consistent with previous commissions created by recent General Assemblies and would allow for nimble, directed, and highly focused action to occur. Sub-recommendation h outlines the composition of the recommended Commission. COGA respectfully suggests the following alternate composition:

1. Two members each from the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA), the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB), and the A Corp Board.
2. Two members from the Special Committee on Per Capita and Financial Sustainability.
3. A member of the Moving Forward Implementation Commission.
4. Two commissioners from the 224th General Assembly (2020).

COGA recommends this composition to allow for representation by those with institutional history and working knowledge of the two agencies and their operation. Additionally, COGA recommends deleting sub-recommendation i and urges the Commission, if this becomes the approved action of the General Assembly, to merge the two agencies with all due haste. Of course, necessary changes to organizational documents (the *Book of Order*, the Standing Rules of the General Assembly, and the *Organization for Mission*) would need to be approved by the 225th General Assembly (2022) and, if changes to the *Book of Order* are made, by a majority of the presbyteries.

B. Assembly Action: COGA additionally proposes a possible path forward to answer the clarion call by the Special Committee on Per Capita and Financial Sustainability (PCFS) for merger of OGA and PMA. COGA is convinced that merger is the logical path forward and presents an opportunity for the church to respond to unprecedented societal change and financial turmoil with nimble, creative action. Simply, the 224th General Assembly (2020) could, through a simple action, require OGA and PMA to merge. If this were approved by the General Assembly, COGA respectfully urges this answer to Recommendation 4 of this report:

“Direct the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency to merge with all due haste.”

1. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA), the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB), and senior staff leadership shall establish missional coordination and determine the strategies and priorities, across all entities,

committees, and constituent bodies of the General Assembly where all available dollars, responsibilities, and charges are unified and evaluated to provide the best accomplishment of General Assembly goals.

2. COGA, PMAB, and senior staff leadership shall consult with representatives of the other General Assembly agencies, committees, and entities and their boards, including the advocacy and advisory committees, and mid councils.

3. COGA, PMAB, and senior staff leadership in collaboration shall have the power to combine, unify, eliminate, and/or create any necessary organizational structure, including personnel, to accomplish these missional strategies and priorities.

4. COGA, PMAB, and senior staff leadership in collaboration shall review, address, and align the financial agreements among the Foundation, PMA, OGA, and A Corp to support the new *Organization for Mission* so that each area of mission has adequate funds to sustain its mission long term.

5. Once the unification is finalized, the successor board to COGA and PMAB shall determine the structure moving forward and present the new *Organization for Mission* to the 225th General Assembly (2022) as well as any subsequent changes to the Standing Rules of the General Assembly and the *Book of Order*.

PC(USA), A CORPORATION BOARD COMMENT ON ITEM 02-080, RECOMMENDATION 5

The intent of this recommendation is not entirely clear. If the intent is to seek funds outside of PMA and OGA for mandates with financial implications beyond PMA/OGA, then it would be helpful to add “and the mission budget” to the end of the first paragraph, so that it would read,

“Instruct agencies to determine a financial model by which overtures with financial implications whose mandates are inclusive of agencies beyond PMA/OGA to receive funding from other sources besides per capita [and the mission budget].”

On the other hand, if the intent is to seek funding from the mission budget for mandates with financial implications beyond PMA/OGA, then the assembly action should be clear.

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 02-080

Presbyterian Mission Agency Comment on Recommendation 1 of COM-019, “Report and Recommendations of the Special Committee on Per Capita and Financial Sustainability.”

It is our assumption that the special committee intended for the Mission Engagement & Support area within the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) to establish these campaigns as part of their existing workload. Other items before the General Assembly call for Mission Engagement & Support to be moved from PMA to the Administrative Services Group (ASG). If that move is approved, then this responsibility would follow Mission Engagement & Support to ASG.

Comment on Recommendation 2 of Item 02-080, “Report and Recommendations of the Special Committee on Per Capita and Financial Sustainability.”

The per capita system is participated in widely by almost all presbyteries, and almost 70% of presbyteries pay their apportionment amount in full. The majority of presbyteries are significantly funded by the per capita they collect from their congregations.

In this time of limited financial resources, we would urge all commissioners to consider thoughtfully each recommendation that has financial implications requiring the expenditure of additional funds. Is it possible that another existing committee might be able to be given this responsibility?

By developing alternate funding and collection models, are we undermining a system that is still working for many mid councils and the national church?

Would the development of experiments bring additional uncertainty into the system and cause those that currently participate in the per capita system to question that participation?

Comment on Recommendation 3.B. of Item 02-080, “Report and Recommendations of the Special Committee on Per Capita and Financial Sustainability.”

02 RECOMMENDED REFERRALS TO THE 225TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2022)

Commissioners should be aware that all available unrestricted and restricted funds in the GA Mission Budget are currently allocated to ministry programs within the Presbyterian Mission Agency. PMA may receive funds in excess of the current restricted and unrestricted funds through unrestricted bequests that come in during the year at higher than expected levels. The current practice is to split these funds between OGA & PMA on an 80/20 basis or whatever the cost allocation percentage is in any given year. Because we cannot rely on bequests to fund the budget, reallocating existing restricted and unrestricted funds from one program to another will have the net effect of eliminating funding for ministry in some current programs in PMA.

Comment on Recommendation 4 of Item 02-080, “Report and Recommendations of the Special Committee on Per Capita and Financial Sustainability.”

In this time of limited financial resources, we would urge all commissioners to consider thoughtfully each recommendation that has financial implications requiring the expenditure of additional funds.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board does not believe that a merger conversation-is prudent at this time, due to:

- the climate of physical, medical and economic uncertainty,
- the distinctly different roles of the two agencies,
- the lack of a clearly identified problem that can only be solved by merger.

However, if the assembly, in its judgment, believes such a conversation should occur, then we suggest that rather than a commission, with the extraordinary authority described in the recommendation, the church would be better served by the formation of a special committee that would bring recommendations to the 225th General Assembly (2022), in order that a more representative body might consider the full implications of the changes.

We hope and expect that PMAB and COGA will be full partners in any process of merger, because we are uniquely positioned to understand the work and the implications of merger. We believe that we can be vital partners with any body undertaking the work.

Comment on Recommendation 5 of Item 02-080, “Report and Recommendations of the Special Committee on Per Capita and Financial Sustainability.”

The intent of this recommendation is not entirely clear. If the intent is to seek funds outside of PMA and OGA for mandates with financial implications beyond PMA/OGA, then it would be helpful to add “*and the mission budget*” to the end of the first paragraph, so that it would read,

“Instruct agencies to determine a financial model by which overtures with financial implications whose mandates are inclusive of agencies beyond PMA/OGA to receive funding from other sources besides per capita [*and the mission budget*].”

On the other hand, if the intent is to seek funding from the mission budget for mandates with financial implications beyond PMA/OGA, then the assembly action should be clear.

REAC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-080

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-080—From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee.

The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item, 02-080 with amendment:

Strike the entirety of Recommendation 4, including all subpoints:

~~“[4. Form a commission to unify OGA and PMA into one agency, revise the Organization for Mission, and work to align the entities, boards, committees, and constituent bodies of the General Assembly toward long term faithfulness and financial sustainability of its mission with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation (A Corp) remaining as the legal entity.]”~~

“a.-i. [Strike all text.]”

The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC) advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 02-80 with amendment by removing Recommendation 4 to merge the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) and the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA).

The OGA's function is to provide ecclesial support.

The PMA, on the other hand, is the mission arm of PC(USA). It maintains the centrality of the denomination's focus on mission.

Instead of merging them for budgetary reasons, we should educate our churches on the importance of per capita payment and expand our admission of immigrant and people of color fellowships to full membership.

Item 02-081

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 303.]

Jarvie Commonweal Endowment Reconciliation Team Recommendation and Report.

The Jarvie Commonweal Endowment Reconciliation Team recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020)

1. Commend the Friends of Jarvie and the Presbyterian Foundation/Board of National Mission for their good faith participation in the reconciliation process undertaken by the team.
2. Direct that the Friends of Jarvie and the Presbyterian Foundation/Board of National Mission continue the process of reconciliation begun during their meetings with the team, using the contact persons and channels of communication identified during the process to heal remaining hurts and to determine potential areas of cooperation.

Rationale

The 222nd General Assembly Action

These recommendations are in response to the following referral: *2018 Referral: Alternate Resolution to Item 13-01: In Regard to the Jarvie Commonweal Endowment, the Co-Moderators of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) Are Directed to Form a Reconciliation Team to Identify and Engage Those Concerned in a Peacemaking and Reconciliation Process, and Report Out to the 224th General Assembly—From the 223rd General Assembly (2018) (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 14, 21, 1165, electronic file).*

The Jarvie Commonweal Endowment Reconciliation Team (the "Team") was appointed by the Co-Moderators of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) and consisted of José Olagues (Co-Moderator), Roxie Holder (Co-Moderator), Elizabeth Terry Dunning, J. Oscar McCloud, Kimo Shalom, Samuel Stone, and Kathryn Westmoreland.

Background

The Jarvie Commonweal Endowment is a fund established in the 1920s and since 1934 titled to the Board of National Mission, a constituent corporation of the Presbyterian Foundation (the "Board/Foundation"). It provides financial and social work services to older protestant adults living within fifty miles of New York City (the "service area"). For many years the services to Jarvie beneficiaries were provided through a program of the Presbyterian Mission Agency ("Mission Agency") working through the Jarvie Commonweal Service Committee (JCSC).

At the end of 2013, the Mission Agency informed the Foundation that in the near future it was going to discontinue staffing and managing the Jarvie program. The Mission Agency's discontinuance of the program meant the termination of the agency's then current staff. As a result, the Board/Foundation, which receives and manages funds but does not operate programs, became responsible for continuation of the program. After conducting an appropriate search, the Board contracted with a service agency in the service area to provide services to Jarvie beneficiaries. The JCSC, which had previously included members appointed by the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Board, was reconstituted with all members appointed by the Board.

The Mission Agency failed to communicate or consult effectively with the Board/Foundation, General Assembly, JCSC, or presbyteries and churches in the Jarvie service area before making the decision that it would no longer staff and manage the Jarvie program. This failure left the Board/Foundation in the difficult position of having to determine, in a very short time, how to continue the program so that its beneficiaries would continue receiving uninterrupted services.

As a result, people in the service area who had been involved with and supportive of the program over many years were taken completely by surprise by the changes and felt excluded from input into decisions and representation in the process. Without knowledge of what precipitated the changes, it was assumed that the Board/Foundation was responsible for the decisions and timing. The unanticipated actions created an atmosphere of distrust and raised concern about the quality and continuity of services.

An informal group of long-time supporters, who became known as Friends of Jarvie (the “Friends”), took a number of actions prior to the 223rd General Assembly (2018) within the church and with civil authorities challenging the Board’s decisions resulting from the Mission Agency’s decision to discontinue its operation of the program. Those actions were unsuccessful and therefore did not resolve the Friends’ concerns. In response to an overture to the 223rd General Assembly (2018), the assembly created the Team.

The Work of the Team

The Team was charged “to identify and engage those concerned in a peacemaking and reconciliation process [regarding Jarvie Commonweal Endowment] and report out to the 224th General Assembly (2020).”

The Team’s leadership worked diligently to identify and contact the concerned parties and others associated with the Jarvie program either in the past or currently for initial information gathering. The concerned parties were identified as the Friends, affected presbyteries, and the Board/Foundation. The issues of interest initially identified included clarity, communication, collaboration/representation, and cessation of legal and ecclesial challenges.

Each member of the Team was provided with resources (including the original 1934 Jarvie Commonweal Fund Trust Agreement, related General Assembly overtures, related legal documents both civil and ecclesiastical, and other documents prepared by the concerned parties) to be thoroughly familiarized with the history and the background of the disputes related to the Jarvie Endowment well before the first face-to-face meeting.

On July 1 and 2, 2019, the Team held an open meeting in New York City with representatives of Friends, affected presbyteries and local churches, the Board/Foundation, JCSC, and the Mission Agency. At that session, representatives of the groups identified prior to the meeting and all interested participants were given an opportunity to speak. This was a listening session during which many of the issues of contention were discussed. Both the Board/Foundation and the Friends acknowledged that hurt had been caused and that communication had been poor. It was decided, at the end of the meeting, that both Friends and Board would submit talking points to be discussed at the follow-up meeting. Furthermore, it was decided that four representatives each from the Friends and the Board/Foundation would meet again with the Team on October 31 and November 1 to engage in further dialogue.

The Beginning of Reconciliation

Both the Friends and the Board submitted talking points prior to the second meeting in New York on October 31 and November 1, 2019. The issues identified were discussed. The successes of the Jarvie program since the transition were discussed and acknowledged, including the balanced budget, the addition of more than thirty new beneficiaries, and the hiring of a full-time Presbyterian chaplain.

On the second day, the parties agreed to talk directly with one another, with the Team acting simply as neutral observers. Out of that direct dialogue, the two parties were each able to identify and list specific actions that they could take to begin to rebuild the relationship between them.

Going Forward

The parties discussed and reached consensus on a variety of areas of cooperation and continuing dialogue. There are additional issues to be discussed between the parties. The Board/Foundation agreed:

Communication

- Expand the annual report or other materials that can be made available for the Jarvie program to include financial information, including the Fund balance, program income and expenditures, and additional management information, including names and biographies of JCSC members, the number of social workers, and chaplain contact information; the Board/Foundation declined to provide some requested information about the contract with the service provider on the grounds that it is privileged, internal information.

- Consider communication channels provided by Friends or other service area sources to communicate key messaging more broadly.

02 RECOMMENDED REFERRALS TO THE 225TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2022)

- Include website materials to better answer the concerns and questions of Friends, including but not limited to clarifying that the Jarvie program is for Protestants, not just Presbyterians, and describing an overview of operations and beneficiary care.
- Create downloadable brochures on the Jarvie program for pastors and potential beneficiaries or their families.

Collaboration

- JCSC to meet regularly in the service area.
- Consider broadening service area participation in the Jarvie Grants to organizations program.
- Consider reinstating elder care event or colloquium in the service area.
- Consider recommending that the Board expand JCSC to include a service area member with social work experience and an understanding of the Jarvie program.
- Review JCSC organizational materials for clarity on JCSC membership and best governance practices.

The Team notes that the Friends of Jarvie are an informal group from across the participating presbyteries and therefore do not speak with one voice in the way that a formal organization can. With that acknowledgment, the Friends agreed:

Communication

- Assist Jarvie staff in outreach within presbyteries and New York social service agencies and other Protestant organizations.

Collaboration

- Seek cooperative means to resolve differences and work to continue improving the Jarvie program and encourage their presbyteries to do the same, including working through the point of contact identified by the Foundation/Board, rather than using legal actions, overtures, and letters of complaint to third parties.

Both parties agreed:

- Direct requests for information, program questions, and concerns to a primary contact person. The Board/Foundation contact will be the vice president, Communication and Marketing, Presbyterian Foundation; the Friends identified one of their active leaders/spokespersons as their contact at this time.
- Friends will contact the Mission Agency to solicit its participation or advice on the Jarvie program. The Board/Foundation will contact the Mission Agency to share its perspective and openness to continued conversation to ensure the Jarvie program maintains Presbyterian values.

The Team experienced the presence of the Holy Spirit at work throughout the process, but particularly and strongly during the afternoon of the second day of the second meeting. The Team commends the participants in the reconciliation process. The Board committed fully to participation, providing important documents and sending senior staff of the Foundation and JCSC to both days of both meetings. Likewise, the representatives of the Friends also fully committed to provide information and documentation, taking time from their personal and professional responsibilities to attend and participate in the process. The parties were definitely dedicated, and the first steps of reconciliation achieved are the product of their efforts

Item 02-082

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 305.]

A Resolution to Make 100 Witherspoon Street a Sanctuary Space—From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee.

The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) direct the agencies and entities housed in the Presbyterian Center to stand with immigrant and asylum-seeking families at risk of separation and those who are homeless by offering sanctuary, safe space, and shelter in the unused spaces of 100 Witherspoon Street for those who are vulnerable under the laws and customs of our time to decry our nation's failure to establish an equitable and compassionate plan for those seeking to immigrate and those who are without homes.

Rationale

There is room in the building's unused space to adequately protect immigrants "caught in the clutches of a broken immigration system" to "fight their orders of deportation from a safe space" and to provide shelter for those who are chronically without homes who live on the streets of Louisville.¹ Just as Boaz sheltered Ruth and Naomi in their time of immigration and homelessness (Ruth 2:11–12), we must continue in the strong faith tradition of providing refuge for the displaced and homeless seeking safety and shelter. This includes two populations:

- People with final orders of deportation deciding to enter sanctuary.
- Those living on the streets of Louisville chronically without shelter.

In the midst of the crisis of desperation and vulnerability for these populations in the United States, we must stand alongside of the poorest of the poor and refuse to sit by and watch another family torn apart or another individual sleeping on the streets in Code Blue (extreme cold) or Code Red (extreme heat) without shelter.

The Office of the General Assembly (OGA) webpage on sanctuary states,

Throughout history, the people of God have provided space in their places of worship for those vulnerable under the laws and customs of the times. The Hebrew people had cities of refuge for persons wrongfully accused of crimes. In the years before the American Civil War, congregations provided safety for slaves fleeing the South in the Underground Railroad. In the 1980s, more than 500 U.S. congregations provided safe houses to Central Americans fleeing civil war but whom our government refused to acknowledge as refugees.²

A stronger PC(USA) begins at home by participating in serving people who are spatially displaced by moving our advocacy agenda forward and taking other actions to establish solidarity with those without shelter.

Resources

Office of Public Witness of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, "Sanctuary Discernment Guide" <[https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/pc\(usa\)_opw_sanctuary_final_6.21_edit.pdf](https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/pc(usa)_opw_sanctuary_final_6.21_edit.pdf)>

Coalition for the Homeless, Louisville, Ky., "2019 Street Count Results" (31 January 2019) <<https://louhomeless.org/2019-street-count-results/>> (19 February 2020)

"Louisville's Homeless Population Has Increased New Report Shows" (18 April 2019). <https://www.wdrb.com/news/louisville-s-homeless-population-has-increased-new-report-shows/article_d2db5ffe-6237-11e9-aa06-031dac15c67a.html> (19 February 2020)

"I never, never seen so many homeless people," *Louisville Magazine* (14 January 2019) <<https://www.louisville.com/content/seeking-shelter-homeless-louisville-family>> (19 February 2020)

Endnotes

1. Office of the General Assembly "Sanctuary" <<http://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/immigration/sanctuary/>>.
2. <http://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/immigration/sanctuary/>.

OGA COMMENT ON ITEM 02-082

COGA has recommended that this item be referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). However, should the assembly determine that this item of business is core and critical to our governance and sustainability, and needs to be considered by 224th General Assembly (2020), OGA provides this comment.

The Office of the General Assembly would like to remind commissioners that the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), through the General Assembly, has been making policy in support of the ministry of sanctuary since 1984. As part of this commitment, the Stated Clerk and the Office of the General Assembly, through the Office of Immigration Issues, and COGA considered this option in 2018–2019, studied it, and brought in outside counsel to consult. In the end, all parties decided not to proceed for the reasons outlined below.

One of the key things that needs to be provided in offering sanctuary is not just a safe space, but a dignified space. Commissioners are invited to consider the denomination's sanctuary webpage at www.pcusa.org/sanctuary and our Welcome and the Law resource at http://oga.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/resource_re_federal_laws.pdf. Video content on

this site highlights one of the congregations that has been involved in offering or supporting sanctuary before and during the thirty-six years following our first statement. In this video, the pastor calls sanctuary a “benign house arrest” and the woman who entered sanctuary says that it was like “tearing my own skin off.” These, and statements by others who have been in sanctuary or accompanying those in sanctuary, remind us that individuals go through extreme hardship even while living in sanctuary. Having a congregation committed to offering friendship, support, and mental health services was essential in the success of their ministry and the survival of the person in sanctuary. For the safety and dignity of the person who would enter sanctuary, what would be needed to replicate such support in the office-like setting of 100 Witherspoon Street?

Considering the legal protection offered by sanctuary, it is unclear whether immigration enforcement would consider 100 Witherspoon a church or an institution of worship, thus protecting the person inside, or whether they would consider it an office building offering no protection to the person inside. Sanctuary works because immigration enforcement is not supposed to enforce in certain sensitive areas. Those areas include, “churches, synagogues, mosques or other institutions of worship, such as buildings rented for the purpose of religious services.” This guidance to immigration enforcement is not law, but comes from a memo titled, “Enforcement Actions at or Focused on Sensitive Locations,” which can be found at <https://www.ice.gov/dolib/publicadvocate/pdf/10029.2-policy.pdf>.

Sanctuary, when guided by the person most affected and in obedience to God, can be a powerful ministry. The videos on the denomination’s sanctuary webpage also highlight this fact. A church elder calls her relationship with the woman in sanctuary “important” to her faith journey and the woman in sanctuary says, “The experience for me has been difficult but it has also been good. So may God bless you and may you keep seeking something better.” When the guidance by those most affected is to provide clear legal protection in a safe and dignified space, what is that “something better” to which God is calling us today?

Item 02-083

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 305.]

A Resolution on Receiving Immigrant Pastors as Members of the Presbytery—From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee.

The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC) recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall G-2.0505a(1) be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“(1) In the case of ministers for immigrant fellowships and congregations, a presbytery ~~may~~ *should*, if it determines that its strategy for mission with that group requires it, *and in consultation and partnership with that community*, recognize the ordination and receive as a member of presbytery a new immigrant minister who furnishes evidence of good standing in a denomination. *If at the time of enrollment that minister lacks the educational history required of candidates, the presbytery should involve either the commission/committee on ministry (COM) and/or the commission/committee on preparation for ministry (CPM) to, even though at the time of enrollment that minister lacks the educational history required of candidates, and* provide such educational and mentorship opportunities as seem necessary and prudent for that minister’s successful ministry in the presbytery.”

Rationale

Often immigrant fellowship members come from cultures that recognize a pastor as the leader of the church from their home country. These pastors many times have theological education from Presbyterian institutions in their home countries and have been ordained by their denomination, which may also be in partnership with the PC(USA). However, these pastors, new immigrants themselves, may face cultural and linguistic challenges in the U.S. Therefore, taking and passing the ordination exams may be very difficult for them. Developing an educational and/or mentoring program for these pastors is paramount for their successful transition to the PC(USA).

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 02-083

Advisory Committee on the Constitution Advice on Item 02-083. A Resolution on Receiving Immigrant Pastors as Members of the Presbytery—From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 224th General Assembly that Item 02-083 presents the following issues that the assembly should consider.

The resolution proposes that presbyteries should ordain immigrant ministers from other denominations and provide a means by which immigrant ministers may receive alternative training and mentoring as their ordination in another denomination is recognized and they are enrolled as members of a presbytery.

The first issue to consider is that the resolution inserts into the Constitution the following language: “commission/committee on ministry (COM) and/or the commission/committee on preparation for ministry (CPM).” These commissions and/or committees no longer appear in the Constitution’s *Book of Order*. Under G-3.01, each council of the church determines its own form and structures for mission (see G-3.0106) within the parameters established by the Constitution. Some presbyteries have a COM and a CPM; others do not. By introducing language regarding COM/CPMs back into the Constitution, the proposal creates confusion and restricts the right of a presbytery to self-organize for its own mission context.

The second issue for consideration involves the Preface to the *Book of Order*, where the words “may” and “should” are explained: “MAY signifies practice that is permissible but not required ... SHOULD signifies practice that is strongly recommended.” The amendment changes “may” to “should,” making previously permissive actions strongly recommended in regard to recognizing an ordination and receiving a minister into presbytery membership. The rationale for the proposed amendment does not explain why this change is advisable, particularly where, as here, the amendment applies to all denominations. The proposed change places additional pressure on a presbytery to accept an immigrant pastor without following established ordination requirements, even where the immigrant pastor does not have exposure to theological and polity consistent with those of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). This change may have the effect of interfering with the right of presbyteries to exercise independent judgment in the examination of candidates for membership (G-2.0104b).

If the 224th General Assembly (2020) believes that the intent of Item 02-83 is appropriate, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that it approve the following proposed language:

“(1) In the case of ministers for immigrant fellowships and congregations, a presbytery [~~may~~] [~~may~~] [*should*], if it determines that its strategy for mission with that group requires it, *and in consultation and partnership with that community*, recognize the ordination and receive as a member of presbytery a new immigrant minister who furnishes evidence of good standing in a denomination. *If at the time of enrollment that minister lacks the educational history required of candidates, the presbytery should* [~~involve either the commission/committee on ministry (COM) and/or the commission/committee on preparation for ministry (CPM) to~~] provide such educational and mentorship opportunities as seem necessary and prudent for that minister’s successful ministry in the presbytery.”

OGA COMMENT ON ITEM 02-083

COGA has recommended that this item be referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). However, should the assembly determine that this item of business is core and critical to our governance and sustainability, and needs to be considered by the 224th General Assembly (2020), OGA provides this comment.

This item has a number of constitutional implications in the proposed change to the *Book of Order*. OGA strongly advises that should the assembly believe the intent behind the amendment is in order, that the assembly approve the language proposed by the Advisory Committee on the Constitution to avoid collateral constitutional confusion.

Item 02-084

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 307.]

A Resolution Addressing the Lack of Installed Pastoral Leadership in People of Color Congregations in the PC(USA)—From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee.

The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC) recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020):

1. Direct the Office of the Stated Clerk to address the PC(USA) policies establishing minimum compensation standards (*Book of Order*, G-2.0804) for pastoral calls to determine what obstacles these may create.
2. Strongly encourage mid councils to correct minimum compensation standards that directly and negatively impact a congregation’s ability to call installed pastoral leadership.
3. Commend the National Black Presbyterian Caucus (NBPC) for their analysis of the causes of the lack of installed pastors.

4. Strongly encourage mid councils to respond to the National Black Presbyterian Caucus's (NBPC) analysis of causes of the lack of installed pastors in predominately people of color congregations.

5. Direct the Office of the Stated Clerk to provide to the Office of the General Assembly current member and church statistics and demographics of people of color congregations. Data to be used to identify the number of predominately people of color congregations without installed pastoral leadership (*Book of Order*, G-2.0504a).

Rationale

What we must do...

To remain silent is to be complicit. REAC acknowledges that the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is a predominately white Protestant Christian denomination. The diversity of the PC(USA) is also determined by the number of its people of color members. For example, the number of black members is declining. Not only is the black membership declining the quality of life of its black congregations and communities in the PC(USA), but it is also deteriorating. Currently 80 percent of the PC(USA)'s predominately black congregations are without installed pastoral leadership. The same issue exists within other communities of color in the denomination. Therefore, REAC can no longer stand by and allow our people of color member congregations to suffer from the lack of installed pastoral leadership and pastoral care.

This is a call to action for the PC(USA) regarding issues and concerns detrimental to its people of color constituency. As members of the Presbyterian assembly, we have stated the obvious, repeatedly, in reference to our perspective on racism and injustice in this community of faith and in society.

The time has come to take action beyond dialogue, discussions, meetings, writing reports, and prayers. It is time to take tangible and measurable actions. We measure those metrics that are important like the number of members, amount of pledges, our budgets all related to quantifiable numbers. We don't measure how well we do our mission, how well we witness to our faith, how well our congregations are witnessing to our faith principles.

It is time we measure other metrics we value such as the witness of our congregations and its ability to witness to God's call without installed pastoral leadership. They should not be penalized for their inability to meet the minimum compensation standards for pastoral calls.

The National Black Presbyterian Caucus (NBPC) utilizing the "Five Why Root Cause Analysis"¹ process determined that the root cause of why black congregations are without installed pastoral leadership is the inability to meet the minimum terms of call requiring pension and medical insurance payments.²

REAC recognizes the same issues are relevant to most people of color congregations. REAC determined that the primary cause is the inability of these congregations to satisfy the minimum compensation standards for installed pastoral leadership.

Many pastors providing pastoral leadership in people of color congregations are more fluent in their native tongue and/or are not ordained Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) ministers of the Word and Sacrament. Therefore, they lack proficiency of the Presbyterian polity, thus diluting their participation and effectiveness in the governance of the church.

Without immediate intervention, it is the conclusion of REAC that many of these congregations will close or merge, thus contributing to the decline of participation of people of color in the life of the PC(USA). REAC believes that people of color congregations are marginalized by a structure that is not responding to the voices of its people of color for inclusion and equity. There is no current plan to address the lack of installed pastoral leadership in predominantly people of color congregations.

REAC recognizes our complicity, complacency, and compromise towards this issue. We acknowledge there are diverse views within the issue of inclusivity in our mission to dismantle racism in God's beloved community.

Endnotes

1. Courtney Seiter, "The 5 Whys Process We Use to Understand the Root of Any Problem" (14 September 2018) <<https://open.buffer.com/5-whys-process/>> (19 February 2020). ***"It's just as it sounds: A discussion of the unexpected event or challenge that follows one train of thought to its logical conclusion by asking "Why?" five times to get to the root of what happened."***

2. The National Black Presbyterian Caucus (NBPC) analysis is included at the end of this resolution for reference.

National Black Presbyterian Caucus (NBPC)
5 Why Root Cause Analysis
February 19, 2020

Background

The Board of Directors of the National Black Presbyterian Caucus determined that in order to meet its mission and purpose the NBPC must fully participate in the governance of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) at all governing bodies. Therefore, the NBPC submitted Item 05-09, “*On the Challenge of Being Black in the PC(USA)*” to the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

While researching Item 05-09, the NBPC discovered that eighty (80) percent of the four hundred (400) plus predominately black PC(USA) congregations, were and continue to be without an installed pastor. Therefore, the NBPC determined it must submit the resolution, “*On the Challenge of Being Black in the PC(USA) Part II,*” to the 224th General Assembly (2020).

The NBPC board asked its members “why are eighty (80) percent of our member churches without installed pastoral leadership?” The first response was they could not afford one. The NBPC board decided that to correct this current reality it must advocate to the General Assembly something tangible such as a root cause so that corrective action may be taken. The NBPC did not want our request to be treated as a “*complaint*” to be easily dismissed. We wanted our voice and participation to be taken seriously with the utmost concern for the welfare of our congregations. We also realized that it would be difficult for the PC(USA) to realize God’s beloved community without healthy congregations.

Therefore, the NBPC board decided to use the “*5 Why Root Cause Identification*” process, a structured problem-solving methodology which identifies the root cause.

Analysis

The NBPC performed two (2) 5 Why Root Cause Analyses. The first was conducted at our face-to-face board meeting on September 21, 2018. The second was conducted on Thursday, June 27, 2019, at the NBPC 45th Biennial Convention in Atlanta, Georgia.

The 5 Why Root Cause Identification process steps are outlined below:

- The plenary formed into small groups of seven (7) to ten (10) members with a total of nine (9) groups.
- Each group was given the main concern—*Currently of four hundred plus black congregations, approximately eighty (80) percent are without an installed pastor.*
 - Each group was instructed to answer the first “why” question. That answer was converted to a “why” question thus forming the second “why” question. This was continued until at least five (5) “why” questions were generated.
 - Each group decided which “why” was their top priority.
 - Each group presented their main “why” to the plenary (larger group).
 - The plenary (larger group) discussed each “why” and through consensus determined the main action to be taken to effect change on the main concern.

In both 5 “Why” sessions conducted by the NBPC, the root cause to the main concern was that the congregation could not afford to pay pension dues and medical plan premiums required by the PC(USA). Below is the result of our 5 Why Root Cause determination process.

Main Concern—“Currently of 400 plus black PC(USA) congregations, approximately eighty (80) percent are without installed pastors.”

Why #1: “Why are eighty (80) percent of the 400 plus black congregations of the PC(USA) without installed pastors?”

Response: Because we cannot afford an installed pastor.

Why #2: “Why can you not afford an installed pastor?”

Response #2: Because it is too expensive.

Why #3: “Why is it expensive?”

Response #3: Because the minimum pastor compensation requirements include payments of pension and medical insurance.

Why #4: “Why does the minimum pastor compensation requirements include payments of pension and medical insurance?”

Response: Because the PC(USA) polity standards require pension and medical insurance for all installed pastors.

Why #5: “Why does the PC(USA) polity standards require pension and medical insurance for all installed pastors?”

Response: The answer to Why #5 was the basis for NBPC to request of the General Assembly to provide a solution to our main concern that “Currently eighty (80) percent of the four hundred 400 plus black congregations in the PC(USA) are without installed pastoral leadership.”

Listed below are a few examples of other first responses to the first “why” question that were not selected as part of our 224th General Assembly (2020) resolution:

- Because there is a lack of qualified black pastors.
- Because we are a small congregation.
- Because we are an extremely aged congregation.

Each of these first responses generated a different root cause outcome. After debate and discussion, the NBPC board chose to pursue the root cause, “*On the Challenge of Being Black in the PC(USA) Part II*,” identifying the inability to afford an installed pastor as root cause that would yield the most tangible long-term results.

The Reverend Dr. Thomas H. Priest Jr.
NBPC, President

BOP COMMENT ON ITEM 02-084

Board of Pensions Comment on Item 02-084. *A Resolution Addressing the Lack of Installed Pastoral Leadership in People of Color Congregations in the PC(USA)—From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee.*

Prior to the passage of this overture, the Board of Pension took action.

Please see the Board’s Response to 2018 Referral: *Item 05-09. Commissioners’ Resolution: On the Challenge of Being Black in the PC (USA). Recommendation 5. Advise the Board of Pensions to analyze and report on the viability of African American Presbyterian Churches and the challenges of supporting installed pastoral leadership.* The conclusion of the response is reprinted as follows:

There is similarity among smaller churches struggling to find congregational leadership. There is a disparity with African American Presbyterian congregations with 101-300 members less likely to be served by leadership. To address this identified need, the Board has expanded the eligibility requirements for Pathways to Renewal, an incentive to employers to bring young ministers into the Benefits Plan with the full benefits of Pastor’s Participation at substantially reduced dues. Effective February 7, 2020, African American Presbyterian congregations up to 300 members are eligible for Pathways to Renewal.

The Board continues to look forward to working with the church to ensure participation in the Benefits Plan for ministers of the Word and Sacrament.

GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 02-084

General Assembly Committee on Representation Comment on Item 02-084. A Resolution Addressing the Lack of Installed Pastoral Leadership in People of Color Congregations in the PC(USA)—From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee.

This item has been recommended to be referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). However, should the assembly determine that this item of business needs to be considered by the 224th General Assembly (2020), GACOR provides this comment.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation commends the work of the National Presbyterian Black Caucus and encourages them to continue such work with their sibling caucuses as a way to further the collection of data that reflects their unique communities. We also recognize the importance of diversity in pastoral leadership. Should this item be approved, we recommend research into data and statistics that represent the needs of all indigenous, immigrant, and other communities of color in order for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to best serve these congregations and contexts. GACOR regularly utilizes statistics in its work and welcomes the opportunity to engage in conversation for data that reflects the rich diversity of the denomination.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation is made up of sixteen persons, elected by the General Assembly, who are drawn from members and elders, ruling and teaching, from across the church in accordance with F-1.0403. Its constitutional mandate and central functions are described in G-3.0103 of the Book of Order (Form of Government).

OGA COMMENT ON ITEM 02-084

COGA has recommended that this item be referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). However, should the assembly determine that this item of business is core and critical to our governance and sustainability, and needs to be considered by the 224th General Assembly (2020), OGA provides this comment.

This item directs that the Office of the Stated Clerk address the PC(USA) policies establishing minimum compensation standards (*Book of Order*, G-2.0804) for pastoral calls to determine what obstacles these may create. The Stated Clerk works through the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) and so OGA requests that the referral/recommendation be made to the Office of the General Assembly.

This item also directs the Office of the Stated Clerk to provide to the Office of the General Assembly certain statistics and demographics. As mentioned above, the Stated Clerk works through the Office of the General Assembly so that this recommendation is a tautology requesting that the same office will provide to itself certain statistics and demographics. The assembly could request that OGA solicit such statistics and demographics from the larger church.

Item 02-085

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 305.]

A Resolution to Establish a Network of Immigration Lawyers—From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee.

The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC) recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through its Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) program, to establish a network of pro-bono immigration lawyers to work on asylum cases throughout the United States to ensure the alleviation of the suffering of immigrants and people seeking asylum.

Rationale

The phrase, “pro bono,” is a Latin phrase, shortened from pro bono publico which means “for the good of the people,” and it refers to legal services performed free of charge or at reduced fees for the public good. It is a service that uses the specific skills of professionals to provide services to those who are unable to afford them. While in law school, students are inculcated with giving back; they are told that as lawyers they should appreciate that lack of access to justice for marginalized individuals and communities is a barrier to equal access for all. As lawyers, they are to understand that their obligation, as a component of being a part of this esteemed profession, is to do what they can to ensure that cases are not decided by zip code, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or any other variables outside of the merits of the case. They are told to look around them and notice the inequities in their communities and beyond to see that those who lack access to information and to attorneys lack voices in our complex legal system. Lawyers have an opportunity and an obligation to do what they can to promote equal access to the law through pro bono advocacy; hence the network of pro bono lawyers to help in immigration cases.

Asylum seekers and immigrants fleeing devastation and life-threatening attacks against them are denied access to the courts because they have no means to afford a lawyer and the willing few pro bono lawyers are taxed to the limit. Therefore, these immigrants and asylum seekers are in limbo at the border or in prisons in the U.S. We, PC(USA), who are charged with being a Matthew 25 church, should weep at the disaster that has befallen our fellow siblings in Christ. We are our siblings’ keepers, therefore we are responsible for their well-being.

*REAC witnessed an unending cycle of court appearances with no resolution due to a lack of legal representation and we were told that they could stay in detention centers indefinitely. Imagine the horror of being locked away for the rest of one’s life for doing nothing other than seeking asylum.

*Our partners shared that 98 percent of asylum seekers are denied entrance due to no legal representation. REAC heard from a young Honduran woman who had six court appearances in one year without being heard so no progress in her case. She was told by the court to get a lawyer from a list of pro-bono lawyers who were not available. How can one get justice if there is no one to speak up?

*Lawyers can help unite families in the future or limit family separation. We heard from the guards at the detention center explaining that children were separated from their parents and sent to detention centers across the U.S. with no one keeping track of their location. It seemed that the guards were unconcerned about the state of the separation; to them it was a matter of fact of the way things were.

When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, "Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me." Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?" And the king will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." (*Matthew 25:31–40*)

OGA COMMENT ON ITEM 02-085

COGA has recommended that this item be referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). However, should the assembly determine that this item of business is core and critical to our governance and sustainability, and needs to be considered by the 224th General Assembly (2020), OGA provides this comment.

The Office of the General Assembly, through the Office of Immigration Issues, offers collaboration and support to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance should this piece of business become Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) policy.

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) affirmed guiding principles in response to those forced to leave their homes. Due process was one of the guiding principles and was viewed to include, "fair and timely legal proceedings, competent legal representation, and due process for children, asylum seekers, and all migrants."

There is no right to appointed counsel in immigration court. This means that a person who cannot afford an attorney or cannot find an attorney must go into court and represent themselves, regardless of their age or understanding. Many viable immigration claims are not given full consideration because of this failure in the law.

This lack of the basic legal protection afforded by representation is exacerbated when individuals seeking an immigration benefit are detained or forced to remain in Mexico during the pendency of their case. How does one afford an attorney when detained? How does one find an attorney and maintain communications with an attorney when homeless in Mexico and separated by a border? These are the situations that so many find themselves in under current immigration policy and they are situations that are a far cry from the notions of due process expressed in this church's policy.

Item 02-086

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 305.]

A Resolution on Collaborating with the Hope Border Institute—From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee.

The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to establish a partnership with the Hope Border Institute, "which seeks to address the wound and scandal our broken immigration system has caused at the southern border of Texas."

Rationale

The situation along the southern border of Texas is at a crisis level. Our siblings in Christ remain subjected to inhumane treatment. Given the complexity of the situation we, the PC(USA), will need seek out an expansive solution. The HOPE Border Institute builds a robust program of research and social policy work to build justice and deepen solidarity across the borderlands.

Increased arrivals and cruel strategy of deterrence at the border masked an emerging humanitarian crisis that led to the deaths of several migrant children. HOPE was on the ground in Mexico as the first caravans from Central America arrived to assess needs and provide assistance and also worked to ensure essential Know Your Rights presentations were provided to

migrants stranded in Mexico. HOPE triaged the response to the refugee crisis created by ICE's needless release of migrant families in the streets of El Paso in winter weather and also brought together faith leaders and experts from both countries to strategize long-term responses. HOPE was also on the ground in Guatemala, the only border nongovernmental organization (NGO) researching the root causes of migration from Central America.

The HOPE Border Institute is an established, respected, advocacy institute that brings together local leaders, communities of faith, advocates, and policymakers to create change and solidarity across borders.

As disciples of Jesus Christ, we cannot sit by and watch as our siblings suffer violence and hopelessness at home and find the same treatment while seeking asylum. As a Matthew 25 denomination, we have taken Jesus' call to care for the sick, welcome the stranger, give food to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, clothing to the naked while visiting those in prison as our vision. Our partnership with HOPE will help us to be the hands and feet of Jesus as well as manifest this vision.

OGA COMMENT ON ITEM 02-086

COGA has recommended that this item be referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). However, should the assembly determine that this item of business is core and critical to our governance and sustainability, and needs to be considered by the 224th General Assembly (2020), OGA provides this comment.

The Office of the General Assembly (OGA) addresses border issues in a number of ways. When focusing on immigration related concerns and engagement, OGA does this through the Office of Immigration Issues. When the Office of Immigration Issues travels to the borderlands to interpret how immigration policies affect migrants, refugees, and those living in the borderlands, they do so in partnership and coordination with the presbytery and church partners in the region. The organizations that the office works with are guided by recommendations of Presbyterian leaders living the experience.

Hope Border Institute is a Catholic affiliated organization located in El Paso, Texas. Due to the nature of a worldwide church, Catholics are well-equipped to address migration issues, especially in parts of the world where there are large numbers of Catholic parishioners. Hope Border Institute, therefore, has been a strong advocate for a human-rights approach to migration at the southern border of the United States. They are a compassionate voice that highlights the need to receive vulnerable populations in ways that express God's love, mercy, and justice. Many of the organizations that the Office of Immigration Issues collaborates with in Washington, D.C., utilize Hope Border Institute to guide policy asks to ensure they are seeking the most compassionate methods to welcome the stranger. Many of the ministries Hope Border Institute establishes meet principles outlined in the 1999 General Assembly statement, "Transformation of Churches and Society Through Encounter with New Neighbors." The Office of Immigration Issues has coordinated visits with the Hope Border Institute during trips they have hosted to El Paso, Texas, and Ciudad Juarez, Mexico.

As with any partner, we would encourage that local leaders in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) guide who national church partners should be in their region. If Item 02-86 "A Resolution for a Mission Co-Worker on the Southern Texas Border" passes, it would be important for that individual to work with local leaders to identify organizations that exemplify Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) policy in their mission and ministries. This would in turn allow national affiliated staff and committees to work with appropriate partners. This also allows for the re-evaluation of those partnerships. Organizations shift and change over time. It is necessary to evaluate how our work intersects and informs each other to be certain the PC(USA) works with the partner who lift up the same vision and mission for God's people.

Item 02-087

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 305.]

A Resolution for a Mission Co-Worker on the Southern Texas Border—From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee.

The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) direct the PMA (Presbyterian Mission Agency) to employ a mission co-worker for the specifically defined need to support the overall mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in the area of peace and justice for asylum seekers. There is an urgent necessity to demonstrate a practical and concrete commitment to the call of Jesus Christ to enter into partnership with and support of the marginalized and disinherited who seek asylum in the United States through:

- Seeking out and securing a culturally competent mission co-worker with lived intercultural experience, language skills, and professional experience or credentials who will hear and create an awareness within the broader church and society of the authentic condition and needs of asylum seekers;

- Enable the opportunity for the mission co-worker to live out their own call to Jesus Christ through service to our sisters and brothers who seek asylum in the United States;
- Increase knowledge of and communication with those seeking asylum on the southern border of Texas to discover their expressed needs and concerns from the vantage point of their own unique and personal perspectives;
- Help to meet these expressed needs of asylum seekers by establishing and interacting regularly and cooperatively with a network of pro-bono lawyers who have a willingness to make a commitment to legal service in the urgent interest of more expeditiously and effectively reducing the caseloads of those who are seeking asylum.

Rationale

In a Reformed understanding of immigration in the twenty-first century, there is belief in the critical need to develop an ethical praxis or practice to accompany existing Reformed ethical theology as it is informed by the church's biblical/theological background and social policies. At least three questions must be asked as the church faces the concerns of asylum seekers in the dilemma of our contemporary historical context.

1. Does this nation's practices toward asylum seekers promote relationships that take advantage of and/or ignore the distress of those who are citizenship disadvantaged?
2. Is this practice structured in a manner that increases or decreases the suffering and distress of asylum seekers?
3. Are the victims of the nation's current practices toward asylum seekers oppressed by a system characterized by the lack of truthfulness, expediency, and non-discrimination and the absence of racism?

In the interest of justice and fairness and for the protection of asylum seekers attempting entry into the United States along the southern Texas border, an additional mission co-worker is needed to assist in Reformed efforts to "unparalyze" the lives and destinies of asylum seekers by specifically providing help in reducing the legal case loads of those held in limbo in detention centers for indeterminate amounts of time. Research into the plight of asylum seekers invariably reveals "Crushing Immigration Judge Caseloads and Lengthening Hearing Wait Times" (see the October 25, 2019 article of this title)¹. There are serious backlogs that indicate:

"The current policies of the Trump Administration have been unsuccessful in stemming the rise in the Immigration Court's backlog. Overcrowded dockets create lengthening wait times for hearings. At some locations, immigrants with pending cases now wait on average 1,450 days or more—over four years!—before their hearing is scheduled."

This article goes on to state:

"Despite promises to reduce the backlog, the latest case-by-case records show that the growth in the backlog has actually accelerated each year since President Trump assumed office. At the start of this administration, 542,411 cases were pending before immigration judges. By September 30, 2019, the backlog had grown to 1,023,411 'active' cases. Year-by-year the pace of increase has quickened. The active backlog grew 16.0 percent from January 2017 to the end of the fiscal year, climbed an additional 22.1 percent during FY 2018, and this past year jumped by a further 33.3 percent."

Current administrative policies have added to crushing caseloads. This article further states,

"Despite the intense public focus on asylum cases originating at the U.S.-Mexico border in recent months, their contribution to the immigration court backlog is clearly substantially fewer than the untold number of cases put back into the judges' workload when the current administration decided to unilaterally reopen long-closed cases."

All current research clearly indicates the need for a mission co-worker who can help ameliorate the distress of asylum seekers by focusing church and public interest on cases involving detained asylum seekers as a way to explore ways of obtaining more information about and the handling of the adjudication process more efficiently. In addition, a greater emphasis can be placed on the high priority of understanding the importance of advocating and providing for a meaningful process for those seeking protection from persecution and preserving the integrity of the asylum process.

Additional Resources

1. "Workload and Adjudication Statistics," The United States Department of Justice resource for detailed information on caseloads originating from "credible fear, reasonable fear and asylum" and "asylum decision rates" pending and "asylum decision rates", etc. <<https://www.justice.gov/eoir/workload-and-adjudication-statistics>>.

2. See from the American Immigration Council, the article “Immigration Detention in the United States by Agency” which reviews and provides a fact sheet “describing noncitizens apprehended at the border or in the interior of the United States...detained by one or more government agencies before or during their immigration proceedings.” This includes and is not limited to detention by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). < <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/immigration-detention-united-states-agency>>.

Endnote

1. “Crushing Immigration Judge Caseloads and Lengthening Hearing Wait Times” *The New York Times* (25 October 2019) <<https://trac.syr.edu/whatsnew/email.191025.html>> (19 February 2020).

OGA COMMENT ON ITEM 02-087

COGA has recommended that this item be referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). However, should the assembly determine that this item of business is core and critical to our governance and sustainability, and needs to be considered by the 224th General Assembly (2020), OGA provides this comment.

As populations coming to the United States southern border change and shift, it is necessary to have a structure on the ground that can aid in that response. Since 2014, the United States has seen a change from single individuals crossing the border to family units seeking asylum. As the United States government implements immigration enforcements focused on detention and deportation, it is key for the church to have models of advocacy that help counter this narrative. PC(USA), General Assembly 2006 policy, “On Advocacy and Welcome for All Immigrants,” urges congregations and presbyteries to embrace a comprehensive approach to “advocacy and welcome,” which includes directives to ensure humanitarian values are lifted up as immigration policies are executed. Currently the United States is taking drastic measures to deter and detain vulnerable populations from seeking asylum. As they also decrease vastly the number of refugees received, we are seeing populations from other parts of the world cross the southern border. This new landscape requires consistent monitoring, organization, and engagement.

The Office of the General Assembly through the Office of Immigration Issues lifts up border advocacy in a number of ways. We have advised the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly to participate in countless advocacy letters to federal leaders—Congress, Department of Homeland Security, and the President—urging leaders to press for a humanitarian approach, to end the criminalization of irregular border crossing, to ensure fair and equitable access to due process, to secure access to legal counsel, to end the Migrant Protection Protocols, and to provide alternatives to detention. These campaigns are done in coordination with the Presbyterian Office of Public Witness and other interfaith partners. We have also led three trips to the southern Texas border since the 2018 General Assembly. From one such visit, you may view the following responses urging action from the Reverend Dr. J. Herbert Nelson, II, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly—<https://vimeo.com/314342869>, Elder Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri, General Assembly 2018 Co-Moderator—<https://vimeo.com/306815227>, and the Reverend Jimmie Hawkins, Director of the Office of Public Witness—<https://vimeo.com/306814251>. We collaborate with local leaders providing services, like the Angry Tías and Abuelas of Rio Grande Valley—<https://vimeo.com/306520536>. These experiences guide the advocacy work we encourage the church to engage. Visit <http://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/immigration/advocacy/> to learn more about how we invite Presbyterians to advocate for changes in immigration policy and enforcement. We would work closely with the person(s) involved in this work to shape future advocacy asks and strategies in regards to immigration along the southern border and in collaboration with work done by Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the Office of Public Witness, and the Presbyterian Office at the United Nations.

Item 02-088

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 303.]

Regarding the Creation of an Advocacy Committee for LGBTQIA+ Equity—From the LGBTQIA+ Advocacy Task Force.

The LGBTQIA+ Advocacy Task Force recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) do the following:

1. Direct that an LGBTQIA+ Equity Advocacy Committee be created as a permanent committee of the General Assembly with

a. Assigned functions, accountability, and access identical to those named for the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) and the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC) in the Presbyterian Mission Agency Manual of Operations but as related to LGBTQIA+ equity in the church and in the world.¹

b. Seven committee members with four-year terms, eligible for re-nomination for one additional term, elected by the General Assembly via the General Assembly Nominating Committee nominations process with commitment to balance and inclusiveness with regards to gender-identity, sexual orientation, and race.

c. Budget to cover one in-person meeting during non-General Assembly years, two in-person meetings during General Assembly years, three resource person attendees to General Assembly, and several electronic meetings.

2. Direct that two members from the LGBTQIA+ Advocacy Task Force serve on the newly formed LGBTQIA+ Equity Advocacy Committee for two-year terms with eligibility for one, two-year re-nomination via the General Assembly Nominating Committee process.

Rationale

At the recommendation of the 223rd General Assembly (2018), the LGBTQIA+ Advocacy Task Force was formed in order to investigate the need for an advocacy committee for LGBTQIA+ Equity.² The task force studied whether the formation of an advocacy committee devoted solely to these and related issues could better address the injustices affecting the LGBTQIA+ community within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and society. The task force successfully fulfilled all recommendations outlined in Item 10-3, gathering an immense amount of data from a variety of people. The task force had conversations with not only the affinity groups named and their leadership, past and present, but also with those in the LGBTQIA+ community who are not connected with any of the organizations. It should be noted that representatives from each of the affinity groups expressed a great need for an LGBTQIA+ Equity Advocacy Committee.

The PC(USA) has been and continues to be served well by More Light Presbyterians, Covenant Network, That All May Freely Serve, and PARITY, by way of grassroots campaigns to help bring about changes within the PC(USA). These affinity groups continue to work for the good of the LGBTQIA+ community, but they work from an external position without the direct access to the General Assembly or the Presbyterian Mission Agency granted the existing advocacy committees.

Rooted in the rich, Reformed theology of the PC(USA), the General Assembly has seen fit to provide within the structure of the denomination advocacy committees to provide accountability and prophetic witness on behalf of groups historically marginalized and silenced via oppressive power structures perpetuated by human sinfulness. The General Assembly has recognized the need for those who have been silenced or ignored by the power structure to be given direct access to decision-making tables through committees specifically called to focus on justice and equity for particular marginalized constituencies. These committees are tasked with amplifying those voices that have so often been silenced and ignored, calling the church and society to be a better reflection of the beloved community and kingdom to which God calls us. What the church is recognizing today is that among these silenced and ignored voices are those of the LGBTQIA+ community. For this reason, the task force unanimously recommends the creation of an Advocacy Committee for LGBTQIA+ Equity.

From its beginnings, the church has worked to remove barriers that stood between newcomers and full participation in the community of faith. When the longstanding covenantal requirement for circumcision created a barrier between Jewish and Gentile believers, advocates for equity came together with representatives of the larger church (Acts 15) to hear reports of the Holy Spirit's work in and through the lives of the Gentile converts and to remind one another of their scriptures that pointed toward greater inclusion (vv. 15–17). Rather than subject Gentile believers to “a yoke neither our ancestors nor we have been able to bear” (v. 10), the council ultimately settled upon removing the circumcision requirement while upholding the heart of their emerging vision for Christian identity (vv. 19–20). This advocacy work continues for the church on many fronts, including the ongoing need to address barriers that still stand between LGBTQIA+ Christians and full equity within the body of Christ.

Current barriers to LGBTQIA+ equity represent contemporary forms of the issues the larger church addressed in Acts 15. Healthcare continues to be an issue not only in the continued battle against HIV, but for the transgender person seeking care for the transition process. As LGBTQIA+ couples marry and make plans to start families, they face issues that many can't even begin to understand, including those related to housing, legal adoption and guardianship, and general safety. Legal discrimination continues in the workplace, and it unfortunately remains a factor in the call process within the PC(USA). We are called to remove and tear down today's barriers in order that LGBTQIA+ Christians may live fully and freely in the body of Christ, and that all LGBTQIA+ people may live fully and freely in society.

Even with the official denominational removal of constitutional barriers to LGBTQIA+ persons serving the ministries of the PC(USA), members still face discrimination within the church and in society, be it obvious or covert, in a similar manner to the experiences women and people of color, for whom the church has seen fit to provide structural accountability and prophetic witness. An Advocacy Committee for LGBTQIA+ Equity will serve as an internal accountability partner with access to decision-making tables, as well as a prophetic witness to and for the denomination regarding LGBTQIA+ Equity. Funding and composition of the Advocacy Committee for LGBTQIA+ Equity is outlined in the appendix.

02 RECOMMENDED REFERRALS TO THE 225TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2022)

As directed by the 223rd General Assembly (2018), the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns, in partnership with the General Assembly Nominating Committee, created a five-member task force to investigate the need for the creation of an Advocacy Committee for LGBTQIA+ concerns [223rd General Assembly (2018) Item 10-03]. The task force consisted of the following members: The Reverend M. Shea McGinnis, Moderator (Presbytery of Boston); Nathan Sobers (Presbytery of Riverside); Julianna Whitson (Columbia Seminary); the Reverend Daniel Hammer (Presbytery of Seattle); Quantisha Mason (Presbytery of Chicago).

The task force met monthly via Zoom, conducted numerous interviews, collecting and reviewing data.

Meeting in Minneapolis, August 12–14, 2019, the task force unanimously voted to recommend the creation of an Advocacy Committee for LGBTQIA+ Equity.

Endnotes

1. See the appendix to this report for the wording adapted directly from the Presbyterian Mission Agency Manual of Operations.
2. 223rd General Assembly (2018), Item 10-03: <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000281>.

Appendix

The Advocacy Committee for LGBTQIA+ Equity

Composition

The Advocacy Committee for LGBTQIA+ Equity shall consist of:

Seven at-large members nominated by the General Assembly Nominating Committee with a commitment to balance and inclusiveness with regard to gender-identity, sexual orientation, and race/ethnicity. Each member shall have a four-year term with eligibility for re-nomination for one additional term as determined by the General Assembly Nominating Committee.

*The first Advocacy Committee for LGBTQIA+ Equity shall consist of:

Two members from the LGBTQIA+ Advocacy Task Force, elected to a two-year term; eligible for two-year renewal.

Five at-large members with a commitment to gender-identity, sexual orientation, and race inclusiveness and balance, elected to a single four-year term with eligibility for re-nomination for an additional term.

Wording of "Accountability and Lodgment," "Budget," "Access," and "Assigned Functions" below adapted from the Presbyterian Mission Agency Manual of Operations descriptions of the existing advocacy committees.

Accountability and Lodgment

Staff responsible for the planning and coordination work of the committee shall be appointed by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Executive Director in consultation with the advocacy committee. The staff shall be lodged within the office of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Executive Director, unless the advocacy committee consents to staff being lodged outside that office. Such staff shall be accountable for the work of the committee to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Executive Director through the manager for diversity and reconciliation.

Budget

Funding for the work of the committee comes from the per capita budget except for the staffing costs, which are accounted for in the budget of the office where the staff is lodged. The advocacy committee shall propose a yearly budget to the manager for diversity and reconciliation. See below for the rationale for a smaller committee.

Access

The LGBTQIA+ Equity Advocacy Committee shall have direct access to the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. In accordance with the recommendation of the 220th General Assembly (2012), the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board shall meet at least once every two years with the elected leadership of the advocacy committees for strategic reflection and anticipation on matters related to LGBTQIA+ Equity.

Access to the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board shall be in the form of policy statements, resolutions, study papers, a yearly narrative report, and advice and counsel memoranda. Advice and counsel memoranda, and other appropriate correspondence, shall be developed in consultation with other advisory and advocacy committees as appropriate. The committee shall submit its General Assembly report to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Coordinating Committee for review and possible comments by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

02 RECOMMENDED REFERRALS TO THE 225TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2022)

Assigned Functions

- The Advocacy Committee for LGBTQIA+ Equity shall assist the PC(USA) in providing full expression to the rich diversity of its membership as specified in the *Book of Order*, G-4.0403. The committee shall monitor and evaluate policies, procedures, programs, and resources regarding the way in which they impact the status and position of LGBTQIA+ persons in the church and the world; and shall advocate for full inclusiveness and equity in all areas of the life and work of the church and society.
- Serve as the point of access for LGBTQIA+ affinity groups to the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency facilitating the free flow of ideas, concerns, and other relevant information between the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and the affinity groups.
- Prepare and provide policy statements, resolutions, recommendations, reports, and advice and counsel memoranda on matters related to LGBTQIA+ Equity concerns to the General Assembly at the request of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, or on its own initiative.
- Advise the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board on matters related to LGBTQIA+ Equity including statements concerning pressing issues the board may wish to consider between meetings of the General Assembly.
- Provide advice and counsel to the General Assembly and its committees on overtures, commissioners' resolutions, reports, and actions before the General Assembly that impact matters related to LGBTQIA+ Equity.
- Assist the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy in maintaining an up-to-date and accurate compilation of General Assembly policy on matters related to LGBTQIA+ equity and provide information to the church as requested.
- Provide the Stated Clerk, the Moderator(s) of the General Assembly, and the Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency with information as they fulfill their responsibilities to communicate and interpret General Assembly policies on matters related to LGBTQIA+ Equity.
- Monitor the implementation of policies and programs relative to matters related to LGBTQIA+ Equity.
- Through advocacy, maintains a strong prophetic witness to the church and for the church on existing and emerging issues matters related to LGBTQIA+ Equity.

Meetings

The advocacy committee will meet as needed via video conference or teleconference, with a minimum of one face-to-face meeting per year and two face-to-face meetings during assembly years.

Rationale for a Smaller Committee and Budget

The task force is acutely aware of, and sensitive to, the reality of declining per capita giving within the PC(USA). As a means of finding a middle ground between the financial realities of the denomination and the need for an Advocacy Committee for LGBTQIA+ Equity, the task force is recommending a smaller advocacy committee of seven members. A smaller advocacy committee will allow for a quicker, more nimble response to events or situations requiring a response from the denomination.

As current technology allows for most meetings to take place via video conference, which reduces travel expenses related to face-to-face meetings, the task force recommends that the majority of meetings of the advocacy committee take place via video or teleconference.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-088

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-088—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP)

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve with amendment the recommendation (add a new Recommendation 3) from the LGBTQIA+ Advocacy Task Force.

“[3. Request appropriate staff of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, in consultation with representatives of the Advocacy Committee on Women’s Concerns, the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee, and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, as well as with leaders of the LGBTQIA+ voluntary organizations consulted in preparing the proposal, to develop a staffing rationale based on an assessment of the capacities and time required to perform the tasks of resourcing, coordination, advocacy, and education; and to provide staff services to this committee until a permanent staffing rationale is developed.]”

It is unquestionably time to create a focal point for advocacy for LGBTQIA+ concerns in the PC(USA) and for that reason we support the new advocacy committee proposed. The 223rd General Assembly (2018) approved in a consent agenda an overture on celebrating the gifts of people of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities in the life of the church. That

assembly expressed thanks for LGBTQ+ pioneers who, at great personal cost and sacrifice, persisted in moving the church toward a more generous, loving, and just understanding of God's grace. It also approved in a consent agenda an overture affirming and celebrating the full dignity and humanity of people of all gender identities. This affirmation was rooted in the Reformed understanding of Scripture, that all people are created in the image of God.

It is time to advocate for the full standing of LGBTQIA+ persons in the PC(USA) and in the world at large. The gracious, inclusive words of previous General Assembly statements deserve to be implemented by the focused attention of love and justice-seeking Presbyterians. Creation of a permanent LGBTQIA+ Equity Advocacy Committee would amplify the voices of people long silenced and marginalized in our church, as well as provide a structure for removing barriers to full inclusion.

Most of the energy and thinking behind the changes in the church's policies on inclusive ordination and marriage came out of the unofficial LGBT-supportive groups in the church, some devoted primarily to that concern (such as More Light Presbyterians, the Covenant Network of Presbyterians, and That All May Freely Serve), and others of more general justice orientation (Witherspoon Society, now combined with Voices of Sophia as Presbyterian Voices for Justice, PV4J). No official support was given to the forty-year effort to change Presbyterian policies, except indirectly through studies and reports of the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy and the Advocacy for Women's Concerns. ACWC has a mandate to look at a range of gender and family concerns, while ACSWP conducted studies on sexuality matters that received major debate in 1978 and 1991 in particular. ACSWP's proposal to update its 2004 Changing Families policy is to recognize that these earlier efforts influenced the church's thought and vocabulary on LGBTQ matters, but did not succeed in becoming more inclusive policy.

In 2008-09, the General Assembly Presbyterian Mission Council conducted a study of the operations and purposes of the two advocacy committees, on Women's and Racial Ethnic Concerns (now, Racial Equity) and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy. The report from that study, <https://www.pc-biz.org/#!/committee/379/business>, substantiated a continuing role for the three committees, though it distinguished among their complementary functions. The advocacy committees have less study capacity but more of a monitoring role over the inclusion and fair representation of women and people of color, based on clear data, as well as the capacity to initiate inquiries and communicate directly with the General Assembly. A one-page chart provides a breakdown of the different tasks: <https://pcbiz.s3.amazonaws.com/Uploads/71726412-9ab0-4b4f-91f8-175cbf0ba53f/Advisory%20Advocacy%20Committee%20Review%20Committee%20appendix.pdf>.

That 2010 report noted the key role of adequate staffing and engagement with the General Assembly:

The role of the three committees was described during the review committee process as a "prophet to power" relationship, advising the church on social and ethical issues. Most of their work is based on initiatives approved by the General Assembly, some referred from the GAMC and only a small portion on the committees' own initiative (yet the taking of such initiative is explicitly authorized by the GAMC *Manual of Operations*). Nor are these committees programmatic agencies. Their role is to relate to, respond to, monitor, and advise the General Assembly and the GAMC. They interact with online networks; a variety of national, international, and ecumenical organizations; as well as middle governing bodies as part of this work."

In conclusion, we appreciate the effort to create a committee intended to function partly in cyberspace—a pre-Covid19 concept, clearly designed also to save the church money. Staff of General Assembly committees are in some ways like pastors working with sessions; however, trust is built through contact and the staff person helps the committee find its voice. We encourage further creative thinking about the placement of staff in the work of the church. Perhaps this advocacy committee might well be served by a staff person in the Washington, D.C., Office of Public Witness (OPW). And what if they were a lawyer and not a minister? Not only is advocacy needed within the life of the PC(USA), but LGBTQIA+ persons experience hostility, exclusion, discrimination, and outright violence in U.S. society and throughout the world. The Religious Freedom Without Discrimination (RFWD) policy approved by the 223rd General Assembly (2018) directly addressed those concerns.

ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-088

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-088—From the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC)

The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 02-088.

ACWC pushed for the task force to study whether an advocacy committee would be worthwhile in light of the growing amount of LGBTQIA+ advocacy work ACWC has taken on, and we wholly support the decision of this task force to create such an advocacy committee. An advocacy committee will be able to focus on the specific needs of the LGBTQIA+ community both within and outside of the PC(USA). Ultimately, ACWC supports our LGBTQIA+ siblings in Christ, and we recognize that advocating for said siblings in Christ now must include advocating for the creation of this advocacy committee for the PC(USA).

GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 02-088

General Assembly Committee on Representation Comment on Item 02-88. Regarding the Creation of an Advocacy Committee for LGBTQIA+ Equity—From the LGBTQIA+ Advocacy Task Force.

This item has been recommended to be referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). However, should the assembly determine that this item of business needs to be considered by the 224th General Assembly (2020), GACOR provides this comment.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) supports this process through which the denomination can seek better ways to represent the denomination's full diversity within its decision-making bodies and processes. The LGBTQIA+ Advocacy Task Force, upon the completion of their mandate, has concluded that an advocacy committee will help to the discernment and guide the PC(USA) to seek and ensure the LGBTQIA+ representation and equity within the larger church.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation is made up of sixteen persons, elected by the General Assembly, who are drawn from members and elders, ruling and teaching, from across the church in accordance with F-1.0403. Its constitutional mandate and central functions are described in G-3.0103 of the Book of Order (Form of Government).

REAC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-088

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-088—From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee.

The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 02-088.

REAC supports the task force's recommendation for a separate advocacy committee for LGBTQIA+ siblings given the injustices that still exists. This work cannot be added onto an already existing advocacy committee for the following reasons:

1. REAC is comprised of five causes whose work already deserves more attention than we can give. Adding another advocacy group's work would tax the members of the committee and not give the time needed for thorough deliberations.

2. LGBTQIA+ concerns are complex and specific, which can only be understood fully by persons within the community. It would be insincere to ask others to speak or advise on such injustices and harmful to the community at large.

3. If the PC(USA) seeks to be a church striving for justice then our actions need to show our commitment. Lumping all advocacy work into one committee reflects that this work is secondary to the "real work" of the church.

Item 02-089

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 304.]

On Promoting Human Rights in the Philippines—From the Presbytery of San Diego.

The Presbytery of San Diego respectfully overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to do the following:

1. Direct the Stated Clerk, the Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and the (Co-)Moderator(s) of the 224th General Assembly (2020) to call upon the president of the United States, Congressional leaders, and related executive branch agencies to promote human rights in the Philippines by

a. Urging the Philippine government to cease labelling the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP), United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP), humanitarian organizations, and other civil society organizations as "front organizations of local communist terrorist groups";

b. Calling upon the Philippine government to live up to their duty to protect civil society and non-state actors, especially church leaders and human rights defenders;

c. Strongly urging the Philippine government, the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP), and related groups, to affirm the lives and human dignity of the urban poor, farmers, and indigenous peoples of the Philippines;

d. Supporting the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP) and the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP) in their advocacy for the peace process between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP);

e. Calling upon the Philippine government to uphold its obligations in agreements such as the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL) and international human rights

standards such as the United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights as well as the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights.

2. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through its Office of Public Witness, to

a. Urge Congressional leaders and relevant Congressional committees to continue their investigations of how U.S. military spending is contributing to and supportive of the misuse of the Philippine Armed Forces in committing human rights violations;

b. Support lobby-advocacy efforts of U.S.-based organizations, such as the International Coalition for Human Rights in the Philippines—United States (ICHRP-US), with U.S. Congressional and Department of State offices;

c. Support efforts between U.S. and Philippine legislators who seek to investigate human rights violations in the Philippines.

3. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations, the Asia-Pacific Office of Presbyterian World Mission, and the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program to

a. Affirm and participate in the international ecumenical solidarity programs and plans such as the World Council of Churches;

b. Support the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP) as co-convenor of the Ecumenical Voice for Human Rights and Peace in the Philippines (EcuVoice) and the Philippine Universal Periodic Review Watch (PUPRW);

c. Support the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to fulfill its reporting obligations and any follow-up actions from Resolution No. 41/2 at the 44th Regular Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (June 15–July 3, 2020). The UN HRC resolution:

(1) Urges the government of the Philippines to take all necessary measures to prevent extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances, and to carry out impartial investigations to hold perpetrators accountable in accordance with due process and rule of law,

(2) Calls upon the government of the Philippines to cooperate with the Office of the High Commission and mandates of the Human Rights Council, including by facilitating visits and preventing and refraining from all acts of intimidation or retaliation,

(3) Requests the High Commissioner to prepare a comprehensive written report on the human rights situation in the Philippines and to present it to the Human Rights Council at its forty-fourth session, to be followed by an enhanced interactive dialogue;

d. Affirm the efforts of the International Criminal Court (ICC) to investigate the extrajudicial killings related to the war on drugs;

e. Resource lobbying-advocacy efforts and visits of Philippine organizations in the United States that advocate for addressing the human rights situation in the Philippines;

4. Urge PC(USA) national agencies, mid councils, congregations and individual Presbyterians to

a. Pray with and for the people of the Philippines;

b. Learn about the history of the Philippines, as well as its contemporary realities;

c. Support the ministry and witness of the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP) and United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP), as well as PC(USA) mission co-workers and volunteers through the Presbyterian Mission Agency and its Presbyterian World Mission Office of Asia-Pacific;

d. Engage in advocacy with their respective legislators to support human rights in the Philippines.

5. Direct the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly to share this action with our partners in the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP), the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP), and other related ecumenical and interreligious partners and conciliar bodies.

Rationale

I. Red-Tagging of PC(USA) Partner Church and Ecumenical Council

On November 5, 2019, the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP) was included on the list of “front organizations of local communist terrorist groups” by the Department of National Defense (DND). The NCCP was one among a number of humanitarian and civil society organizations in the list that was presented by Major General Reuben Basiao, Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence during a committee meeting at the House of Representatives for the modernization of the armed forces. The presentation of Major General Basiao was in the context of the ongoing counterinsurgency program of the Philippines government against the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People’s Army-National Democratic Front (CCP-NPA-NDF), its history, organizational flowchart, and number of attacks nationwide. The front organizations were allegedly providing funds to the “Communist Terrorist Group” (CTG) through “International Solidarity Work.” While the NCCP decried its inclusion on the list, international partners rallied and supported the NCCP through statements of support and letters directly addressed to the Philippine president and to the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

This red tagging by the Philippine government is part of a nationwide militarized counterinsurgency campaign that is aimed against activists and progressives, under Executive Order 70. The NCCP member churches such as the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP), Iglesia Filipina Independiente (IFI), and the United Methodist Church (UMC) are targets of this campaign. Human rights and environmental defenders, as well as the communities and individuals that they serve, are also targets. The war on drugs is worsening the plight of the poor, resulting in the killing of thousands and leaving their surviving family members with few legal options in local and national courts. Meanwhile very few members of law enforcement and the Philippine National Police (PNP) have been investigated in their roles in this war on drugs. Those who are defending the lands, sometimes the ancestral domains of indigenous peoples, from the development of mines and dams, are having to deal with the Philippine military that uses their might to protect the interests of international companies. Farmers, who seek to provide food for their families during their low seasons while working in feudal systems, are imprisoned or killed, while the lawyers who seek to represent them are murdered. Meanwhile the Philippine government has ordered the additional deployment of both Philippine National Police (PNP) and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) to suppress the violence and terror in these agrarian communities.

In red tagging the NCCP, the Philippine government has implicated, by association and membership, its member churches including the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP). This is not the first red-tagging accusation for UCCP. This accusation defies the open lines of communication previously promoted through dialogues between UCCP and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and Philippine National Police (PNP) leaders, under several previous presidential administrations.

Under the current administration of Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte, this red tagging of churches and church leaders emboldens the government to silence dissent. Many UCCP church leaders have already experienced threat, harassment, and intimidation, as well as vilification, filing of trumped up cases, and unlawful arrests.

II. Ecumenical Solidarity

The UCCP is a seventy-two-year-old denomination with mission heritage from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The 217th General Assembly (2006) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) approved Item 7-11 (see <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/1383>) and recognized this denial of human rights in the Philippines through the crackdown and killing of UCCP church leaders. The 218th General Assembly (2008), in approving Item 11-31 (see <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/2123>), affirmed new measures of solidarity with Philippine church partners in light of numerous and well-documented human rights violations against church leaders and civil society groups. The global ecumenical community has expressed prayerful solidarity with Philippine church partners out of grave concern of human rights violations in the Philippines. The Central Committee of the World Council of Churches, meeting in Geneva, Switzerland, on June 15–21, 2018, among several actions similar to what is being requested in this overture, adopted an action of solidarity, urging the government of the Philippines to “end the culture of impunity, order the investigation of all killings, and drop the Department of Justice’s petition to declare activists as terrorists” as well as the “resumption of formal peace talks between the government of the Philippines and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP)” (see document # GEN PUB 05.04 at : <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/central-committee/geneva-2018/situation-in-the-philippines>). The Executive Committee of the World Communion of Reformed Churches adopted actions in 2012, 2013, and 2015 urging that human rights be honored, and that justice and peace pursued in various focus areas in the world, including the Philippines (see Minutes of the WCRC Executive Committee: 2012, p. 164; 2013, p. 151; 2015, pp. 15, 202).

In addition to the solidarity through PC(USA) General Assembly actions, the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations (PMUN) can provide support by including the Philippines in its reporting mechanisms and facilitating Philippine delegations. At the upcoming 44thth Regular Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council meeting in June 2020, for Resolution

No. 41/2, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights will prepare a report based on data submitted by various organizations. Starting with this overture, the PMUN draws attention to the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP) report that was already submitted to the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights. The NCCP report included examples about these UCCP church leaders:

III. Real-Life Examples of Christian Leaders Experiencing Violence and Harassment

Bishop Modesto Villasanta, Bishop Emeritus of the UCCP, has been harassed by the military on various instances for his ministry and advocacy for the Lumad (collective term for indigenous people of the island of Mindanao). In November 2017, Bp. Villasanta along with Fr. Raymond Ambray and other members of the Friends of the Lumad in Caraga were subjected to threat, harassment, and intimidation by Col. Andres Centino, Brigade Commander of the 401st Brigade of the Philippine Army during a meeting of the Municipal Peace and Order Council (MPOC).

In November 2017, Perfecto Hoyle, a lay pastor for the UCCP, was shot by two masked men in his front yard. This incident occurred in a village in Kicharao, Agusan del Norte, where the 29th Infantry Battalion of the Philippine Army was encamped at the time of the shooting. Hoyle was known to be a staunch advocate of peasant rights, advancing the interests of the farmers in their area. He was a member of a peasant organization, UMAN (Peasant Union of Agusan Del Norte).

In September 2018, Rachel Mariano, wife of UCCP Pastor Bill Mariano, handed herself over to the court to prove her innocence of the charges levelled against her. Rachel was charged with different counts of murder related to an encounter between the AFP and NPA in Quirino, Ilocos Sur, in October 2017. The trumped-up charges were filed by the 81st Infantry Battalion of the 7th Infantry Division of the AFP based in Ilocos Sur. Since the fabricated charges were non-bailable, she was incarcerated in the provincial jail for close to a year and was only freed after a year had passed. Rachel is a human rights defender working as the health program desk coordinator of Community Health, Education, Services and Training in the Cordillera Region (CHESTCORE).

There was also the unlawful arrest in June 2019 of seven civilians, some of whom are members of the UCCP and IFI in the remote area of Buenavista Himamaylan, Negros. Included was Pastor Jimmy Teves, UCCP Licentiate Pastor, who together with a co-pastor has been serving seventeen UCCP local churches. According to verified reports from the UCCP Office of the Bishop of West Visayas Jurisdiction, the seven were arrested on trumped-up charges of murder and frustrated murder. They were arrested without the benefit of a genuine preliminary investigation that is required by law. Their arrest happened within months of the killings of other activists, including fourteen killings on one day and seventeen killings over six days. The Negros Occidental and Oriental regions are included in a memorandum order that supports the “immediate deployment of additional forces of both PNP and AFP, to suppress violence and acts of terror.”

In addition to those situations, the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP) is aware of and responding to these specific cases:

Although Rachel Mariano was released from prison, her family continues to fear for their lives because of red tagging. Members of the 2nd Civil-Military Operations Company under the 7th Infantry Division of the Philippine Army made regular unannounced visits to Rev. Mariano. A soldier claiming to serve with the 81st Infantry Battalion has asked for his home address. This same individual has accused him of being a member of the New People’s Army. Rev. Mariano is very involved in a community organization called Defend Ilocos, known for its campaigns against destructive mining. Their daughter, Jennybeth, has also experienced red tagging on social media. She is the secretary-general of Anakbayan Ilocos, a regional student-led progressive organization.

In September 2019, UCCP Bishop Hamuel Tequis of the Southeast Mindanao Jurisdictional Area received a charge of human trafficking of Lumad children, based on a complaint issued by the Philippine National Police (PNP) and Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). Along with two colleagues from Save our Schools Network, they accompanied the children from UCCP Haran to the General Santos City Airport. Under the custody of the DSWD, the children were subject to intimidation and harassment by police authorities for three days. Authorities also prevented their parents from securing their children and subjected these parents to harassment. Save Our Schools Network provides an alternative school environment for Lumad (a collective word for indigenous peoples in Mindanao) students who have been forcibly displaced from their communities because of militarized violence. For many years now, UCCP Haran provided a venue for the schooling of some hundreds of Lumad children and a home for displaced Lumads.

Both Rev. Rosing Doydora and her husband Reynaldo are facing separate charges of murder, and her husband is in jail. She is a UCCP church worker from the Bukidnon Area Conference. Since 2010, they have been active with a farmer’s organization, NAMAKA, with anti-illegal logging and anti-quarry campaigns focused on protecting human rights and the environment. Due to military operations in the same region as NAMAKA, the couple has been implicated for supporting the New People’s Army (NPA).

In eastern Visayas, UCCP church workers and their ecumenical colleagues are investigating the impact of climate change on their human rights. El Niño has replaced harvests of rice, abaca, corn, and coconut, with drought, disease, and displacement. Las Navas, located in Northern Samar, now suffers from zero abaca production. Farmers who only knew this livelihood, are left with little or no government assistance in seeking alternative sources of income. In November 2019, there were reports of a bomb in Las Navas, as well as forced entry and strafing of homes. School has also been suspended. The military claims that one specific farmer was a commander of the New People's Army, the armed counterpart of the Communist Party of the Philippines.

In the UCCP South Luzon Jurisdictional Area, several church workers who are actively serving as pastors of local churches, face trumped-up charges. The Reverend Dan P. San Andres currently serves as an administrative pastor and chairperson of the Christian Witness and Service of the UCCP North Bicol conference. He has been accused of double murder charges in Ragay, Camarines Sur. The Reverend Elena Del Valle serves as an administrative pastor in Palawan. She has been tagged as a supporter of the CPP-NPA-NDF. The Reverend Luisito Saliendra is an administrative pastor and chairperson of the Evangelism and Church Development Committee, of the Southern Tagalog Conference. He was charged with attempted murder. The Reverend Edwin Egar is an administrative pastor and chairperson of the Christian Witness and Service committee of the Batangas Associate Conference. He was charged with attempted murder.

The common denominator for these UCCP church leaders is their commitment to serving vulnerable communities, such as farmers and Lumads, in their vision for a society that is centered on human rights, peace, and justice. Such acts are not only out of their sense of welfare and patriotism but are deeds inspired by and integral to their Christian faith. They are expressions of their faithfulness to the UCCP's Statement of Faith. And these very communities are the ones who stand to benefit from sustainable livelihoods and adequate social services such as health care and education. These concerns are the core of the ongoing peace process between the Philippine government and the Communist Party of the Philippines. Both UCCP and NCCP leaders also actively support these peace talks.

IV. International Response

International governments, nongovernmental organizations, and faith institutions alike have called attention to the human rights violations occurring in the Philippines. On February 28, 2019, members of the House Foreign Affairs committee called on U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to raise human rights concerns with the government of President Duterte around the Philippine government's assault on civil society, media freedom, and human rights. The letter concluded, "the United States must not be silent in the face of democratic regression in the Philippines." Later that year, U.S. Senators brought to light a portion of the Philippine government's injustices through proposing Senate Resolution 142 to employ the Global Magnitsky Act in order to place sanctions on those in the Philippine government and security forces responsible for the arrest and continued detention of Philippine Senator Leila De Lima. De Lima, an internationally recognized human rights defender and vocal critic against the extrajudicial killings of Duterte's War on Drugs, was arrested in 2017 on trumped-up drug-trafficking charges. However, these sanctions would barely scratch the surface of the government-sponsored injustices occurring throughout the nation.

The Philippine military and state forces insist on cracking down on church leaders and human rights defenders for their work. Backing up those who support this crackdown is the United States military who also provides the training and ammunition. Since 2016 the US Department of State and Department of Defense have provided close to \$550 million in defense funding to the Philippines and have increased joint military exercises with the nation's armed forces. When this information is viewed in tandem with the reality that many of these extrajudicial killings, including those cited above, occur by the Armed Forces of the Philippines, the U.S. is condoning and even supporting these actions.

V. Final Word

Previous General Assemblies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) have acknowledged and resolved to take action regarding the human rights violations in the Philippines. These critical issues cannot be meaningfully resolved in a mere decade or two. The PC(USA) must continue what it started by advocating for the U.S. government to cease funding the violent actions of the Philippine Armed Forces and by standing alongside the church's siblings of faith in the Philippines as they fight for the rights and dignity of themselves and the people of their country.

Concurrences to Item 02-089 from the Presbyteries of de Cristo, Lake Huron, San Gabriel, and San Jose.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-089

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-089—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 02-89.

The United States has particular responsibility for human rights in the Philippines for several reasons:

- The Philippines was a colony of the U.S. for fifty years following the Spanish-American War.
- The continuing U.S. military presence and aid to their military have frequently abetted the commission of human rights abuses.
- Many Filipinos and their descendants now live and work in the U.S. Due partly to past immigration policies, they are frequently active as professionals in our health care facilities.

Those arguments are not particularly theological, but they reflect a reparative ethic of wanting to help rectify a difficult situation.

Item 02-090

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 304.]

On Commending and Furthering Mental Health Ministry in the PC(USA)—From the Presbytery of Winnebago.

In support of continued progress in mental health ministry, the Presbytery of Winnebago overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) to do the following:

1. Commend the 223rd General Assembly (2018) for its approval of Item 10-11: *On Establishing a Grant to Develop Resources to Educate Entities Regarding Serious Mental Illness Issues* (<https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000227>).
2. Commend the Presbytery of Mission (and congregations Hope, Austin, and Covenant, San Antonio) and the twenty concurring presbyteries and synods for their leadership in bringing this overture to the assembly, thereby reinvigorating interest and engagement in mental health ministry.
3. Commend the Presbyterian Mission Agency for its response to the directives of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) in Item 10-11: Recommendations 2, 4, 5, in holding a summit on mental health ministry (Louisville, February 2019), establishing a grant process and awarding grants for the furthering of mental health ministry, supporting the formation of a nationwide network, creating a website to share information and encourage network sign-up, sponsoring a churchwide mental health survey to lay a foundation for further action recommendations, and reporting back to the 224th General Assembly (2020) with recommendations for actions to focus and enhance mental health initiatives in congregations, mid councils, and seminaries going forward.
4. Commend the Board of Pensions for encouraging pastors to complete the churchwide survey by including it as an action item in the Call to Health.
5. Commend the nascent Presbyterian Mental Health Network for its grassroots work to begin connecting congregations, mid councils, and seminaries engaged in mental health ministry so that they might share ideas, spark innovation, discover best practices, lead the church to launch effective mental health ministries, encourage one another in important but sometimes difficult ministry, and thereby bring hope to those living with mental health concerns and save lives.
6. Commend the Presbyterian Mission Agency for its report and recommendations in E. 102 “On Furthering Mental Health Ministry in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)” and encourages a robust and full response to all of its action recommendations.

Rationale

Vision

“I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?” (Isa. 43:19a).

To God’s people living in exile in Babylon, a great danger was that they had lost hope, given up on a vision of returning to Judah, and come to assume that “things will never change.” For many of those living with mental health conditions and their

loved ones, losing hope is a real and present danger. In a prophetic role, the church is called to give hope when signs appear of God's new work in our midst.

The advancements made in mental health ministry since the 223rd General Assembly (2018) reveal that we are in a *kairos* moment: God appears to be working through cultural changes in the world around us, leadership by the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and energy from grassroots leadership in the church “to educate and equip the church to walk compassionately alongside people living with mental health issues, recognize neurodiversity, and encourage mental wellbeing” (mission statement of the Presbyterian Mental Health Network).

There are numerous entities to commend for the advancements made since the 223rd General Assembly (2018). This assembly has the opportunity to commend the vision and the “energy, intelligence, imagination, and love” they have all brought to advancing this work. In doing so, it can both express its gratitude for strides already made and communicate its commitment to seeing that this work continues to advance.

Background

The “Comfort My People: A Policy Statement on Serious Mental Illness,”¹ approved at the 218th General Assembly (2008) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), was a profound statement of faith for persons, families, and communities living with mental illness. This statement has aided in the message of hope through educating Christians and reducing the stigma associated with mental illness.

In recognition of its tenth anniversary, the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approved Item 10-11 “On Establishing a Grant to Develop Resources to Educate Entities Regarding Serious Mental Illness Issues”² that

- ignited a critical conversation within our denomination,
- provided \$250,000 in grant funding for congregations, mid council bodies, and seminaries to engage in new models of mental health ministry,
- provided for the surveying of our denomination to learn about ministry already in progress,
- facilitated the formation and nurturing of a critical new ministry network (the Presbyterian Mental Health Network—PMHN),
- helped formulate means for connecting individuals and entities interested in engaging in mental health ministry,
- and directed a report to be brought back to the 224th General Assembly (2020) to “recommend specific activities designed to focus and implement measures to enhance mental health initiatives in presbyteries, congregations, and seminaries.”

That overture received overwhelming support, receiving concurrences from twenty mid councils and strong support from the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP), the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC, now the Racial Ethnic Advocacy Committee, REAC), and the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC). Each recognized the urgent need for this ministry. The ACSWP and the Presbytery of Newton both urged an increase in grant funding to \$1,000,000. The overture, as strengthened through amendments, ultimately received approval by 82 percent of voting commissioners. Clearly, both the need for the ministry and the cost-effectiveness of the model were embraced by much of the denomination.

The extension of grant funds will encourage more congregations, mid councils, and seminaries to imagine and implement models for mental health ministry to address needs in their communities. As we hear back on the impact of these experiments in ministry, we will discover new and innovative ways to engage in compassionate and transformative ministries. These impactful efforts will encourage congregations, mid councils, and seminaries to continue to innovate in mental health ministry long after the denomination's investment in jump-starting these ministries.

The excellent report from the Presbyterian Mission Agency to the 224th General Assembly (2020) speaks to the need for this ministry, the work that has been accomplished, and the importance that it continue to be funded into the future.

This effort is still sprouting and in need of support. A new model for a missional relationship between the Compassion, Peace, and Justice (CPJ) of the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) and a grassroots ministry network (the Presbyterian Mental Health Ministry—PMHN) is still taking shape. To provide oversight for the awarding of grants, to create the new “primary resource” for mental health ministry, and to help the PMHN reach maturity as a ministry network requires having a

full-time staff person in CPJ to lead or support these activities. While there are certainly financial implications to this work, the cost-effectiveness of it is undeniable.

Thus, the direction set by the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to implement the recommendations of “Comfort My People” and begin imagining and implementing effective models for mental health ministry was timely, well-supported, and cost-effective. Now, in 2020, the need persists, the grassroots effort is taking root, and the cost-effectiveness of the model is even more evident. It is imperative that the assembly help our church capitalize on the groundswell of support to establish ministries and models that can save lives and help the church in its transformation and deepening as a community that understands, responds compassionately, and helps all God’s people be nurtured and equipped to serve in Christ’s body.

Endnotes

1. <https://www.pcusa.org/resource/comfort-my-people-policy-statement-serious-mental/>
2. *Overture 10-11. On Establishing a Grant to Develop Resources to Educate Entities Regarding Serious Mental Illness Issues*, <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000227>. Read the report authored by Donna Miller E.102 “On Furthering Mental Health Ministry in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)” at: <http://pmab.pcusa.org>. Then click progressively on “Meeting Papers,” “2020,” “February,” “E - Mid Councils,” and finally, “E.102 Response to Referral On Furthering.” This report is wonderfully written, giving context, key findings from the churchwide study, and recommendations for action to guide the ongoing work of Compassion, Peace, and Justice Ministries.

Concurrences to Item 02-090 from the Presbyteries of de Cristo, Mission, and Peace River.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-090

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-090—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Item 02-090 asks that the 224th General Assembly (2020) commend the church on its dedication and action towards mental health ministry, explicitly naming the 223rd General Assembly (2018), Presbytery of Mission, Presbyterian Mission Agency, Board of Pensions, and the Presbyterian Mental Health Network. This overture also commends the Presbyterian Mission Agency’s report “On Furthering Mental Health Ministry in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)” and encourages a full response to its actions and recommendations.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 02-090 as amended by adding a new Recommendation 7. below:

“[7. Encourage the Presbyterian Mission Agency to release materials guiding ministers, congregations, mid councils, and seminaries on how to care for the unique mental health needs of church members during times of prolonged emergency isolation, sharing lessons learned in the process of dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic.]”

The 218th General Assembly (2008) approved the statement “Comfort My People: A Policy Statement on Serious Mental Illness,” and a further call to action was made on its ten-year anniversary at the 223rd General Assembly (2018). The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is living into its call to love the whole person and has been seeking a deeper understanding of how mental health ties into personhood, faith, and worship in a culture already marked by fewer communal ties. This overture was originally timed, then, for an especially propitious moment when Presbyterians and their neighbors across the nation struggle(d) with mental health issues that are/were occurring or worsening due to quarantine and social distance in light of COVID-19.

ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-090

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-090—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) to approve Item 02-090.

The ACWC views mental illness as a gender justice issue that must be recognized and addressed within the PC(USA), and believes that the Mental Health Ministry is a beginning of this much needed awareness, as well as resources.

Women’s Mental Health: The Facts:

- Depressive disorders account for close to 41.9 percent of the disability from neuropsychiatric disorders among women compared to 29.3 percent among men.

- Leading mental health problems of the older adults are depression, organic brain syndromes, and dementias. A majority are women.
- An estimated 80 percent of 50 million people affected by violent conflicts, civil wars, disasters, and displacement are women and children.
- Lifetime prevalence rate of violence against women ranges from 16 percent to 50 percent.
- At least one in five women suffer rape or attempted rape in their lifetime.¹

Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has created an even greater need for mental health awareness and resources, particularly for women. *Medical News Today* advises women experiencing significant mental distress to consult with the healthcare provider or counselor.² Jessica Gold, M.D. and professor of psychiatry at Washington University in St. Louis reported April 3, 2020, “Our mental health system is deeply flawed and understaffed and is in no way prepared to manage the onslaught of mental health issues in health care providers and the citizenry in general after the mass tragedy of Covid-19. We must think of ways to prevent mental health from deteriorating while also coming up with innovative ways to target at risk groups, particularly health care workers.”³ The National Alliance of Mental Illness (NAMI) has crafted a twenty-two page “COVID-19 Resource and Information Guide” to assist those experiencing mental illness and their families,⁴ further articulating the even greater need for mental health awareness and resources across the PC(USA) and truly, the world.

For further insight, the ACWC recommends that The World Health Organization’s “Women’s Mental Health: An Evidenced Based Review” (2000) be consulted.

http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/66539/WHO_MSD_MDP_00.1.pdf?sequence=1

Endnotes

1. World Health Organization: http://www.who.int/mental_health/prevention/genderwomen/en/
2. MedicalNewsToday: <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/covid-19-pregnancy-and-mental-health#tips>
3. Jessica Gold, M.D. Assistant Professor of Psychiatry, Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri: <https://www.stat-news.com/2020/04/03/the-covid-19-crisis-too-few-are-talking-about-health-care-workers-mental-health/>
4. <https://www.nami.org/covid-19-guide>

Item 02-091

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 303.]

Recommendations Regarding the Reformed Perspective of Christian Education in the 21st Century—From the Special Committee to Study the Reformed Perspective of Christian Education in the 21st Century.

The Special Committee to Study the Reformed Perspective of Christian Education in the 21st Century recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) do the following:

1. Direct Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) to create a PMA associate position (1.0 FTE) to equip and connect Christian formation practitioners across the denomination (professional educators, pastors, volunteers, commissioned ruling elders [CREs], etc.). Responsibilities will initially include curating and keeping up-to-date a Christian Formation Web Portal—a Reformed educational resource toolbox—with resources, links to curricula, training, and more; identifying gaps in resources available and find ways to help fill them; assisting those involved in planning of Christian education with suggestions, resources, and training for ministry; making connections between Christian formation leaders across the denomination.
2. Direct Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) Research Services to conduct a qualitative research study exploring the particularities and differences of Christian education and faith formation ministries and practices in racial/ethnic minority congregations, for the purpose of informing the PMA Office of Theology, Formation, and Evangelism, as well as the cultural sensitivity and relevance of Presbyterian Publishing Corporation (PPC) publications. These offices should report back to the 225th General Assembly (2022) as to how this information was disseminated and implemented.
3. Enhance minister of Word and Sacrament/teaching elder and commissioned ruling elder (CRE) preparation for ministry to have a greater focus on the role of pastor as teacher and educator by strongly encouraging:

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- a. Presbyteries to require Christian education and faith formation coursework as part of a candidate's Master of Divinity (M.Div) degree or additional preparation for ministry.
- b. Presbyteries to develop Christian education and faith formation leadership training as part of commissioned ruling elder (CRE) preparation.
- c. Presbyteries' Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM) to have candidates demonstrate proficiency in teaching as part of the final assessment, in addition to preaching a sermon.
- d. The Office of the General Assembly's Mid Council Ministries to work with the Presbyteries' Cooperative Committee on Examinations (PCC) to consider adding an ordination exam, or work within already existing ordination exams, to have every candidate demonstrate proficiency in Christian education and faith formation.
- e. Committee on Theological Education (COTE) to ask leaders of seminaries related to the PC(USA) to support professors in adding a practical application/teaching component as a regular part of their coursework across disciplines.
- f. COTE to encourage seminaries related to the PC(USA) to offer Christian education and faith formation coursework as a regular part of the M.Div. curricula.
- g. COTE to encourage offices of continuing education of its related seminaries to offer continuing education opportunities in Christian education and faith formation.

4. Direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative vote:

Shall G.1-103b be amended as follows: [Text to be inserted in shown as italic.]

"G-2.1103b. Presbytery Responsibility

"The presbytery shall establish minimum requirements for compensation and benefits for Certified Christian Educators and Certified Associate Christian Educators and shall provide access to the area of presbytery that oversees ministry (G-3.0307). During their term of service in an educational ministry under the jurisdiction of the presbytery, Certified Christian Educators *and Certified Associate Christian Educators in good standing* are entitled to the privilege of the floor with voice only at all presbytery meetings, and in the case of Certified Christian Educators who are ruling elders, the privilege of voice and vote at all its meetings. *In order to remain in good standing, contact information must be updated with the national certifying body, including proof of current membership in the PC(USA), and proof of boundary training that includes the topic of sexual misconduct and child abuse prevention at least every thirty-six months.*"

5. Strengthen Christian educator certification by:

- a. Directing the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) to collaborate with the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) to promote educator certification across the denomination including resourcing the Educator Certification Committee (ECC) to do so.
- b. Encouraging the ECC to consider a continuing education/professional development requirement to maintain good standing as a certified Christian educator.
- c. Directing OGA to encourage the ECC to make educator certification more accessible including but not limited to multiple languages and cultural sensitivity, and re-evaluating the current exam in light of that accessibility.
- d. Directing PMA to open financial aid and financial support for certified educators and those enrolled in the Christian educator certification process for continuing education and Presbyterian engagement.
- e. Asking the Committee on Theological Education (COTE) to encourage Master of Arts in Christian Education (MACE) and equivalent programs in seminaries to connect PC(USA) students to the educator certification process.

6. Direct the COGA, in consultation with the General Assembly Nominating Committee, to create a committee of three to five members, no earlier than 2024 with no financial implications, to report back to the 227th General Assembly (2026) General Assembly for the purpose of assessing the viability of the educator certification program including making recommendations on continuing, modifying, or discontinuing the CCE process based on whether it is making a significant contribution to the Christian education and faith formation of the denomination.

Rationale

Christian Education and Faith Formation is a lifelong journey of deepening one's relationship with Christ. As a denomination rooted in the Reformed tradition, we claim a faith seeking understanding that raises learning, study, and critical thinking as important ways we live out that faith which compels us to seek the love and justice of Christ in the world. More than the passing on of knowledge, Christian education and formation shapes us to be disciples of Christ through our rhythms of faithful practice in daily life, how we gather as family and community, in our worship, through the Sacraments, in living our mission, and so much more.

As the church adapts to God's call in the 21st century, so must our understanding and emphasis on Christian education and formation. In times of adaptive change, grounding ourselves in who and Whose we are is more important than ever. The changing cultural location of the mainline church in the United States, the competing priorities for the time of our members, the general disappearance of a rhythm of Sabbath in many of our communities, a growing number of families who feel ill-equipped to teach and model their Christian faith at home, the declining fiscal resources for many of our congregations, and more, means the PC(USA) must adapt its education and formation models—maintaining its essential function in shaping life-long disciples but with new tools and strategies for today and tomorrow.

In this second round of the special committee's recommendations, we highlight and make recommendations for three primary areas where we believe the General Assembly can have the most impact through the PC(USA) agencies that directly and indirectly support Christian education and faith formation for our denomination. Those three areas are:

1. Supporting local congregations' efforts to do Christian education and formation in their contexts (Recommendations 1 and 3).
2. Enhancing minister of Word and Sacrament/teaching elder preparation for ministry to be educators and formation leaders in their contexts (Recommendation 2).
3. Christian educator certification (Recommendations 4, 5, 6).

On Recommendation 1: The creation of a PMA associate position to equip and connect educators, pastors, and volunteers in congregations, including the creation of a regularly curated web-based resource:

- With the increase of smaller congregations and the decline in actively maintained presbytery resource centers, coupled with the variety of personnel beyond trained Christian educators responsible for educational ministries in local churches, there is a need for easily accessible Reformed educational resources to support leaders.
- As we interviewed educators (pastors, CCEs, volunteers, etc.) across the denomination, the one thing our interviewees asked for over and over again was a resource toolbox that could be curated regularly for up-to-date curricular materials and educational guidance aligned with PC(USA) theology. The special committee concurs with the exceptional value this resource could provide the denomination.
- Our research showed us that there is no one-size-fits-all solution for local churches when it comes to Christian education and formation. Each context and need is different. Support, training, and access to a variety of tools that can be adapted is more helpful than a singular new curriculum.

On Recommendation 2: Research study on Christian education and formation in racial/ethnic minority congregations:

- Certain emphases, such as the focus on intergenerational Christian education and faith formation, are less culturally relevant to certain racial/ethnic minority congregations.
- Often shifts in primary language, theology, and the very meaning of age differences can vary from one racial/ethnic group to another, and practices that are best practices in Anglo congregations cannot be expected to be duplicated in all racial/ethnic minority congregations.
- This study would help ensure that denominational offerings and resources are more relevant to all contexts with an appreciation for difference.

On Recommendation 3: Enhancing minister of Word and Sacrament/teaching elder and CRE preparation for ministry to be educators and formation leaders in their contexts:

- Increasingly pastors are becoming the primary educators in their ministry context. Trends demonstrate that across the denomination congregations have fewer paid staff dedicated to Christian education and faith formation than they once did.

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- As of 2020, 74.1 percent of PC(USA) congregation are under 150 (approximately 60 percent are under 100) members, making a dedicated Christian education and faith formation staff member in these congregations even less likely. However, the importance of Christian education and faith formation in congregations is still critical for shaping faithful disciples for the church now and in the future. Pastors must have these skills to both lead Christian education and faith formation in their congregation and equip others to do so.

- (Addressing 3.a.) As of February 2020, only some of the PC(USA) seminaries have dedicated Christian formation faculty. Currently one can graduate from a PC(USA) seminary without any coursework focused on Christian education and formation. Courses specific to human and faith development and educational pedagogy are typically electives where they are offered.

- (Addressing 3.b.) With CRE training being unique to each presbytery, there is no easy way to conclude whether training in educational ministries is common practice across the denomination.

- (Addressing 3.c. and 2.d.) CPMs do not typically have the data to assess if a future teaching elder can teach/educate. Knowledge of facts and theories does not always translate to practical implementation.

- (Addressing 3.e.) As a Master of Divinity degree is a professional/vocational degree, all content is intended to be translatable into professional functioning. Creating these pedagogical bridges in classes helps prepare students with both knowledge and the skills to communicate it in a ministry context.

- (Addressing 3.f.) Just as there is a class in all MDiv curriculums dedicated to the art of preaching, it is necessary to include a class on the art of teaching/educating and human spiritual development.

- (Addressing 3.g.) Recognizing many pastors could benefit from opportunities to hone their education and formation skills, continuing education would be a place for that content and practice to be refined beyond the limits of a M.Div.

On Recommendation 4: Adding an “In Good Standing” status to Certified Christian Educator and Certified Associate Christian Educators, including a change to the *Book of Order*:

- As certified Christian educators work with vulnerable populations, it is essential that we have a mechanism to hold them accountable for personal and professional integrity.

- Additionally, the 223rd General Assembly (2018) had significant conversations regarding the prevention of sexual abuse in PC(USA) congregations. This action furthers the accountability beyond ministers of Word and Sacrament such that CCE’s would also regularly attest to their good standing in this matter.

On Recommendation 5: Strengthening Educator Certification:

- Christian educator certification has historically been a way some educators have been equipped to carry out these essential functions of Christian education and faith formation in the church. This certification has generally been a valuable standard for the congregations who have sought educators with the credential.

- As Christian education and formation is at the heart of the Reformed tradition and congregational life, educator certification has been one way the denomination has ensured extensive and rigorous formation and evaluation of readiness to teach those called to serve educational roles. There are many possibilities and ways to strengthen the program, widen its accessibility, and increase its utilization.

- Most professional certifications outside and inside the church have ongoing requirements for personal and professional integrity as well as continuing education/professional development. Keeping track of those currently serving in congregations, and those retired or still connected to the church in some capacity continues to honor the denominational recognition.

- After the 223rd General Assembly (2018), the ECC responded to the special committee request to make the Christian Education Associate level more accessible. The extensive work in that area shows potential to increase the number of people who seek out this entry level training, possibly leading to certification as a next step.

On Recommendation 6: COGA review of Christian Educator Certification by 2026:

- The educator certification process utilizes human and financial resources. Historically, the return on this investment yielded much higher numbers of certified Christian educators.

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- In recent years, decreasing numbers of certified Christian educators warrants review for the ongoing investment of resources in this specific process.

Educators Certified in 2019		Educators Certified in 2018		Educators Certified in 2017		Educators Certified in 2016		Educators Certified in 2015		Educators Certified in 2014	
CCE	1	CCE	4	CCE	9	CCE	7	CCE	2	CCE	8
CEA	0	CEA	0	CEA	1	CEA	2	CEA	0	CEA	1
Total	1	Total	4	Total	10	Total	9	Total	2	Total	9

- It would be appropriate to allow 5–6 years for these proposed changes to take effect and to see whether increases in certification’s utilization across the denomination will have an appreciable impact on the church before making a conclusive decision on the future of the CCE program.

In conclusion, we have arrived at these recommendations after sending out surveys and conducting interviews with people across our denomination who lead Christian education and faith formation in congregations, by learning with content experts in the field, by consulting with PMA and OGA staff, and seeking feedback from every entity within our denominational structure that would be impacted by our recommendations. Being entrusted by the General Assembly to do this work has been a privilege for which we are deeply grateful. We now hope it will be a gift to our beloved church.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 02-091

Advisory Committee on the Constitution Advice on Item 02-091. Recommendations Regarding a Reformed Perspective on Christian Education

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) disapprove Recommendation 4 of Item 02-091.

Recommendation 4 of Item 02-091 seeks to amend G-2.1103b regarding presbytery responsibility for certified Christian educators. (Note: here and elsewhere in the *Book of Order* “certified Christian educators” is used as a generic category for all certified educators; “Certified Christian Educators” and “Certified Associate Christian Educators” refer to persons with that specific level of certification.) It proposes two amendments to the section: the first would insert the words “and Certified Associate Christian Educators in good standing” to the second sentence; the second adds a sentence to the section requiring submission of proof of boundary training in order to remain “in good standing.”

This advice concerns only the first of these two amendments; the second is addressed in the Advisory Committee on the Constitution’s advice on Item 02-102.

The insertion of the words “and Certified Associate Christian Educators in good standing” raises a constitutional issue that has come before the assembly on at least four different occasions in the past twelve assemblies: whether Certified Associate Christian Educators should be given a constitutional right to have voice on the floor of presbytery while serving in an educational ministry under the jurisdiction of the presbytery. Conflicting *Book of Order* provisions regarding this right resulted in a clarifying amendment being sent to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes [Item 04-17, 218th General Assembly (2008)]. The presbyteries concurred with the recommendation of the assembly to extend the right to have voice on the floor of presbytery only to Certified Christian Educators.

Our Principles of Presbyterian Government state, “This church shall be governed by presbyters, that is, ruling elders and teaching elders (also called ministers of the Word and Sacrament)” (F-3.0202). The decision as to who shall have the right to speak in the deliberations of a council properly belongs to that council. There are currently no impediments to extending the privilege of the floor to any person a presbytery might choose. Neither is there an impediment for a presbytery to adopt a rule granting such a privilege to a class of persons such as Certified Associate Christian Educators. Certified Christian educators, unlike ruling elders, are not elected to their positions by congregations. There is no requirement that a certified Christian educator, once certified, shall remain a member of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) even if serving in a ministry under the jurisdiction of the church. Broadening the right to participate in the governance of the church to those who are not presbyters and may not even be church members weakens the principle of self-governance.

The inclusion of the phrase “in good standing” uses a term in a new and different sense than it is used elsewhere in the Constitution, creating ambiguity and the possibility of confusion. This is addressed more fully in the Advisory Committee on the Constitution’s advice on Item 02-102.

GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 02-091

General Assembly Committee on Representation Comment on Item 02-091. Recommendations Regarding the Reformed Perspective of Christian Education in the 21st Century—From the Special Committee to Study the Reformed Perspective of Christian Education in the 21st Century.

This item has been recommended to be referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). However, should the assembly determine that this item of business needs to be considered by the 224th General Assembly (2020), GACOR provides this comment.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) questions why there are so few Certified Christian Educators, and even fewer Certified Christian Educators of color or of intersectional* identities. GACOR encourages referred entities to examine the hegemonic White cultural lenses determining “standards of excellence” in the field of Christian Education.

Regarding Recommendation 2, the General Assembly Committee on Representation reminds commissioners and delegates that there are considerable numbers of persons of color worshiping in predominantly white congregations and who might benefit from inclusion in this proposed research project.

Regarding Recommendation 3.d., considering the addition of an ordination exam, GACOR wishes to remind commissioners and delegates that there is a long-standing denominational concern regarding cultural privileging in ordination exams. Any bodies considering adding to the exams should take into consideration the historic concerns and differential impact of exams on marginalized communities’ candidates.

Regarding Recommendation 5c, “c. Directing OGA to encourage the ECC to make educator certification more accessible including but not limited to multiple languages and cultural sensitivity and re-evaluating the current exam in light of that accessibility.” GACOR encourages the ECC to also take into consideration the cultural competence of any bodies evaluating Christian educators and equip such bodies to expand their own cultural competence as well.

Regarding Recommendation 6, the General Assembly Committee on Representation commends to the assembly Standing Rule K.1.c, which lists GACOR with the General Assembly Nominating Committee (GANC) as consulting partners to the General Assembly Moderator (s) and entities in appointing special committees and bodies created by General Assembly action.

The GACOR stands ready to advise new bodies and advocate to ensure the widest participation, diversity, and representation so that God’s diversity is seen throughout the process and within the resulting nominating pools and finalized slates. The GACOR reminds the assembly that the GANC and the GACOR work together to fulfill F-1.0403 and that relationship is reflected in the Standing Rules and the Organization for Mission.

The GACOR stands ready to partner with and assist COGA. GACOR evaluates the impact of inclusion practices and advises and consults with bodies and agencies to ensure the widest participation of all persons in our denomination.

*intersectionality is a framework for understanding how aspects of one's social and political identities combine to create unique modes of discrimination.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation is made up of sixteen persons, elected by the General Assembly, who are drawn from members and elders, ruling and teaching, from across the church in accordance with F-1.0403. Its constitutional mandate and central functions are described in G-3.0103 of the Book of Order (Form of Government).

OGA COMMENT ON ITEM 02-091, RECOMMENDATION 3.d.

Office of the General Assembly Comment on Item 02-091, Recommendation 3.d.

COGA has recommended that this item be referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). However, should the assembly determine that this item of business is core and critical to our governance and sustainability, and needs to be considered by the 224th General Assembly (2020), OGA provides this comment.

The Office of the General Assembly would advise the commissioners with regard to Recommendation 3.d. that the Presbyteries’ Cooperative Committee on Examinations for Candidates (PCC) does not establish the areas of standard ordination

examination, but rather prepares and administers examinations in those areas approved by the General Assembly (G-2.0607d). Should the PCC consider the possibility of recommending to the assembly the addition of an examination in Christian education and faith formation, it would be in the context of its regular self-study for six-year review by the 225th General Assembly (2022).

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 02-091

Presbyterian Mission Agency Comment on 02-091. Recommendations Regarding the Reformed Perspective of Christian Education in the 21st Century—From the Special Committee to Study the Reformed Perspective of Christian Education in the 21st Century.

Recommendation 1. The Theology Formation and Evangelism department (TFE) of the PMA recognizes and concurs with need for a mission associate to focus specifically on equipping and connecting Christian educators, formation ministry leaders. This addition to our staff would expand our capacity to equip churches and judiciary bodies with much needed and requested resources that support Christian formation throughout the denomination.

Approval of this recommendation, however, would need to include funds from outside the current budget of the Office of Christian Formation (where the proposed associate would likely be located). The Office of Christian Formation was formed by combining five separate offices (Christian Education, Ministries with Youth and the Presbyterian Youth Triennium, Collegiate Ministries, Young Adult Ministries, and Camp and Conference Ministries) that underwent staffing and budget cuts over the past five years. The Office of Christian Formation also serves older adult ministries and [in accordance with the 223rd General Assembly (2018)] intergenerational formation nationally. Its current staffing model includes one coordinator, two associates, and a mission specialist.

In sum, TFE strongly supports the creation of this position and believes it will help better equip pastoral, educational and formational leaders in the PC(USA), but also maintains the need for additional outside funding to establish the position.

Recommendation 5.d. Financial Aid for Service is the Presbyterian Mission Agency’s ministry for student aid. We support undergraduates without restriction to degree, and we assist MDiv and MACE students with the expense of their degree programs. We provide very limited assistance for student aid applicants to attend events in order to spend down funding that was not used for eligible, and selected, scholarship and grant program applicants. On behalf of Theology, Formation, and Evangelism, Financial Aid for Service provides grant administration services to TFE offices, providing grants for TFE-sponsored events.

The 2021–2022 budget includes a proposal to create a Continuing Education grant program for church professionals (teaching elders, Christian educators, and commissioned ruling elders) that would provide opportunities to apply for aid to attend training events. We are seeking financial resources to support this proposal through the agency.

PPC COMMENT ON ITEM 02-091

Presbyterian Publishing Corporation Comment on Item 02-091 Christian Education Study Group.

PPC congratulates the Special Committee on Christian Education for their work and welcomes the positive results of their efforts. A survey completed by Research Services, as described in Recommendation 2, would help us continue to refine our curriculum offerings so that we are offering as helpful and representative a group of resources as possible.

PCC COMMENT ON ITEM 02-091

Presbyteries’ Cooperative Committee on Examination for Candidates Comment on Item: Report of the Special Committee on the Reformed Perspective of Christian Education in the 21st Century.

The Presbyteries’ Cooperative Committee on Examination for Candidates (PCC) commends the work of the Special Committee on the Reformed Perspective of Christian Education in the 21st Century for its efforts to raise awareness of the importance of Christian education and faith formation for the life of the church.

In response to Recommendation 3.d., the encouragement to “consider adding an ordination exam, or work within already existing ordination exams, to have every candidate demonstrate proficiency in Christian Education and Faith Formation,” the PCC offers the following comments:

1. The current ordination exams address many of the concerns named by the special committee by crafting questions that ask candidates to demonstrate readiness for ministry in each of the four exam areas (Bible exegesis, church polity, theology, and worship and sacraments) in specific circumstances and to different constituencies within the church. For these reasons, the

PCC urges working within the current exam structure to more directly address proficiency in Christian education and faith formation, rather than adding a new exam.

2. The PCC is committed to emphasizing the concern for Christian education and faith formation in its resource materials prepared for readers of the exams, emphasizing the importance of taking seriously the responses to the particular context of the question, and the pedagogical appropriateness of the responses.

3. The PCC is further committed to considering the importance of Christian education and faith formation in its future exams as it undergoes its upcoming self-study (2022).

Item 02-092

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 303.]

On Amending G-2.0804 and Recommendations Regarding a Family Leave Policy—From the Family Leave Policy Task Force.

The Family Leave Policy Task Force recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) do the following:

1. Direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall G-2.0804 be amended to read as follows: [Text to be inserted is shown as italic.]

“The terms of call shall always meet or exceed any minimum requirement of the presbytery in effect when the call is made. The session shall review annually the minister’s terms of call and shall propose for congregational action (G-1.0501) such changes as the session deems appropriate, provided that they meet the presbytery’s minimum requirements. The call shall include *provision for twelve weeks paid family medical leave* and participation in the benefits plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), including both pension and medical coverage, or any successor plan approved by the General Assembly.”

2. Define “family leave” as including, but not limited to the following:

- leave following the birth or adoption of a child;
- leave to provide care to an ill or disabled family member;
- leave to heal following a loss or tragic event.

3. Approve a sample policy (included in rationale) to be used as a template for use by presbyteries.

Rationale

In recent years the General Assembly has taken actions to encourage various councils of the church to honor the full humanity of its members and employees. The 221st General Assembly (2014) encouraged presbyteries and churches to create parental leave policies with the minimum of six weeks and 100 percent pay without using other forms of paid leave. The 222nd General Assembly (2016) also voted to encourage the six agencies of the General Assembly (Board of Pensions, Foundation, Office of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., Presbyterian Mission Agency, and Presbyterian Publishing Corporation) to improve their paid parental leave policies in accordance with the advice of the 221st General Assembly (2014). The 223rd General Assembly (2018) created a task force with a charge of determining the most effective method for ensuring a robust family leave policy throughout the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

The Family Leave Policy Task Force began meeting in September of 2019, first with a two-day, in-person meeting in Chicago and then through a series of video conference calls. In our meetings, we looked into the history, context, possibilities, and theological implications of current practices around family leave and desired changes to parental and family leave.

Through its research and deliberations, the Family Leave Policy Task Force (FLPTF) has determined the most effective method of accomplishing this goal for called and installed ministers is through a constitutional mandate. The FLPTF recommends that “family leave” be interpreted as a dimension of wholeness, one that responds to the need for time away from work:

- following the birth or adoption of a child;

- in order to provide care to an ill or disabled family member;
- to heal following a loss or tragic event.

The FLPTF believes there are theological, developmental, and societal justifications for committing to a denomination-wide family leave policy, and while this specific recommendation provides for called and installed pastors, the task force would urge the adoption of this same provision of care for all PC(USA) workers.

As proclaimed in our Constitution, the affirmation of God's Sovereignty leads us to recognize "the human tendency to idolatry and tyranny, which calls the people of God to work for the transformation of society by seeking justice ..." (F-2.05). The 216th General Assembly (2004) delineated aspects of these systems of idolatry and tyranny: the U.S. cultural values of materialism, consumerism, and individualism that lead us to evade responsibility to care for our siblings in Christ (*Transforming Families*). We forget the timeless theological truth that "God acts with grace; we respond with gratitude. ... This rhythm of divine action and human response ... shapes all of Christian faith, life, and worship" (W-1.0102).

In accordance with these historic theological affirmations, the 216th General Assembly (2004) of the PC(USA) urged "synods, presbyteries, congregations, and individual Presbyterians to advocate for local, state, and federal legislation that might strengthen family life ... [including] more paid leave for the care of dependent persons and child-related activities" (*Transforming Families* p. 16), calling for better parental leave broadly within the U.S. The FLPTF believes the PC(USA) should heed this call within our own system.

Specific to the welcoming of a new child to a family, family leave policies benefit children, parents, and employers in several ways. Research indicates that children whose mother returns to work within the first twelve weeks after birth are less likely to be breastfed, less likely to be up-to-date on immunizations and pediatric check-ups, and are more likely to present with externalizing behavior problems. In addition, mothers who are able to spend significant time with their child after birth experience fewer depressive symptoms than those who have to return to work earlier. Fathers who are able to have longer leaves remain more involved in child rearing activities even once they've returned to work (research taken from *Paid Leave in the States: A Critical Support for Low-wage Workers and Their Families*, by Sarah Fass, March 2009, http://www.nccp.org/publications/pub_864.html).

According to a 2012 study by the National Center for Children in Poverty, the U.S. is one of only four countries that have no guarantee of paid time off for new parents. The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) allows for job protection; however, there are limits to who this law applies to and it does not mandate that leave be paid. Some states have mandates to address the shortcomings of FMLA, but this issue remains a concern in many states as well as in our church. For many families, if their parental/family leave is not paid, then it is not an option.

Though this policy seeks to support ministers of Word and Sacrament, the FLPTF believes in our connectional nature and the importance of caring for the larger body and not only individuals. Family Leave does benefit the employer or congregation, not just the minister of Word and Sacrament. When similar policies have been introduced at the federal government level, reports show that employees who take paid time off for family care and bereavement are "better able to deal with the financial and personal strains caused by a family member's medical needs or death." The report found that even after the act's implementation, employees used, on average, less than one-third of the sick leave available to them, quelling agency managers' concerns about employee absences following the family definition expansion. In fact, the report found an overall positive impact on employee productivity and morale: "When an employer demonstrates support of its employees through this means, it fosters goodwill and creates a more compassionate family friendly workplace, resulting in a more productive workforce" <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/reference-materials/reports/federal-employees-family-friendly-leave-act/>.

The FLPTF considered several avenues of funding for this policy. After much consideration, it is our belief that as part of the vow taken during ordination/installation services "to pay them fairly and to provide for their welfare as they work among us; to stand by them in trouble and share their joys," funding should be the responsibility of the individual entity/congregation employing the minister of Word and Sacrament. At the same time, as presbyteries are the ones most responsible for setting minimum terms of call for most congregations/entities, we believe it is incumbent upon each presbytery to set and enforce their policy (within the guidelines set forth and with the suggestion of the policy below), facilitating conversations around funding when churches need help.

Paid Family Medical Leave

Sample PC(USA) Policy

Eligibility

All ministers of Word and Sacrament serving a PC(USA) entity and other full-time employees.

Leave Parameters

- Up to 12 weeks (total, regardless of precipitating event or circumstance) of Paid Leave per year, with as much advance notice as possible. Paid Leave may be used—in accordance with need—consecutively or intermittently.
- During Paid Leave, the pastor will continue to receive all benefits in their terms of call, including dues paid to and benefits provided by the Board of Pensions.
- Use of vacation time is not required but may be used to extend leave time at the discretion of the pastor.

Following the period of Paid Leave, the pastor shall be entitled to return to the same position with the same title, terms of call, hours worked, and job description.

Types of Leave

- Parental Leave: Within one year of birth or adoption, a pastor may take up to twelve consecutive or intermittent weeks bonding time
- Caregiver/Family Leave: In times when a family member requires care due to an illness or disability, a pastor may take up to twelve weeks Paid Leave, either consecutively or intermittently, depending on the nature of illness and need
- Personal Loss: In the event of the death of a loved one or a tragic event, a pastor may take up to twelve weeks Paid Leave, either consecutively or intermittently, depending on the nature of event and need

Church [and Other PC(USA) Entity] Support

- While the individual church/entity is responsible for the funding and administration of Paid Family Leave, state-provided disability and paid leave benefits and Board of Pensions financial protection programs may be considered in order to help offset income continuation costs.
- Where possible, communication of mutual needs and planning is vital to minimize disruption for the entity served by the pastor. Pastors are encouraged to anticipate leave with sensitivity around the needs of the church/entity/body, including but not limited to temporary replacement and fulfillment of duties.
- Paid Family Leave is not intended to be a burden but rather a source of joy as churches/entities encourage pastors to take time for the good of their families. In the spirit of the connectional church, councils of the PC(USA) are encouraged to work together to assist individual churches/entities in the development of funding Paid Family Leave in order best to serve the Kingdom of God. Presbyteries and synods are encouraged to facilitate conversations regarding how individual churches/entities might fund Paid Family Leave.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 02-092

Advisory Committee on the Constitution Advice on Item 02-092. Report of the Family Leave Policy Task Force.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) to disapprove Recommendation #1 within the Report of the Family Leave Policy Task Force.

Recommendation #1 proposes to introduce specific minimum terms of call within the *Constitution* of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). This step creates constitutional problems.

History

Comparable language came before the 223rd General Assembly (2018) from the Presbytery of Boston in Item 06-14. Item 06-14 suggested that G-2.0804 be amended as follows: “The call shall include participation in the benefits plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), including both pension and medical coverage, or any successor plan approve by the General Assembly, *and paid family leave of at least twelve weeks*” (italics indicate proposed insertion). The language of Item 06-14 (2018) only differs from the language of Recommendation #1 in the placement of the words to be inserted.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advised the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to disapprove the item on the following grounds:

1. Introducing administrative particulars into the Form of Government would reverse its movement away from a manual of administrative operations. That movement began well before introduction in 2011 of the Foundations of Presbyterian Polity the major revision of the Form of Government.¹
2. The constitutional nature of the *Book of Order* articulates general principles and practices of governance but leaves specific details to the contexts where those principles and practices must be carried out.
3. Presbyteries already have, through G-2.0804, the responsibility and authority to establish family leave policies consistent with fair employment practice (see also G-3.0106).
4. Listing in the *Constitution* such a specific requirement will invite insertion of other requirements that should be enacted in more contextually appropriate settings.
5. The purpose of encouraging, and even defining, fair employment practices such as family leave can be accomplished without writing the provision into the *Constitution*.

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) voted to establish the task force in question and instructed it to return to the 224th General Assembly (2020) with a recommendation.

Analysis

The language of Item 02-92 introduces administrative-operational detail into the *Book of Order*. Councils have a responsibility and should be trusted to adopt policies appropriate to their circumstances that support and nurture their members, families and staff (see G-3.0301c, for example).

The choice of “twelve weeks” reflects the societal sensibilities of the present day toward fair employment practices. Likely changes in those sensibilities mean that G-2.0804, if amended in this fashion now, may well require further and repeated amendment in the years ahead. Such amendments are more appropriate in an operations manual than a constitutional document.

Advice

For the above reasons, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the assembly to disapprove Recommendation #1 of the task force report. The non-constitutional measures that the task force recommends are better options for promoting such practice.

If the assembly nevertheless believes that highlighting family leave rises to the level of a constitutional amendment, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution believes that such an act can be accomplished with less constitutional harm by amending G-3.0106 as follows (*italics* denote words to be inserted; ~~strikeouts~~ denote words to be deleted):

“All councils shall adopt and implement a sexual misconduct policy, ~~and~~ a child and youth protection policy, *and a family leave policy.*”

Other Matters

Recommendations #2 and #3 are outside of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution’s purview. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution does, however, support these two recommendations as appropriate alternatives to amending G-2.0804.

Endnote

1. Previous assemblies removed forms for terms of call from the then *Book of Order* in the early 2000s. The major revision of the Form of Government that became effective in 2011 established using the *Constitution* for general principles and leaving administrative details to more local councils.

ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-092

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-092—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC)

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 02-092.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns supports the approval of this recommendation.

We first wish to express our thanks to the members of the Family Leave Task Force for their time and energy that went into the crafting of this work. We thank also those who served on Assembly Committee 06 of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) who worked diligently to blend all the family leave resolutions and overtures that came before them.

The PC(USA), as an employer from the national level down to the local congregation, has the opportunity to model just employment practices through family leave policies that encourage balance in life between work and family and are consistent with PC(USA) theology and policies on work and workers:

The church must seek to become a model employer by providing workers with adequate compensation, meaningful opportunities for participation in decision making, leisure time in which to participate in family and community life... The foundation upon which all just employment policies are built is access to employment at a level of compensation that allows people to live in dignity and security. All conditions of paid employment, including compensation and working conditions, should sustain and nurture the dignity of individuals, the well-being of households and families...¹

Endnote

1. 207th General Assembly (1995), God’s Work in Our Hands, pp. 18, 19 < https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/gods-work-in-our-hands-1995.pdf > (6 April 2020).

GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 02-092

General Assembly Committee on Representation Comment on Item 02-092. On Amending G-2.0804 and Recommendations Regarding a Family Leave Policy—From the Family Leave Policy Task Force.

This item has been recommended to be referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). However, should the assembly determine that this item of business needs to be considered by the 224th General Assembly (2020), GACOR provides this comment, regarding amendment of G-2.0804, the change, “The call shall include *provision for twelve weeks paid family medical leave and participation in the benefits plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), ...*”

The General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) acknowledges that the procedures of employment matter. Unfortunately, in the area of parental and family leave, the denominational instruction is not as clear. GACOR has continuously supported efforts to create an equitable family leave policy.

Often governing bodies and individual congregations do not have parental/family leave policies in place and must do so if and when the case arises (putting the individual requesting the leave in a precarious position). This can result in decision-making that focuses on the financial cost of the leave rather than the care of the leader and family. The proposed amendment would provide the framework for individuals needing parental or family leave. Committees on representation at the presbytery and synod levels, or the committees tasked with such work, should serve as a resource to their governing bodies concerning employment practices as stated in G-3.0103.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation is made up of sixteen persons, elected by the General Assembly, who are drawn from members and elders, ruling and teaching, from across the church in accordance with F-1.0403. Its constitutional mandate and central functions are described in G-3.0103 of the Book of Order (Form of Government).

REAC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-092

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-092—From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee.

The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 02-092.

The Racial Equity and Advocacy Committee (REAC) supports the need to have appropriate time of leave for ministers.

Item 02-093

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 304.]

Regarding Worship Resources for Ministering to Veterans—From the Presbytery of Blackhawk.

The Presbytery of Blackhawk overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) to direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through its Office of Worship and Theology, to consult with military chaplains, mental health professionals, and other Christian traditions to develop worship resources and other appropriate rituals that pastors and military chaplains could use to assist

military personnel when they are sent for training, when they are deployed, when they return home from deployment, and when they separate from military service. The new worship resources should be available to chaplains, pastors, and churches at the 225th General Assembly (2022).

Rationale

Every year since 2008, at least 6,000 veterans who have served on active duty have died by suicide. In 2017 the rate was 16.8 veterans per day¹ (If we include non-activated Guard and Reserve members, the rate was 19.3 per day.²). But taking into account the declining veteran population—largely older and male, the sex and age adjusted rate (to match the U.S. demographics of the 2000 C.E. Standard Population) of death by suicide in 2017 was 27.7 per day per 100,000, up from 18.5 per 100,000 in 2005!³ Of special note, the rates for women veterans taking their own lives has increased to 2.2 times the national average for women⁴ and the overall suicide rate of all veterans was 1.5 times the general population in 2017⁵ And it's not just recent veterans—though that rate is considerably higher than for older veterans, but veterans of all ages are dying by suicide at an alarming rate ([Alarming VA Report Totals Decade of Veteran Suicides](#) by Richard Sisk, 9/23/19, [military.com](#)).

Our most recent veterans between 18–34 years of age had the highest suicide rate of 44.5 per 100,000⁶. It is important to note that of the 17 deaths per day average of active duty military veterans, six had some kind of Veterans Health Administration (VHA) engagement while 11 veterans didn't have any record of VHA engagement⁷. This means that 2/3 of veteran suicides could be intervened by pastors and churches. Far too many military members are facing “moral injury” and post-traumatic stress issues without getting the help they need and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) currently has no resources available to help military members when they leave for service, when they return home, or when they separate from military service.

Ancient Israel had cleansing rituals to welcome warriors back into the community after returning from war (Numbers 31: 19–24). They recognized that war could make a person feel dirty, and that special rituals could help returning fighters deal with that sense of uncleanness so they could rejoin the community. Rita Nakashima Brock and Gabriella Lettini, in their book *Soul Repair: Recovering from Moral Injury after War*, write that in addition to deep grief over the loss of comrades and sometimes horrendous memories of what they have seen, veterans can often suffer from “moral injury.” It is a violation of one's conscience that can occur in the heat of war. The Christian church as a channel of God's grace and healing power is in a unique position to address “moral injury.” In fact, as Brock and Lettini note, the church in the first millennium recognized this and “required that anyone who ‘shed human blood’ to undergo a rehabilitation process that included reverting to the status of someone who had not been baptized and was undergoing training in the Christian faith.” While this seems a little extreme today, it would be helpful if the church had liturgies that addressed the needs of returning military members to help them discover, or perhaps rediscover, the love and forgiveness God offers us in Christ and through the Christian community.

What sort of new worship resources would be helpful? *Resources for sending*: resources for congregations sending their young people into military service; resources for congregations and military chaplains for sending military members when they are being deployed; resources that remind military members and their families that God is with them. *And resources for welcoming home*: resources for local congregations and military chaplains to welcome military members back and to help them reintegrate into the community; and resources that pastors and Christian therapists could use with small groups or in one-to-one counseling.

Endnotes

1. [National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report 2019](#), Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, pages 3, 9.
2. *Ibid*, pages 3, 19.
3. *Ibid*, page 10.
4. *Ibid*, page 16.
5. *Ibid*, pages 3, 10.
6. *Ibid*, page 14.
7. *Ibid*, page 26.

Concurrences to Item 02-093 from the Presbyteries of Coastal Carolina, de Cristo, San Gabriel, and Southeastern Illinois.

ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-093

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-093—From the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC)

The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 02-093.

The Presbyterian Council for Chaplains and Military Personnel (PCCMP) is a joint ministry of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Cumberland Presbyterian Church, Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America, and the Korean Presbyterian Church Abroad. As a joint ministry of these four denominations, they only receive less than 50 percent of our operating funds from these General Assemblies and Presbyterian Mission Agency. There are currently twenty-five Presbyterian women chaplains (of 138 total Presbyterian chaplains) serving in the Armed Forces.¹ Currently there is no intentional resource available that provides care for these chaplains. Chaplains are called upon to minister to their troops regardless of their religious affiliation by bringing hope and healing.²

Suicide is becoming more and more prevalent among all military chaplains; however, the rates for women veterans taking their lives has increased to 2.2 times the national average for women.³ For this reason and many others, the church must provide readily accessible resources to support those who serve. Additionally, spiritual materials for the spouses of military service members and veterans are minimal. The church would commend a powerful service to our veterans as we seek to support those who have served as well as those who currently serve and the families who support them.

Endnotes

1. Information received from the Presbyterian Council for Chaplains and Military Personnel.
2. Presbyterian Council for Chaplains and Military Personnel (<https://pccmp.org/>).
3. National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report (2019).

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 02-093

Presbyterian Mission Agency Comment on Item 02-93. Regarding Worship Resources for Ministering to Veterans.

The Office of Theology and Worship is ready and eager to undertake this project in consultation and collaboration with the partners identified in the overture, as well as theological scholars, pastoral leaders, and intercultural constituencies. The work proposed would fill a gap in currently available resources and would respond to a critical need among those experiencing the effects of trauma and moral injury. If it sees wide distribution, the resulting resource could be of great use and benefit in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and beyond.

Item 02-094

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 304.]

On Furthering Mental Health Ministry in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020):

1. Commend to ministers, congregations, members, mid councils, and seminaries, capacity-building in the skills of mental health first aid and suicide prevention.
2. Commend to ministers, congregations, members, mid councils, and seminaries, capacity-building in trauma-informed responses to mental distress and trauma-informed pastoral care.
3. Commend to ministers, congregations, members, mid councils, and seminaries capacity-building in the skills of “companioning,” in order to better walk side-by-side with people affected by mental health conditions and their loved ones.
4. Commend to ministers, congregations, members, mid councils, and seminaries capacity-building in mental health awareness and understanding, advocating with and for people with lived experience of mental health conditions to create safe and stigma-free communities for all.
5. Commend to mid councils and seminaries, capacity-building in resilience and the prevention of compassion fatigue for ministers and other church leaders, working in collaboration with established programs of Presbyterian Disaster Assistance in the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

6. Commend the work of grass-roots leaders instrumental in forming the churchwide Presbyterian Mental Health Network that will promote and support mental health ministry across the denomination, and commend to ministers, congregations, members, mid councils, and seminaries, active participation and networking with others engaged in mental health ministry.

7. In order to consolidate the foundation that has been laid, extend funding for staffing of Mental Health Ministry for an additional two years, and extend funding for mental health ministry grants, prioritizing creative and innovative projects focused on capacity-building in the areas of Items 1–4.

8. Direct that a new “primary resource” be created by the Presbyterian Mission Agency for inspiring and equipping congregations, mid councils, and seminaries to engage in mental health ministry. Where excellent capacity-building models/programs already exist (as with Items 1–3, 5), these should be lifted-up.

Rationale

These recommendations are in response to the following referrals:

2018 Referral: Item 10-11. On Establishing a Grant to Develop Resources to Educate Entities Regarding Serious Mental Illnesses. Recommendation 2. Establish a \$250,000 Grant to Be Used to Implement the Provisions of This Overture. The Funds Will Be Used to Develop Plans of Action and Resources That Will Be Used by Presbyteries, Congregations, and Seminaries of the PC(USA) to Further Educate These Entities Within PC(USA) Regarding Serious Mental Illness Issues with the Intent to Provide a Foundation for Action within the Denomination, and That the Materials Developed Include Help for Congregations Interfacing with Mental Illness Found in the Homeless Population Surrounding the Church—From the Presbytery of Mission (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 28, 32, 292–93 of the print copy, pp. 831–38 of the electronic copy).

2018 Referral: Item 10-11. On Establishing a Grant to Develop Resources to Educate Entities Regarding Serious Mental Illnesses. Recommendation 4. Conduct a Review and Evaluation of the Actions That Have Been Taken Since the Policy Statement Was Approved, with a Report to Be Presented at the 224th General Assembly (2020)—From the Presbytery of Mission (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 28, 32, 292–93 of the print copy, pp. 831–38 of the electronic copy).

2018 Referral: Item 10-11. On Establishing a Grant to Develop Resources to Educate Entities Regarding Serious Mental Illnesses. Recommendation 5. Review, Update, and Present a Second Edition of “Comfort My People” for Approval at the 224th General Assembly (2020). This Review and Update Would Examine Terminology, Facts, Findings, Hyperlinks, and Add Any Additional Resources (i.e. Websites, Books, Movies) Published Since 2008 That Would Add Value to the Statement—From the Presbytery of Mission (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 28, 32, 292–93 of the print copy, pp. 831–38 of the electronic copy).

Current backdrop for mental health ministry in the PC(USA). According to the National Institute for Mental Health, one in five people in the United States has a diagnosable mental health condition during any given year. For perspective, that translates into 264,000 PC(USA) members and 3,848 Presbyterian ministers facing mental health challenges at any given time. Over the past decade, the rate of suicide has increased significantly, particularly among youth, older adults, and veterans. In 2017, 70,000 people died from drug overdoses and 47,000 died by suicide, 24,000 of these involving guns. A growing number of people have been directly affected by the trauma of mass shootings, hate crimes, natural disasters, and many are affected by the trauma of domestic violence. Many children are growing up in the shadow of gun violence and active shooter drills. Thousands of families are living with the trauma of being separated at the border, and many people live with the impact of structural racism, chronic poverty, and homelessness on their mental health. Altogether, this forms the backdrop for ministry in PC(USA) congregations at this point in history.

The call to mental health ministry. Against this backdrop, the church is called to ministry—to intervene like the good Samaritan, and, following Matthew 25, to accord to people who have been stigmatized as “the least of these,” the same dignity and welcome and care that would be given to Jesus or a member of his family. These recommendations invite Presbyterians to build their capacity to engage in this kind of ministry, which has the potential to transform and save lives.

Assessing the state of mental health ministry in PC(USA). On the tenth anniversary of *Comfort My People—A Policy Statement on Serious Mental Illness*, the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approved a new mental health initiative. This initiative called for the establishment of a new \$250,000 mental health ministry grant program and the launch of a new churchwide mental health network. It also called for a churchwide study on the state of mental health ministry ten years on from the original *Comfort My People* document with a report back to the 224th General Assembly (2020) containing recommendations for specific actions designed to focus and enhance the mental health initiatives of congregations, mid councils, and seminaries going forward.

Need for capacity-building. The mental health study found that, although progress has been made since the original *Comfort My People* document, significant capacity-building is still needed in specific areas. The above recommendations are aimed at expanding the capacity of PC(USA) members and ministers, congregations, mid councils, and seminaries to engage in mental

health ministry in ways appropriate to each role, so that persons affected by mental health challenges and their loved ones—especially those affected by serious mental health conditions—are welcomed, supported, accepted, respected, and valued, and are fully included in the life of PC(USA) congregations.

Need for staffing and funds to support moving forward. While a solid foundation has been laid with the recent launch of the mental health ministry grant program, website, and Presbyterian Mental Health Network (PMHN), this work is still nascent and in need of support. To provide oversight for the awarding of grants, to create a new “primary resource” for mental health ministry that will address existing gaps, and to help the new Presbyterian Mental Health Network reach its full maturity as a self-sustaining ministry network, additional staff time and funding are needed.

Background

The mental health initiative set into motion by the approval of Item 10-11: Recommendations 2, 4, and 5, has several components: (1) \$250,000 grant program, (2) launch of a churchwide Presbyterian Mental Health Network, (3) Churchwide study of mental health ministry, (4) *Comfort My People* Second Edition, (5) Report to 224th General Assembly (2020). The initiative was designed to assess the current state of mental health ministry across the PC(USA), reignite interest, energy, and engagement, and lay a foundation for moving forward. The PMA, through the Director’s Office of Compassion, Peace and Justice Ministry has responded to these referrals in the following way:

“Mental Health Summit” Held in February 2019

Co-led by Compassion, Peace and Justice (CPJ) staff and grass-roots mental health leaders instrumental in passage of Item 10-11, seventeen grass-roots leaders gathered from across the church in Louisville, Kentucky, to discuss next steps for moving the Comfort My People (CMP) mental health initiative forward.

Two-Year Full-Time Associate for Mental Health Ministry Hired by CPJ

By May 2019, Donna Miller (PsychD) was in place to staff implementation of the initiative. A collaborative and productive partnership uniting the complementary contributions of staff and grass-roots leaders was forged between the staff associate and the CMP core leadership team.

\$250,000 PMA Mental Health Ministry Grant Program Established

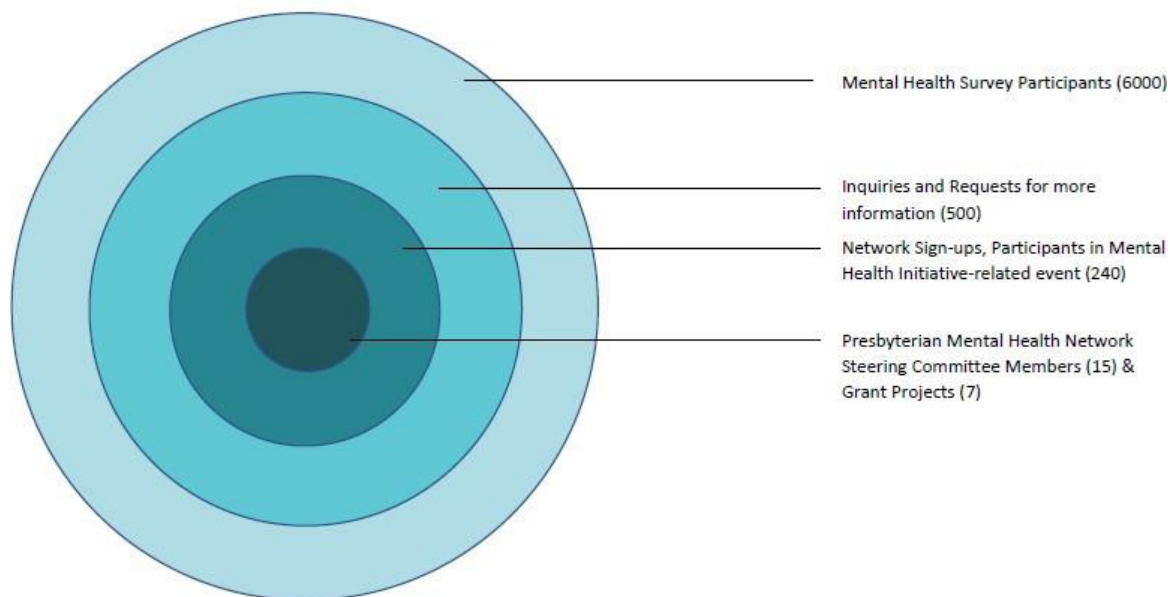
The top priority was getting the new grant program written, approved, and functioning. The \$250,000 grant program was launched on August 3rd at a sold-out “Mental Health Matters” breakfast hosted by CPJ at Big Tent. Congregations, mid-councils, and seminaries can apply for “seed” grants to initiate or advance creative models of mental health ministry. The first cycle of grants, totaling \$68,500, was awarded in September 2019 to an impressive and diverse array of projects that can be viewed at www.pcusa.org/mentalhealth. The next cycle will be awarded in January 2020.

Presbyterian Mental Health Ministry Website www.pcusa.org/mentalhealth

The associate developed content for mental health pages on the PMA website to introduce the mental health initiative across the church. Thanks to a very able communications team, it was “live” by August 2019 and features:

1. *Grant Program* information, application materials, list of grant projects
2. *Resources Section* with downloadable resources and an annotated list of hyperlinks to websites with high quality mental health resources
3. *Presbyterian Mental Health Network (PMHN)* sign-up form
4. *Churchwide Mental Health Survey* with link to findings
5. *Second Edition Comfort My People* link to download First Edition and click to leave input/suggestions for Second Edition.

Reach and Depth of Engagement with Mental Health Initiative Components



Launch of Churchwide Presbyterian Mental Health Network (PMHN)

At the heart of the mental health initiative is a rapidly growing network of committed individuals and entities expressing interest and stepping forward to become part of expanding and deepening mental health ministry in the PC(USA). Between May and October, the scaffolding of a nascent Presbyterian Mental Health Network was put into place.

Steering Committee and Structure

A leadership team of fifteen individuals has been strategically recruited from across the PC(USA). All bring mental health experience—lived, professional, or both. The team includes five persons of color. Different geographical regions and roles in the denomination are represented. A mission statement and bylaws were adopted, and officers were elected in October 2019. The Presbytery of Mission, acting as fiduciary agent, has received a Mental Health Ministry Grant and a generous anonymous donation of \$10,000 to help with start-up costs.

Presbyterian Mental Health Network Visibility and Presence—Logo and Website

Plans for a website are underway, and PMHN will have an exhibition booth and host a lunch at General Assembly. An artist who advocates for the National Alliance on Mental Illness was commissioned to create a logo. The forms and colors convey community, faith, openness, and vitality.

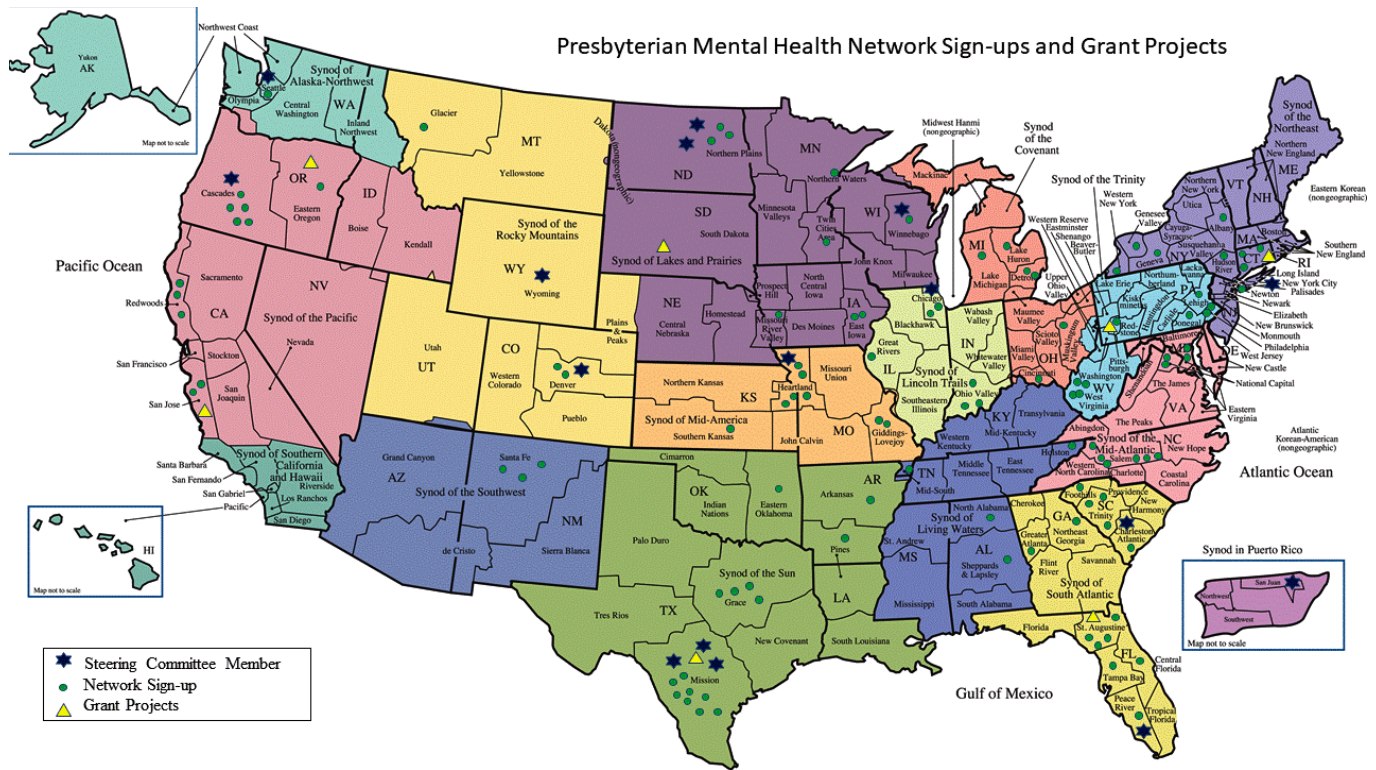


Network Membership

Since the website launch in August, 120 individuals have signed up “to hear about and from” the newly forming Presbyterian Mental Health Network (PMHN), with an unexpectedly large number expressing interest in future volunteer possibilities—many citing professional credentials in mental health. Three options were presented for which people could indicate interest in future volunteer roles:

1. *Volunteer Consultant*—those with expertise in an area who would be willing to respond to mental health ministry-related inquiries and requests from congregations, mid councils, seminaries (e.g., serving as speaker or workshop leader, offering guidance or consultation on issues of mental health ministry).
2. *Virtual Village of Voices*—those interested in increasing the diversity of voices helping to shape mental health ministry who are comfortable sharing the “lens” or “voice” they bring and open to being called upon, as needed, to be part of a focus group, review existing resources, help “crowdsource” new resources, or comment on early stage drafts.
3. *Network Supporters*—willing to assist in the development and maintenance of ongoing activities of the Presbyterian Mental Health Network.

Sixty indicated interest in the “Virtual Village of Voices,” and fifty-two in being volunteer consultants. Twenty-two have offered to help with the Network. The strength of this response has outpaced the existing capacity of the single PMA Mental Health Ministry associate and nascent Presbyterian Mental Health Network Steering Committee to follow-up with these potential volunteers. The most immediate challenge going forward is developing the capacity for integrating these and future volunteers (e.g., vetting, orienting, training/equipping, placing, supporting/supervising), so that their gifts and energy can be well-used across the church.



Review of Comfort My People—A Policy Paper on Serious Mental Illness

The mental health initiative called for a review and update of this paper, first approved in 2008, which is a profound statement of affirmation and hope for persons, families, and communities living with mental illnesses. A review has been underway. The first edition has been available for download at www.pcusa.org/mentalhealth with an invitation to give input for the next edition.

Input has also been received from the PMHN Steering Committee and beyond, including grass-roots leaders instrumental in framing this part of Item 10-11. The review efforts of CPJ and the PMHN have revealed that what is most deeply needed is

not an updated policy statement, but rather, a new “primary resource” for mental health ministry in the church informed by deep listening to a diverse range of voices and a focus on capacity-building rather than policy.

Churchwide Mental Health Survey Fielded in October 2019

CPJ commissioned Research Services (RS) to conduct a churchwide survey on the state of mental health ministry across the PC(USA), and CPJ is grateful for the work of dedicated RS staff. The survey has yielded rich results. A summary prepared by Research Services is included in the Appendix. Full reports on each of the demographic groups are available for viewing at www.pcusa.org/mentalhealth.

Study Design

The associate for Mental Health Ministry collaborated with the director of Research Services on survey design, seeking input from others within tight time constraints. Questions were designed to assess responses to the substance of *Comfort My People* recommendations, ignite conversation about mental health, and inform participants of available resources and opportunities. Five demographic groups were surveyed, each with its own set of questions:

1. *Person in the Pew* survey focuses on the member’s perspective of their local church and community. N=1309
2. *Church on the Corner* survey focuses on the local church leaders’ perspective for their church and community. N=752
3. *Mid Council Leaders* survey focuses on presbytery leadership in support of their ministers and congregations. N=57
4. *Minister* survey focuses on the minister’s capabilities for effective mental health ministry and their own mental health. N=3,838
5. *Seminary* survey focuses on mental health training. N=12

Results

There were 6,000 responses with nearly 4,000 responses from ministers, and the surveys generated requests from 400 individuals for additional information about mental health resources. A full one-third (34 percent) mid councils participated, and 8 percent of congregations were represented.

Response from the twelve Presbyterian-related seminaries was limited despite considerable effort to enlist their participation. More than 2,000 individual comments were added, many expressing gratitude for the survey and the attention being paid to mental health by the PC(USA):

I have a family member with mental illness, have been affiliated with NAMI for 14 years, and am glad the larger church is finally getting on board to start talking about mental health issues!

Thank you for conducting this survey! Mental health and mental illness are important issues to me, and I am glad that they are important to the church as well.

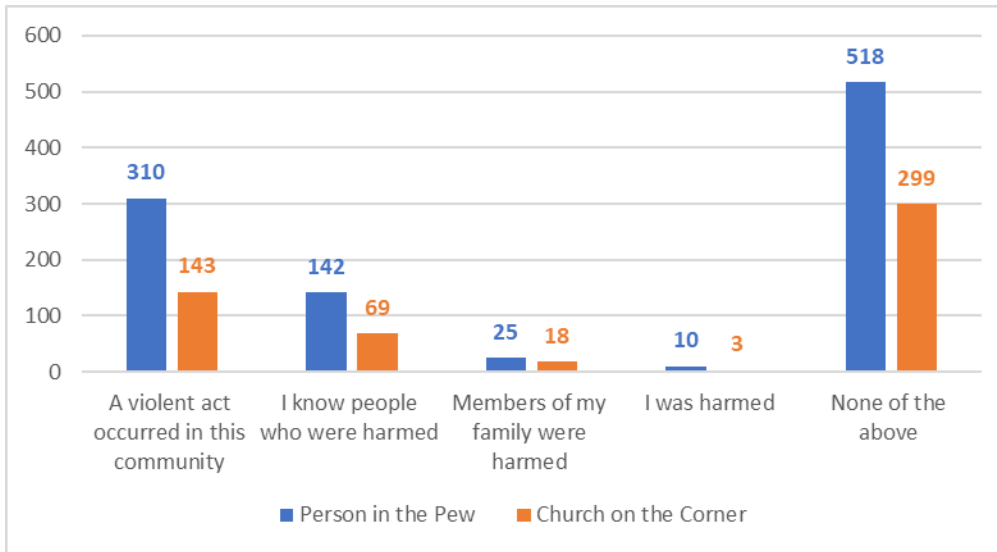
As someone with a history of severe depressive episodes and suicidality, I am grateful to the PC (USA) for recognizing the importance of mental health.

Key Findings

- *Experience and basic knowledge.* Ninety-seven percent of Person-in-the-Pew respondents knew someone with mental illness or significant mental health concerns. Members and church leaders have an abundant understanding of the warning signs of mental illness and most can correctly identify myths about mental illness as false.
- *Community backdrop for mental health ministry.* Nearly all members and church leaders reported having some type of mental health services in their town or county. However, many gaps were identified in comments on the ministers’ survey, especially in rural areas.

Some 35 percent of members reported having experienced a large-scale act of violence in their communities:

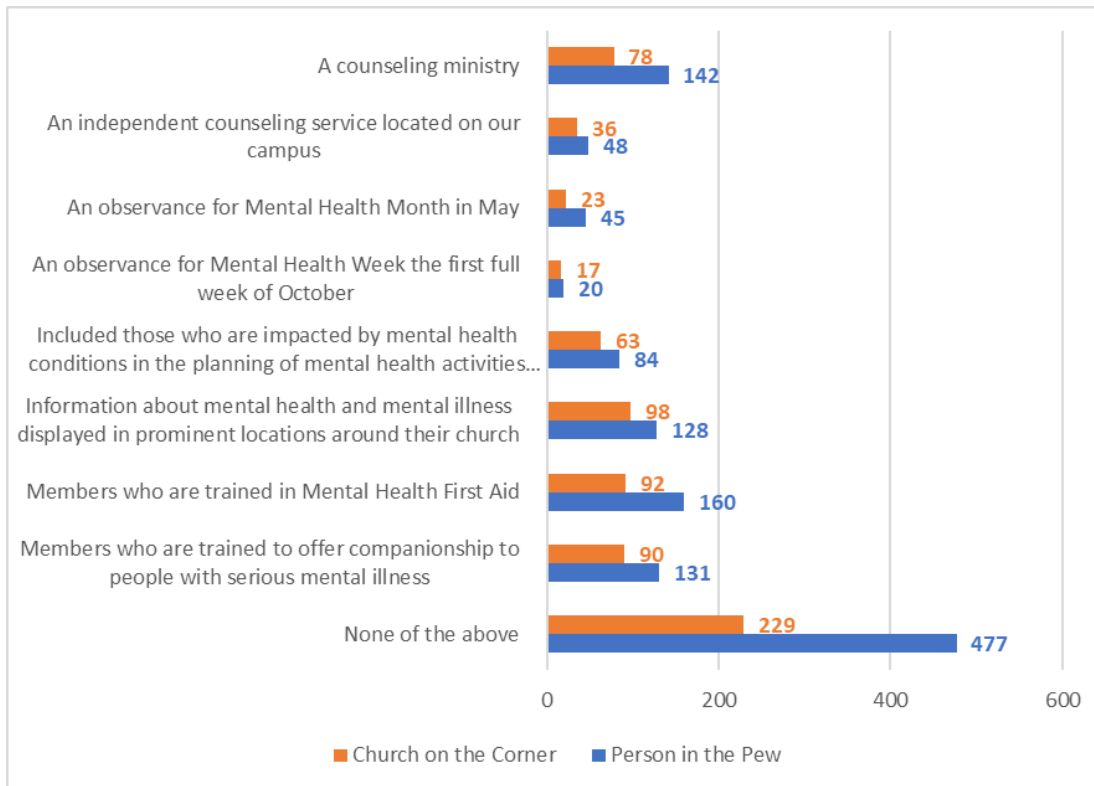
02 RECOMMENDED REFERRALS TO THE 225TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2022)

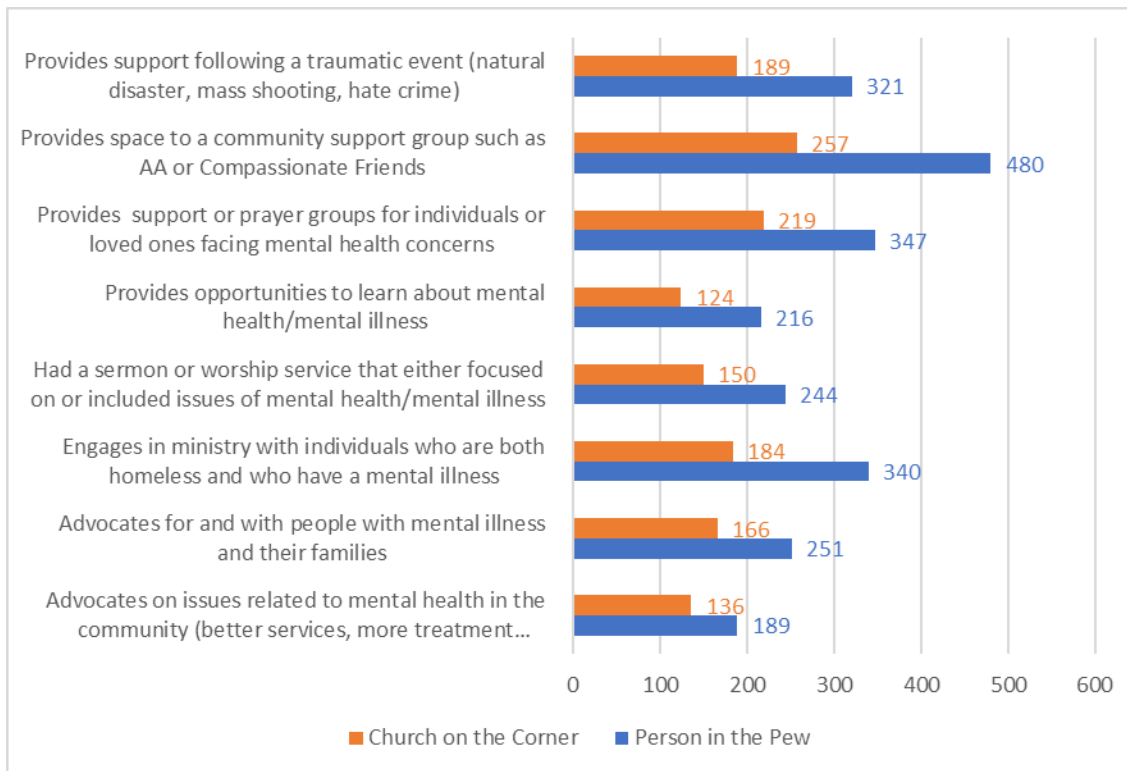


- *Interest in learning more about mental health ministry.* More than half (54 percent) of members (Person-in-Pew) and church leaders (Church-on-Corner) agree that their congregations are interested in learning more about mental health ministry, and many ministers expressed the need for additional training.

- *Current Congregational Engagement in Mental Health Ministry*

The nature of engagement over the past twelve to eighteen months is shown in the following two charts:



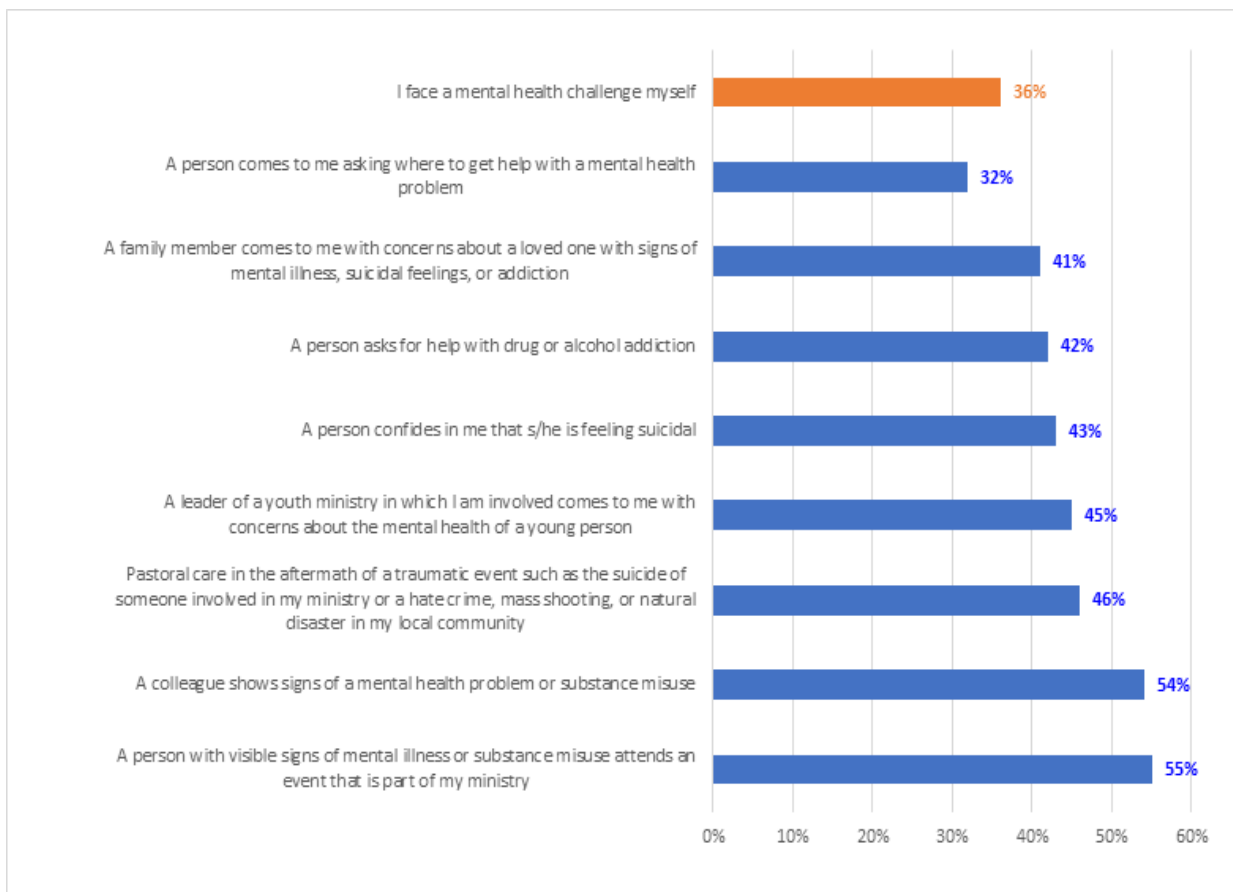


- Perceptions of preparedness for mental health ministry*—Nearly half of members (49 percent) and church leaders (48 percent) say that their church is “not” or “probably not” equipped to welcome individuals with significant mental health issues into the daily life of the church, with 20 percent reporting that they “are” equipped, and about 20 percent reporting they “are equipped and have done so.” The following comment points to the need for more understanding of specific mental health conditions and an opportunity to learn from the congregations most fully equipped in their capacity to be safe and welcoming communities for everyone.

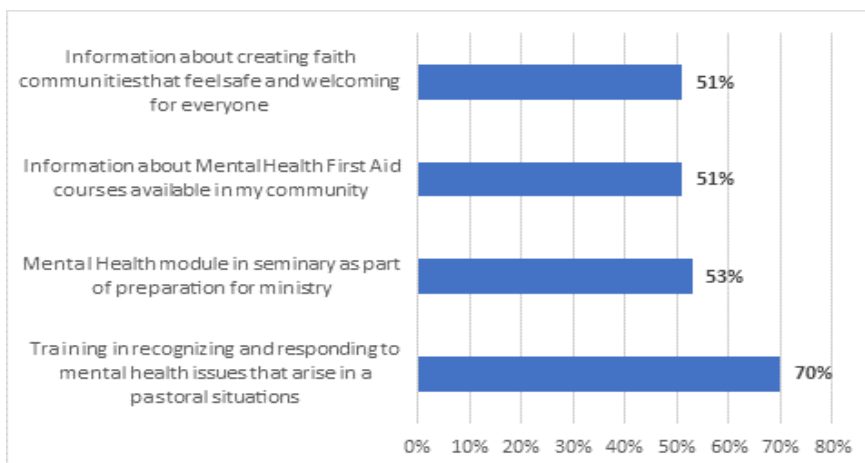
I think the welcoming issue depends totally on the kind of mental health challenges. We have people with depression, bipolar and schizophrenia in the congregations but would struggle with severe autism or Turrets syndrome in which people “acted out” uncontrollably.

- Barriers to mental health ministry*—The top two ranked barriers for members, church leaders, and mid council leaders were “not knowing how to respond to an individual showing signs of a mental health condition” and “lack of knowledge about mental health issues.”

- Role of ministers*—Ministers were given examples of mental health situations that can arise in ministry and asked to rank them in terms of their own capability handling the situation. Many ministers expressed a need for more training, including knowing when and how to refer. The following chart shows the percentage of ministers who rated themselves as less than capable in response to specific situations:

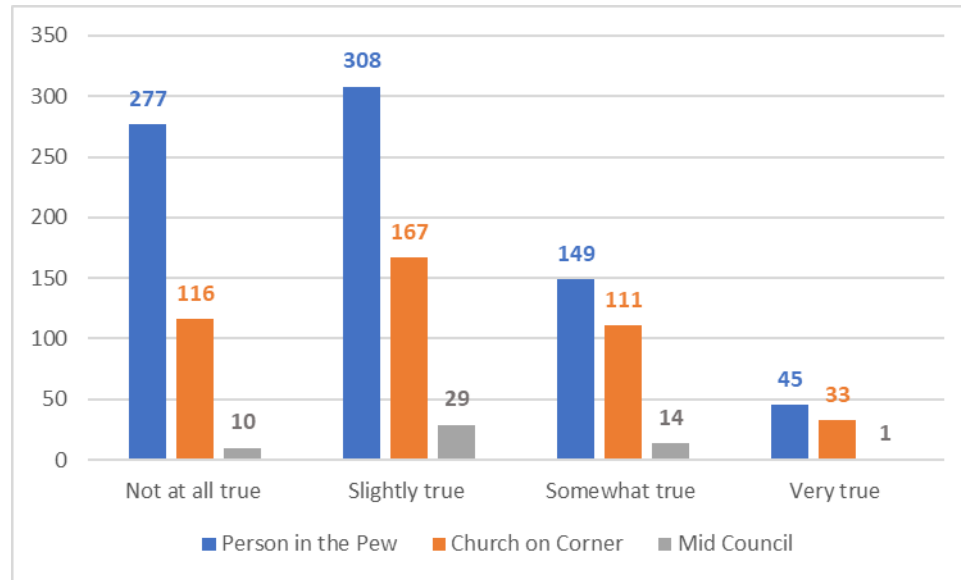


- Priorities for resources**—The level of awareness about available resources such as the *Comfort My People* policy paper, grant program, NAMI, and Mental Health First Aid training was higher among mid council leaders, but low in general. The surveys generated 400 requests from respondents for more information. Ministers ranked a list of resources in terms of potential helpfulness and added their own suggestions. The need for resources that are culturally attuned to specific constituencies (e.g., race, ethnicity, LGBTQ+) was cited by ministers. Their responses have informed Recommendations 1–5. Continuing to raise awareness of excellent existing resources is just as important as developing new resources where gaps are identified.



- Mental health of ministers**—The roles of ministers (as pastor or specialized minister) can be emotionally demanding and oftentimes also isolating, increasing risk of burnout and compassion fatigue. More than 90 percent of ministers described their mental health as good, very good, or excellent, only 9 percent describing their mental health as fair to poor. Given concerns expressed about stigma in the minister’s survey, it’s difficult to interpret these numbers.

- Stigma**—There is considerable evidence that stigma around mental health continues to weigh heavily, especially on ministers with a history of mental illness as shown by the following chart that shows responses to a question asking how true it is that their congregation/s are open to calling a minister with a history of mental illness.



- *Role of mid councils*—Central to their connectional function, mid councils both support congregations in their ministries and nurture the mental health of ministers. In relation to congregations, in the past eighteen months, 26 percent of the mid councils offered mental health training, and of these, more than half used National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) materials. Compared to members and church leaders, mid council leaders are more aware of denominational resources such as the grant program, website, and *Comfort My People* policy paper.

In relation to the mental health of ministers, a majority of mid councils (60 percent) described themselves as “somewhat equipped,” with 7 percent describing themselves as “not at all equipped” to respond to ministers who are facing mental health challenges. Just 38 percent have a process for assisting ministers facing mental health challenges, and 44 percent offer or providing confidential counseling to ministers.

- *Role of seminaries*—Five responses were received from the twelve PC(USA)-related seminaries (twelve began but did not submit and only three completed the survey). Rather than an online survey, engaging seminaries in a relational way—possibly in one-on-one interviews or focus groups with pastoral care faculty—might be more fruitful.

Capacity-Building Activities to Focus and Enhance Mental Health Initiatives in Congregations, Mid Councils and Seminaries

The aim of the mental health initiative is to increase the capacity of PC(USA) members and ministers, congregations, mid councils, and seminaries to engage in mental health ministry in ways appropriate to each part of the church, so that persons affected by mental health challenges and their loved ones—especially those affected by serious mental health conditions—are welcomed, supported, accepted, respected, valued, and fully included in the life of PC(USA) congregations.

While some progress has been made since the approval in 2008 of the *Comfort My People* policy paper, much work remains to fully live into this vision. The newly launched grant program, mental health ministry website, Presbyterian Mental Health Network, and churchwide mental health survey have succeeded in reigniting interest and conversation about mental health ministry and have put the scaffolding into place on which to build further capacity.

Core “capacities” of mental health ministry can be grouped into several categories.

Congregations

- “*First responder*” capacity—the capacity for ministers and members to engage in a role-appropriate and helpful way when someone shows signs of a mental illness, is in mental health distress or crisis, or has concerns about the mental health of a loved one. Skills include assessing for risk of suicide or harm, listening non-judgmentally, giving reassurance and information, encouraging appropriate professional help, and encouraging self-help and other support strategies.

Examples of capacity-building activities: training in skills of Mental Health First Aid <https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/> for adults and youth, training in QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) suicide prevention <https://qprinstitute.com/>, training of pastors and members—including elders, deacons, volunteers working with children and youth, ushers, and church staff—in principles of trauma-informed care and responses to people in distress <https://store.samhsa.gov/system/files/sma14-4884.pdf>.

- “*Companioning capacity*”—skills for “walking side-by-side” with people affected by mental illness and their loved ones and to share the journey toward health and wholeness in ways experienced as welcoming, respectful, and supportive. Core “practices” include hospitality, neighboring (relating as equals), listening, and expanding the circle of care.

Examples of capacity-building activities: Pathways to Promise Companionship training <http://www.pathways2promise.org/companionship-training/>, NAMI training and programs such as Family to Family <https://www.nami.org/Find-Support/NAMI-Programs>.

- “*Advocacy capacity*”—Advocacy is often framed as lobbying for certain policies but results of the survey suggest the need for another kind of advocacy within PC(USA) congregations.

- *Addressing stigma.* One of every five Americans experiences a diagnosable mental health condition in any given year. That translates into 264,000 Presbyterians and 3,848 Presbyterian ministers facing mental health challenges at any given time. While many mental health conditions occur early in life, others, such as dementia, typically emerge late in life. Some are visible; most are not—often hidden because of the stigma attached to mental illness and mental health conditions.

Stigma can cost lives and is an obstacle to seeking treatment and recovering. It also inhibits authenticity, which is at the heart of faith communities with a vital spirituality that can foster transformative relationships. Advocacy involves working *with* as well as *for* people who are affected by mental health challenges and their loved ones to make the church a safe place talk about mental health, acknowledge mental health vulnerability, and become a source of companionship and spiritual nourishment “in sickness and in health.”

- *Changing how we view, think, and talk about mental health and mental illness.* Advocacy can begin with “taking the mote out of our own eye.” It means moving beyond “them” and “us” and focusing on our common humanity—recognizing that anyone can have a mental illness or condition, and that mental health is on a continuum for everyone and fluctuates over the course of a lifetime. It means taking seriously the voices of those of us with lived experience of mental health diagnoses who insist, “nothing about us without us,” and those who challenge us to recognize neurodiversity.

Examples of a capacity-building activities: A next step could be downloading the NAMI handout, *Being a Stigma-Free Faith Community* from the Resource Section at www.pcusa.org/mentalhealth and talking about it in your church.

A step further: The new worshipping community, Sweaty Sheep, in the Presbytery of San Jose is using a mental health ministry grant to address stigma through “cross-cultural” recreational retreats that use “play” to bring together people with serious mental illness (some also homeless) with church people open to mutual sharing, growth, and learning across social, economic, and faith barriers. This builds on a model they used previously that focused on moving beyond the stigma of homelessness: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CW0S8EoaiQ&feature=youtu.be>.

Mid Councils

In their connectional role, mid councils are positioned to support congregations in building their capacity for mental health ministry. An important step for mid councils is learning more about what congregations are doing. Presbyteries have a unique role to play in the mental health of ministers. Because mid councils vary widely in terms of size, structure, available resources, staffing, and thus, ways of engaging with congregations and ministers, it is difficult to generalize but the following could be readily adapted to fit local context.

Examples of activities that can help focus and enhance mental health initiatives at the mid council level:

- “*G*” as in *Getting the word out*—Mid councils are well-placed to learn about mental health activities, resources, and opportunities for engagement that congregations do not hear about directly and thus, have a key role to play in getting the word out to congregations through their communication channels.

- “*A*” as in *Appreciating good examples/models*—Mid councils are also well-placed to recognize and lift-up examples and models of mental health ministry in congregations and to facilitate “cross-pollination” among congregations.

- “*I*” as in *Initiate the next step*—Mid councils can initiate next steps, such as planning a mental health event/training or applying for a mental health ministry seed grant. Five mid councils already have exciting capacity-building grant projects

underway that can become models and springboards for others. A list of these projects can be found at www.pcusa.org/mentalhealth

- “*N*” as in *Nurture pastors*” *mental health*—This can be broken into two parts—proactive strategies such as Resilience and Compassion Fatigue Prevention training (available to them through Presbyterian Disaster Assistance), and strategies for responding when pastors are struggling with mental health challenges, an area where there may be a gap in resources and need for additional resourcing.

Seminaries

The key capacity-building role of seminaries involves initial preparation and continuing education of ministers (some serving in churches, others in specialized ministry) and commissioned lay elders. Input from the ministers’ survey identified the kinds of mental health situations arising in ministry for which many ministers would like to be better prepared, also the kinds of resources they might find helpful.

Results from the ministers’ survey will be shared with seminaries. These findings may be of most value to deans, pastoral care faculty, and others involved in the initial preparation and continuing education of ministers and others serving the church.

Example of a capacity-building activity undertaken by a seminary:

Pittsburgh Seminary, partnering with Washington and Upper Ohio Valley presbyteries, has developed a continuing education program for rural congregational leaders designed to equip them to provide spiritual care and mental health resourcing in the rural underserved areas of southwest Pennsylvania, southeast Ohio, and West Virginia. This is being funded by one of the new Mental Health Ministry grants.

PMA Staff Priorities Informed by the Survey Results

In order to build something sturdy and lasting on the scaffolding that is now in place, there is a need for continued PMA staffing and close collaboration with the Presbyterian Mental Health Network as it develops its capacity to advance and support mental health ministry across the church. Priorities include:

- Developing systems for responding to inquiries, requests for guidance and support, and for presentations that are being generated as awareness of the mental health initiative grows.
- Developing a strategy and timetable for ongoing visibility, presence, and communications.
- Developing systems for integrating volunteers stepping forward who want to engage—vetting, orienting, training, placing, and providing support and supervision.
 - Volunteer Consultants
 - Virtual Village of Voices
 - Network Supporters
- Developing strategies to facilitate connections and support among individuals/entities engaged in mental health ministry, possibly by region.
 - Refining, maintenance, and continued content development for the PMA Mental Health Ministry webpages to promote awareness of the mental health initiative, provide access to mental health resources, and channel energy into the Presbyterian Mental Health Network.
- Resource development.

Mental HealthSummary

Report of five surveys sent to Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) members, church leaders, ministers, mid council leaders, and seminaries



The report has been prepared for:
Donna Miller, PsychD
Associate for Mental Health Ministries
Compassion, Peace and Justice

Prepared by: Susan Bar-
nett, PhD Jashalund
Royston, MA Research
Services



Process

Research Services works with clients to determine the purpose of the work, who should be surveyed, and timeline.

- Preliminary meetings were held with Mental Health Initiative (MHI) staff leadership to discuss the work
- Five surveys were designed
- Research Services supplied mid council, church leaders, and members contacts
- MHI staff provided the seminary contacts
- Surveys were approved by MHI leadership
- Surveys were sent to ministers in September
- Surveys were sent to mid council leaders, church leaders, seminaries, and church members in October
- Links to all surveys were on the MHI website
- The survey process included an invitation to participate, two reminders, and an immediate thank you upon completion of the survey
- Surveys closed on November 1 for mid council leaders, church leaders, church members, and seminaries
- The ministers survey closed on November 15

The surveys were designed to ask several of the same questions to each of the different audiences. This was done to obtain insight from all perspectives of PC(USA). Doing this allows us to see how well aligned or misaligned members are to ministers, church leadership to presbyteries, and seminaries to ministers.



Mental Health -Surveys

Five similar, yet distinct, surveys were designed for this study

Research Services used its Person in the Pew, Church on the Corner, and Mid Council databases for survey distribution. The first comprehensive PC(USA) Minister survey included the minister specific mental health questions. Mental Health Initiative staff sent letters to seminaries with survey links and provided email information for the seminary survey.

Surveys were sent via Survey Gizmo, the online survey software used by Research Services. Interested parties could access the links via the Mental Health Initiative website and from links that were included in news stories.

1. **Person in the Pew** survey focuses on the member's perspective of their local church and community. N=1309
2. **Church on the Corner** survey focuses on the local church leaders' perspective for their church and community. N=752
3. **Mid Council Leaders** survey focuses on presbytery leadership in support of their ministers and congregations. N=57
4. **Minister** survey focuses on the minister's capabilities for effective mental health ministry and their own mental health. N=3,838
5. **Seminary** survey focuses on mental health training. N=12

Mental Health

Comments

- PC(USA) members, leaders, and ministers want to address the issues of mental health and mental illness in their communities and churches but do not know what to do, or what resources are available to them and, in general are unprepared to act. Discussions around mental health are challenging. Members and leaders alike are looking for direction as how to start these conversations.
- Church leaders and members have agreement that they are **not** equipped to welcome individuals with significant mental health issues into the daily life of the church.
- Training positively impacts the ability to conduct mental health ministry.
- Most respondents to the Person in the Pew and Church on the Corner surveys are white, 56-75 years old, and are politically, socially, and theologically moderate.

Mental Health

Key findings

- 54% of church leaders indicated that their church is interested in learning more about mental health ministry, yet only 30% indicate that they are equipped for such ministry.
- 73% of church leaders say that their church is open to calling a minister with a history of mental health illness.
- 89% of members and 92% of church leaders correctly identified common indicators of mental health concerns or mental health illnesses
- Members and church leaders rank these as the top two barriers to adequate mental health treatment and services in their communities:
 - Individuals may not know that they are eligible for services
 - Information about services is not widely shared.

Mental Health – *Why Survey the Church?*

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Mental Health Initiative for 2019–20

*In recognition of the continued relevance of mental health and the need to advance and expand mental health ministries, the 223rd General Assembly (2018) adopted a two-year Mental Health Initiative (Item 10–11) on the 10th anniversary of Comfort My People: A Policy Statement on Serious Mental Illness (2008). The Compassion, Peace & Justice Ministry within the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is responsible for facilitating implementation and reporting back to the next General Assembly (in 2020). **

To report on the state of mental health awareness, training, advocacy, and ministry that has occurred and is occurring, one must ask. In order to be comprehensive, surveys were designed for multiple audiences.

The surveys also inform recipients about the initiative, its grant program, and the *Comfort My People* policy statement.

* <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/compassion-peace-justice/mental-health-ministry/>

Mental Health – Person in the Pew n= 1309

Galatians 6:2 instructs Christians to “carry each other’s burdens.” -that is, to walk along side people during difficult and challenging times.

Members/Family/Community Members

- Most (97%) members recognize many of the commonly known warning signs of mental illness. They want to engage these individuals, but they may not know how to respond to mental health concerns. Nor is the church equipped to welcome people with significant mental health concerns into their fellowship (49%).
- Yet, 97% of members know someone who has or previously had a mental health concern
- 60% offer meeting space for some community support groups
- Within the previous 18 months, 18% of members report a church-sponsored mental health event or training session. Of these, 41% included National Alliance on Mental Health (NAMI) materials.
- 35% of members report large-scale acts of violence have occurred in the communities where their church is located. Of these, 3% of members they or their family members were harmed and 14% know people who were harmed.
- Most members (90%) are not aware of funds, information, or resources that are available to churches for mental health ministries.
- Most members do not know if their church’s staff have asked for additional training related to mental health ministry.

Mental Health Summary 7

Mental Health – Person in the Pew continued

When members were asked if their church is equipped to respond to ministers who are facing mental health concerns:

- 32% said that they are *well equipped* (5%) or *somewhat equipped* (28%)
- 60% do not have a process in place to assist their ministers
- 40% do not offer any access to confidential counseling for its ministers
- 45% do not offer any access to confidential counseling for its ministers' families
- 29% included mental health services in the minister's insurance coverage

Mental Health - Church on the Corner_{n = 716}

Clerks of Session (53%) primarily responded to the Church on the Corner survey. Survey questions address caring for the church's ministers, equipping its members to engage in mental health ministry, the barriers to services in their community, and the mental health services that the church currently provides.

Most (73%) are open to calling a minister with a history of mental health illness.

Many (41%) churches provide care for their ministers' and ministers' families with insurance plans that include mental health coverage. However, another 20% do not provide any medical coverage for their staff.

Much of the work of the local church is carried out by the members. What resources does the church provide to equip them? In the last 18 months, 17% report having sponsored an event on mental health. Another 35% maintain a church based mental health resource directory that is available to members.

Members and leaders alike indicate that they do not know how to best engage individuals and families about mental health concerns. Of these, 40% *moderately agree* that they are interested in learning more about mental health ministries.

While many churches do provide education and services, 51% do not provide any information on mental health to its members and do not engage in any form of mental health ministry.

When discussing their current ability to engage in mental health ministry, the response is equally split between 28% that report they are equipped and 28% that are not equipped.

Mental Health Summary 9

Mental Health – Mid Councils $n= 58$

A function of mid council ministry is to support and equip their ministers and, in turn, local congregations for ministry. Sometimes this support is to assist a minister who is facing a mental health concern. Only 4% of responding mid council leaders say that their mid council is *extremely well equipped* to respond to a minister who is facing such a challenge. Some (38%) have a process for assisting ministers facing mental health challenges, with 44% offering or providing confidential counseling. A little more than half (54%) offer some of these services to the minister's family.

82% of mid council leaders say that their churches are open to calling a minister with a history of mental illness. When ranking hinderances to mental health ministry in their mid council, leaders ranked these as the top two hinderances:

1. Lack of knowledge by church leaders about mental health issues
2. Not knowing how to respond to an individual who is showing signs of a mental health condition

For those seeking community and individual training on mental health, the National Alliance on Mental Health (NAMI) offers training and materials. NAMI offers training in most areas of the U.S. In the past 18 months, 26% of the mid councils offered mental health training and of those 53% used NAMI materials.

Many mid council leaders are unsure of the number of congregations that are affiliated with NAMI or who include NAMI materials.

Four mid council leaders reported maintaining a mental health resource directory. Of these, only two respondents say that this directory is shared with each congregation in their mid council. Only one routinely shared with ministers new to their presbytery.

Mental Health – Ministers n= 3,838

The first comprehensive survey of Presbyterian ministers of the Word and Sacrament (ministers) occurred in Fall 2019 with nearly 5000 responses. One section of this landmark survey focuses on mental health: awareness, training, ministry, and self-care.

Ministers rate their capabilities for responding to different mental health concerns such as responding to a person considering suicide or responding to community-wide crisis. Overall, 46% said that they are less than capable of responding to these mental health concerns.

Several ministers contacted Research Services about the confidentiality of the survey responses. They expressed concern that if they were honest about their own mental health struggles that it would be reported to their church or mid council and that they would lose their job. Research Services explained that we relied on news stories, word of mouth, Board of Pensions' Call to Health incentives, and postcards to advertise the study. The same survey link was used for all respondents; the links were not unique to an individual. Even if identities were known, it would be unethical to share the personal data without written permission from each person.

After this explanation, some said that they would complete the survey while others were still not convinced. Whether they did or did not complete the survey will not be known as it anonymous.

Many (44%) ministers have not been trained to recognize mental health concerns or how to minister to those individuals and families who face them. Training has been on the job (22%) with less than 20% having had enrolled in a training course either in seminary or as a part of continuing education.

For those who have sought training, 61% say that the training has been effective.

Ministers facing mental health concerns may not share their story out of fear of repercussions. More training is wanted and warranted.

Mental Health – Seminars n= 12

In the early conversations at the Mental Health gathering, in February 2018, survey participation by Presbyterian seminaries was discussed. At that time, there was no seminary participation in the volunteer mental health initiative planning group. Involving seminaries is essential yet challenging. Several efforts were made by Mental Health Initiative staff to engage seminaries and to identify the best faculty or administrators who could speak about mental health training at their respective seminaries. A total of 12 participants responded to the survey; however, only 5 completed it. In some cases, only 3 responded.

Questions focused on mental health topics offered and what material is required for which students.

- One seminary offers classes devoted to mental health
- Two offer mental health topics as a part of other classes
- Two do not cover any mental health issues
- Two seminaries require M.Div. students to have general knowledge of mental health topics
- Three seminaries expect M.Div. students to participate in both personal counseling or therapy and peer support or personal growth group
- Four seminaries agree that all ministers serving congregations should be encouraged to enlist a trained consultant for regular confidential discussions related to congregational ministry
- Seminaries would like to strengthen their training of ministerial self-care instruction and preaching/teaching skills related to mental health

Mental Health –Report Logistics

Each report has a unique icon to assist the reader. The icons are found in the lower right corner of each page. As several questions are duplicated across the surveys, it helpful to have a very clear anchor that identifies each unique report.

Ministers Seminaries

Each report stands on its own merit and can be shared independently of others. Questions that are repeated across surveys are presented in the same format for ease of comparison.

ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-094*Advice and Counsel on Item 02-094—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns*

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 02-094.

At the 223rd General Assembly (2018), the ACWC recommended approval of Item 10-11 to adopt a two-year Mental Health Initiative, which, upon adoption by the full 223rd General Assembly (2018) assembly was charged with reimagining and instituting as a priority within the PC(USA), and as such, putting into practice in mid councils, congregations, and seminaries the PC(USA)’s Policy Statement on Serious Mental Illness (2008) “Comfort My People.”

The PC(USA) Mental Health Ministry grant program provides “seed money” for Presbyterian congregations, mid councils, and seminaries to initiate or advance mental health ministries that educate, equip, and empower churches to reach out to and with people living with mental health conditions and their loved ones. The means by which the PC(USA) Mental Health Ministry strives to achieve its goals are (1) to expand mental health awareness, understanding of mental health issues, and advocacy for mental health services; (2) to eliminate the stigma surrounding mental illness, especially serious mental illnesses; and (3) to become more welcoming, inclusive, and supportive faith communities for people living with mental health challenges.

As evidenced by the concurrence of twenty presbyteries for the initial two-year Mental Health Initiative, as well as the more than 6,000 responses to the mental health study conducted by Research Services in October 2019, our denomination recognizes the need for, and support of, mental health resources such as the Mental Health Ministry is now providing. Participants from congregations, clergy, mid councils, and seminaries all reported inadequacies in recognizing, counseling, and referring persons suffering from mental illnesses.

The ACWC views mental illness as a gender justice issue that must be recognized and addressed within the PC(USA), and believes that the Mental Health Ministry is a beginning of this much needed awareness, as well as resources.

Women's Mental Health: The Facts:

- Depressive disorders account for close to 41.9 percent of the disability from neuropsychiatric disorders among women compared to 29.3 percent among men.
- Leading mental health problems of the older adults are depression, organic brain syndromes, and dementias. A majority are women.
- An estimated 80 percent of 50 million people affected by violent conflicts, civil wars, disasters, and displacement are women and children.
- Lifetime prevalence rate of violence against women ranges from 16 percent to 50 percent.
- At least one in five women suffer rape or attempted rape in their lifetime.ⁱ

Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has created an even greater need for mental health awareness and resources, particularly for women. *Medical News Today* advises women experiencing significant mental distress to consult with the healthcare provider or counselor.ⁱⁱ Jessica Gold, M.D. and professor of psychiatry at Washington University in St. Louis reported April 3, 2020, “Our mental health system is deeply flawed and understaffed and is in no way prepared to manage the onslaught of mental health issues in health care providers and the citizenry in general after the mass tragedy of Covid-19. We must think of ways to prevent mental health from deteriorating while also coming up with innovative ways to target at risk groups, particularly health care workers.”ⁱⁱⁱ The National Alliance of Mental Illness (NAMI) has crafted a twenty-two page “COVID-19 Resource and Information Guide” to assist those experiencing mental illness and their families,^{iv} further articulating the even greater need for mental health awareness and resources across the PC(USA) and truly, the world.

For further insight, the ACWC recommends that The World Health Organization’s “Women’s Mental Health: An Evidenced Based Review” (2000) be consulted. http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/66539/WHO_MSD_MDP_00.1.pdf?sequence=1

Endnotes

- i. World Health Organization: http://www.who.int/mental_health/prevention/genderwomen/en/.
- ii. MedicalNewsToday: <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/covid-19-pregnancy-and-mental-health#tips>.

iii. Jessica Gold, M.D. Assistant Professor of Psychiatry, Washington University, St. Louis, MO: <https://www.stat-news.com/2020/04/03/the-covid-19-crisis-too-few-are-talking-about-health-care-workers-mental-health/>.

iv. <https://www.nami.org/covid-19-guide>.

Item 02-095

Native American Coordinating Council Report—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

Moved to 00 Plenary, as Item 00-95. (See pp. 17, 27, 104–05.)

Item 02-096

Native American Church Property Report—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

Moved to 00 Plenary, as Item 00-96. (See pp. 17–18, 28, 111–12.)

Item 02-097

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 304.]

Mission Responsibility Through Investment: Response to the 223rd General Assembly (2018) Directive on Applying Environmental Policy and Recommending Selective Divestment—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, upon recommendation from The Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI), advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) do the following:

1. Recognize the need for urgent and robust responses to the existential threat of the climate crisis, including limiting global warming to well below two degrees Celsius, as outlined in the Paris Agreement, as well as the need for Presbyterian entities and individuals to pursue a comprehensive set of faithful responses.

2. Commend the investing agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for their work to provide options for congregations, mid councils, and individuals working for a fossil fuel-free future. Specifically, the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., for its Restoring Creation Loan program; the Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for its positive investments in renewables and its environmental investment option for plan members; and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation for its positive investments in renewables, and for providing, through its New Covenant Trust Company subsidiary, fossil free investment strategies for congregations, mid councils, and individuals.

3. Direct MRTI to continue its engagement process with deliberate haste through Climate Action 100+ and utilize its Guideline Metrics with corporations in the 2021 and 2022 proxy seasons and report back to the 225th General Assembly (2022) with possible divestment recommendations for the companies that are not moving towards compliance with criteria established by the 222nd General Assembly (2016) and the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

4. Direct MRTI to add Occidental Petroleum, American Airlines, Delta Airlines, and United Airlines to its list of companies previously identified by MRTI for this focused engagement that included, but was not limited to: Chevron, ConocoPhillips, Duke Energy, Ford, General Motors, and Philips 66.

5. Approve the following resolution:

“The Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment, in the 2019 and 2020 proxy seasons, attempted to engage and evaluated companies using its Guideline Metrics in an effort to improve the companies’ governance, strategy, implementation, transparency and disclosure, and public policy with respect to climate change. In the cases of ExxonMobil, Marathon Petroleum, and Valero Energy, this process of engagement produced no substantial change or movement towards compliance with the General Assembly’s criteria established by the 222nd General Assembly (2016), and in the judgment of this assembly, is likely not to do so in the future. Under the church’s regular process of corporate engagement (approved by the 116th General Assembly [1976] of the PCUS and reaffirmed as policy after reunion), the final step is to recommend divestment from companies where engagement is not resulting in change. In accordance with prior assembly actions, and the Divestment Strategy, Principles, and Criteria (approved by the 196th General Assembly [1984] of the PCUSA), we direct that ExxonMobil, Marathon Petroleum, and Valero Energy, be placed on the General Assembly Divestment/ Proscription List until their actions are in compliance with the General Assembly’s established criteria.”

Rationale

These recommendations are in response to the following referrals:

2018 Referral: Item 08-03. On Engagement with the Issue of Climate Change. Recommendation 8. Instruct MRTI to Continue Its Long History of Corporate Engagement on Climate Change Issues, Applying the Long-Standing PC(USA) Principles Related to Corporate Engagement and Consideration of Divestment—From the Presbytery of New Covenant (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 53, 54, 254–55 of the print copy, pp. 704–10 of the electronic copy).

2018 Referral: Item 08-08. Mission Responsibility Through Investment Report. Recommendation 4. Direct MRTI to Continue Its Engagement Process with Deliberate Haste and Continue to Utilize Its Guideline Metrics with Corporations in the 2019 and 2020 Proxy Seasons and Report Back Three Years of Metrics to the 224th General Assembly (2020) with Divestment Recommendations for the Companies Who Are Not Moving Towards Compliance with the General Assembly’s Criteria Established by the 222nd General Assembly (2016)—From the 223rd General Assembly (2018) (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 52, 53–54, 253 of the print copy, pp. 693–700 of the electronic copy).

Executive Summary

MRTI believes faithfully caring for God’s creation is essential to our Christian vocation, and the threat of climate change to God’s creation is well established.

In response to Item 08-08 from the 223rd General Assembly (2018), MRTI attempted to arrange dialogues with the nine companies identified. MRTI sent letters to these companies in August and September 2018 informing them of the General Assembly (GA) Directive. Every company except Marathon Petroleum responded to MRTI’s requests and held a dialogue discussing the GA Directive and their activities related to climate change. From 2018 to 2020, MRTI participated in thirty-one dialogues with the nine companies and used the Guideline Metrics (Appendix 1) to score each company. MRTI recommends adding the three lowest scoring companies, ExxonMobil (Exxon), Marathon Petroleum (Marathon), and Valero Energy (Valero), to the GA Divestment/ Proscription list.

Biblical, Theological, Ethical, and Policy Background

MRTI understands that its role as a committee is to be guided by the Holy Spirit, which calls us into being and sustains us in relationship with one another. As Presbyterians, we operate within an ecclesial structure seeking mutual responsibility and accountability. That understanding has distinctive theological and polity features that are simultaneously rewarding and frustrating. Theologically, we emphasize the power of communal discernment; the Holy Spirit is present in collective discussion, debate, and even conflict. We acknowledge the asymmetry between humans and God, and therefore believe that broad representation and diversity is pertinent to discerning God’s will for the church.

Central to Reformed Christian witness in the world is the emphasis upon placing our beliefs, faith, and practices alongside what is happening around us to discern the best way to live out our covenant with God and embody justice and love. To that end, MRTI “extends the concept of stewardship into society and insists that the full influence and impact of church investment be seen in the larger social context” and weighs “the church’s involvement in a particular investment with the church’s engagement in the larger society” (The Divestment Strategy: Principles and Criteria 1984, 25.200–25.201).

As such, we recognize that climate change is undeniable, and is one of the most pressing moral and theological problems of our time. Human action and corporate degradation of creation threatens the survival of the planet upon which we live and depend for our sustenance. People in the poorest regions of the world are more significantly impacted and live in vulnerable and precarious circumstances because of the rapidly changing climate. In the United States, this disproportionately manifests in communities of color.

With these realities at the forefront of our work, we sought to be guided by biblical and Reformed theological principles. We understand the following:

Faithful concern for the environment is rooted in the Word of God, spoken into creation. Reformed Christians have always affirmed the sovereignty of God as the creator and sustainer of life, over the whole of creation. Even before creating humans, God created the Earth and the universe of which it is a part and called it “very good” (Gen. 1:31). Like other living creatures, humans are formed of the earth and intimately intertwined with all God’s creation (Gen. 2:7, 9, 19). Creation is God’s handiwork, the Earth and all that is in it, belongs to God (Ps. 24:1 and Ps. 104). Creation is also a gift, to which we respond with gratitude and faithful stewardship. As Christians who have covenanted in relationship with God, we are called by God to care and maintain the fragile order with which God has entrusted us (Gen. 2:15).

Creation cries out in this time of ecological crisis (Rom. 8:18–22). The undeniable urgency of climate change that threatens the planet warrants a response at every religious, social, political, and economic level. There are no silver bullets, quick fixes, or simple solutions. The problems and injustices associated with a warming planet threaten the tenuous interconnections that make life possible. The changes needed to preserve the Earth require multifaceted, multicultural, and interreligious collaborative approaches unheard of in human history. The sustainability of creation, human life, and well-being depend upon “the flourishing of other life and the integrity of the life-supporting processes that God has ordained” (*Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice*, 1990, p. 2). The principles of response are illuminated through the ministry and teachings of prophets, kings, and humans throughout scripture and in the reconciling ministry of Jesus Christ. In response to injustices, these principles ground our moral and ethical behavior and should define the ways we treat each other and the global environment where we live.

Since the last General Assembly, MRTI carefully weighed our Reformed commitment to justice for people and the planet and the church’s investments in the oil and gas industry. We prioritized listening to the voices of those historically marginalized and oppressed and meeting with communities who are disproportionately impacted by environmental injustice and racism. We prioritized the voices of people of color who have been devastated by the increased erratic weather patterns or are suffering life-threatening illness from irresponsible corporate action.

In response, we engaged in dialogue with corporate representatives and sought intentional, thoughtful, and productive resolutions to address the ways in which oil and gas companies hasten climate change. We collaborated with other churches and investment firms through organizations such as the Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility (ICCR) to strengthen our witness and listening to people and communities directly impacted by and involved with these corporations.

As we seek to respond faithfully, we are cognizant of history and that reformers such as John Calvin questioned the ability for people to pursue and achieve perfection both personally and within communal life. They challenged other church teachings and practices because they developed a different understanding of human nature, sin, and everyone’s need for God’s grace. Thus, one of the tasks that distinguishes Reformed theology from other theological traditions is the insistence that the church, the body of Christ, mirrors the brokenness of other institutions of society and bears witness to God’s justice and love amidst the complex social circumstances in which we live.

What the committee has heard consistently throughout this process is a collective call for just transition that will faithfully address climate change as quickly as possible and attend carefully to the needs of workers and communities most directly affected by the corporations in which we have investments. With the long-term threats to planetary survival that climate change represents, our Reformed Christian witness demands we act with urgency, prudence, and a measured understanding of the complexities of the social structures that exist today. Issues of systemic and structural sin, the most egregious acts of environmental racism, ecological devastation, and worker exploitation not only define how we respond, but inform our next steps.

MRTI has participated in several community engagements since the 223rd General Assembly (2020), outlined in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Date and Location	Communities	Issues discussed
March 2019— South Louisiana	Zion Travelers Cooperative Center in Plaquemines Parish; Pointe-au-Chien Indian Tribe	Coastal erosion: flooding; whether and how to relocate communities; governmental challenges
April 2019— Pikeville, Ken- tucky (Eastern Ken- tucky/Appalachia)	Pikeville University	Just transition
June 2019—De- troit and Flint, Michigan	Michigan United Community volunteers in Detroit; First Presbyterian in Flint.	Flint water crisis; impact of Marathon Petroleum refinery on communities and resulting discrimination and unequal treatment of neighbors
March 2020— Puerto Rico (planned as of January 15, 2020)	Communities around San Juan	Coastal erosion and alternative energy

The Guideline Metrics (Appendix 1), developed by MRTI and approved at the 223rd General Assembly (2018), along with the directive from 2018, give MRTI the underlying policy necessary to support recommendations for divestment. Figure 2 is a timeline of General Assembly events and directives leading to this recommendation:

Figure 2:

GA Year	Policy/ directive
221st GA (2014)	Fossil Free PCUSA divestment overture brought to GA, referred to MRTI; Directed MRTI to report in 2016 after “action and discernment in accordance with its long-standing and detailed procedures to engage with individual corporations to advance their actions in support of important social policy issues.”
2015–2016	MRTI conducts research and policy analysis; gaps identified in “Power to Change” GA Environmental Policy (2008)
222nd GA (2016)	Established criteria for owning fossil fuel stocks; GA directed MRTI to report back in 2018, “with recommendations, including possible selective divestment if significant changes in governance, strategy, implementation, transparency and disclosure, and public policy are not instituted by the corporations during the engagements of MRTI and ecumenical partners.”
2016–2017	MRTI develops tool for measuring criteria
223rd GA (2018)	Affirms measurement criteria laid out in MRTI’s Guideline Metrics and participation in CA100; names 9 companies for focused engagement
2018–2019	MRTI works with partners to hone Guideline Metrics by prioritizing criteria; seeks engagement with 9 companies
2019	MRTI completes two rounds of Guideline Metrics; agrees to recommend companies scoring in red for addition to GA Divestment/ Proscription list.
2020	MRTI recommends adding Exxon, Marathon, and Valero to GA Divestment/ Proscription list.

Guideline Metrics, Corporate Dialogues, and Ecumenical Outreach

In 2018, the PC(USA) through MRTI joined Climate Action 100+ (CA100), an investor initiative representing \$35 trillion in assets under management. CA100 engages the world’s 161 largest corporate greenhouse gas emitters, who combined are responsible for 80 percent of the world’s emissions pressuring them to manage operations toward compliance with the Paris Accord framework by 2023, including: curb emissions, improve governance on climate change, and strengthen climate-related financial disclosures.

The nine companies named by the 223rd General Assembly (2018) are on the CA100 list for engagement and held by PC(USA)’s investing agencies. MRTI participated in dialogues with these companies both independently and through CA100. Figure 3 summarizes these engagements occurring between July 2018 and January 2020.

Figure 3

Companies	Correspondence	Dialogues	Shareholder Resolutions	Summary of Engagement
Chevron	4	6	1	Climate crisis strategy; greenhouse gas reduction; human right to water and concerns of community impacts
ConocoPhillips	3	6	0	Stakeholder and community engagement; greenhouse gas reduction; engagement with indigenous communities; risk of stranded assets.
Duke Energy	3	3	1	Greenhouse gas reduction; community engagement; impact of coal ash on neighboring communities.

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ExxonMobil	5	2	2	Greenhouse gas reduction; climate crisis.
Ford	5	5	0	Public policy lobbying; vehicle electrification plans; greenhouse gas reduction.
General Motors	3	2	1	Worker issues in plants; public policy lobbying; vehicle electrification plans; greenhouse gas reduction.
Marathon Petroleum	9	0	1	Company refused engagement
Phillips 66	3	5	0	Human rights policy development and implementation; greenhouse gas reduction and climate reporting; community impacts.
Valero Energy	3	2	0	Greenhouse gas reduction and climate reporting; climate crisis strategy.

Completing the Guideline Metrics

Following the 223rd General Assembly (2018), MRTI worked with partners to refine the Guideline Metrics by creating a prioritized scoring process and incorporating feedback from Fossil Free PC(USA) and Faithful Action on Climate Change to update criteria. Scoring is based on public disclosures, reports and filings, third-party evaluation from research firm Sustainalytics, and the companies’ responses in engagements. The Guideline Metrics produce a total score falling within a color range of red, orange, yellow, blue, or green. The “red” corresponds with the lowest scores and “green” corresponds with the highest scores.

At its October 2019 meeting, MRTI agreed to recommend adding to the GA Divestment/ Proscription list any company in red by January 15, 2020. Figure 4 is a chart of the scores as of January 15, 2020.

Figure 4



Divestment Recommendations

MRTI recommends adding Exxon, Marathon, and Valero to the GA Divestment/ Proscription list. All three companies had Guideline Metrics scores in the “red” category as of January 15, 2020.

MRTI hopes these divestment recommendations will prompt these companies to (1) change their current course and address the risks that their operations, policies and governance pose related to climate change, and (2) move into compliance with the criteria outlined by the GA, as measured by the Guideline Metrics.

Chronology of MRT's Engagement with Exxon, Marathon, and Valero Since 223rd General Assembly (2018)

ExxonMobil

MRTI sent a letter of inquiry to Exxon on August 16, 2018, informing the company of the GA Directive and requesting a dialogue. Exxon responded via phone call on September 10, 2018, and held a dialogue via conference call on September 20, 2018. MRTI also had a dialogue with Exxon through CA100 on November 8, 2018, and again on December 11, 2018, organized through ICCR partners. Due to the company's poor response to these engagements, MRTI co-filed a resolution filed by the Church of England and New York State Common Retirement Fund regarding the adoption of greenhouse gas emission reduction targets that December. In April 2019 the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) granted Exxon's request to block the resolution on the grounds that it would "micromanage" Exxon by seeking to impose "specific methods for implementing complex policies" in place of managerial judgment.¹

January 11, 2019, MRTI sent a letter with ecumenical partners to Exxon leadership offering propositions for how Exxon could improve its engagement with investors on environmental, social, and governance (ESG) issues. On April 17, 2019, MRTI sent a letter supporting a resolution asking the company to provide full disclosure of its lobbying policies, activities, payments, and trade organization memberships related to climate change.

July 2019, Rob Fohr, lead staff to MRTI, was called as a fact witness to the New York State Attorney General's lawsuit against Exxon. The lawsuit, filed in late 2018, claimed the company misled investors about how it accounted for climate change risk and its impact on the company's bottom line. At the 2016 Annual Stockholders meeting of Exxon, Mr. Fohr was recognized by then CEO and Chair, Rex Tillerson. Mr. Fohr asked Mr. Tillerson about the resilience of Exxon's business strategy to withstand potential regulatory, technological, and market-based disruptions related to low-carbon demand scenarios. Mr. Tillerson's response to this inquiry was allegedly problematic, misrepresenting what the firm was in fact doing. For this reason, the New York State Attorney General called Mr. Fohr as a fact witness. When Mr. Fohr was publicly named as a witness, Exxon responses to MRTI ceased. On December 10, 2019, the judge ruled in favor of Exxon, claiming the State failed to prove Exxon misled investors. However, the judge said, "Nothing in this opinion is intended to absolve ExxonMobil from responsibility for contributing to climate change through the emission of greenhouse gases in the production of its fossil fuel products."² As of January 2020, the attorney general of Massachusetts filed a similar lawsuit with the company.³

Additionally, in September 2019, further CA100 dialogue was conducted with the corporation in which MRTI did not directly participate. The engagement indicated continued commitment to the corporation's current stated approach to climate change, which includes research into new climate solutions and support for a revenue neutral carbon tax, but does not incorporate a commitment to take action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions across the corporation's value chain consistent with the Paris Agreement's goal of limiting the global average temperature increase to well below 2 degrees Celsius.

Despite Exxon's initial willingness to engage MRTI regarding the GA Directive, the company's actions to challenge the resolution on greenhouse gas emissions target and its lack of regular, substantial dialogue on climate change risks are of vital concern. Further, Exxon's score in the Guideline Metrics decreased from orange to red between June 2019 and January 2020 for the following reasons: (1) Lack of alignment with goals and expectations of CA100; (2) in December 2019, MRTI received stories from mission partners in Cameroon describing how past operations from Chevron and Exxon decimated local fishing communities, greatly hurting local economies in the following years⁴; and (3) once Mr. Fohr was confirmed as fact witness (July 2019) in NY State AG's suit, Exxon ceased direct engagement and dialogue with PC(USA) and MRTI. Due to the company's lack of substantial engagement and low score in the Guideline Metrics, MRTI recommends adding Exxon to the GA Divestment/ Proscription list.

Endnotes for ExxonMobile

1. <https://www.cnn.com/2019/04/03/investing/exxon-sec-climate-change-shareholder-vote/index.html>.
2. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/exxon-found-not-guilty-of-fraud-in-climate-change-accounting-case-11575991792>.
3. <https://insideclimatenews.org/news/24102019/massachusetts-sues-exxon-climate-change-investor-fraud-misleading-advertising-healey>.
4. Written report from coordinator of Network for the Fight Against Hunger/ RELUFA Cameroon (Presbyterian Hunger Program Partner).

Marathon Petroleum

MRTI sent a letter of inquiry to Marathon on September 12, 2018, informing the company of the GA Directive and requesting a dialogue. After no response from the company, MRTI sent a second letter on May 6, 2019, again requesting a dialogue. CA100 investors sent six additional communications seeking dialogue, with no results. As of January 15, 2020, the company failed to respond to MRTI's, or CA100's, requests for dialogue. In October 2019, Rob Fohr did receive an email from a company representative sharing the latest climate report and disclosures, however, MRTI's request to engage in a dialogue was not addressed. With these updates, Marathon's final score in the Guideline Metrics remains in red.

Additionally, in June 2019, MRTI held its stated meeting in Detroit, Michigan, where committee members visited a community organizing group headquartered near a Marathon Oil refinery. There, MRTI members learned of the environmental degradation and environmental racism evident throughout the area.¹ Due to the company's lack of engagement and Guideline Metrics score, MRTI recommends adding Marathon to the GA Divestment/ Proscription list.

Endnote for Marathon Petroleum

1. <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/story/investment-group-meets-detroit-residents-living-in-refineries-toxic-shadow/>

Valero Energy

Since formation of CA100, MRTI staff participated in two dialogues with Valero. Despite Valero's willingness to engage, the company is the lowest scoring of the nine companies named by the GA and is firmly in red. There is little indication of willingness to adopt policies addressing climate change. The company has yet to address how climate-related risks will impact operations, does not disclose emissions, has no human rights or indigenous rights policy in place, and has failed to outline the strategic implications of a transition to a low-carbon society. MRTI recommends adding Valero to the GA Divestment/ Proscription list.

Engaging Mid Councils Impacted by Potential Divestment

MRTI prioritized communication with the mid councils that might be impacted by divestment recommendations. In September 2018, MRTI sent letters to the leadership of the presbyteries where the focus companies are headquartered, informing them of the GA Directive. A follow-up letter was sent to inform the leadership of the Presbytery of Maumee Valley that Marathon, based in their region, had not responded to requests for dialogue. MRTI sent a final communication to leadership of the Presbytery of Maumee Valley, the Presbytery of Mission (Valero), and the Presbytery of Grace (Exxon) about the pending divestment recommendations in November 2019.

MRTI leadership and members held fifteen meetings and presentations with mid councils that would be affected by possible divestment recommendation between October 2018 and November 2019.

Recommendations for Continued Engagement

MRTI recommends the following companies named by the 223rd General Assembly (2018), remain on a list for focused engagement: Chevron, Conoco Phillips, Duke Energy, Ford, General Motors, and Phillips 66. These companies all held dialogues with MRTI regarding the GA Directive and received final scores in orange, yellow, or blue. If a company moves into compliance with GA criteria and their Guideline Metrics score advances to green, MRTI will recommend that company be taken off the list for focused engagement at the next GA.

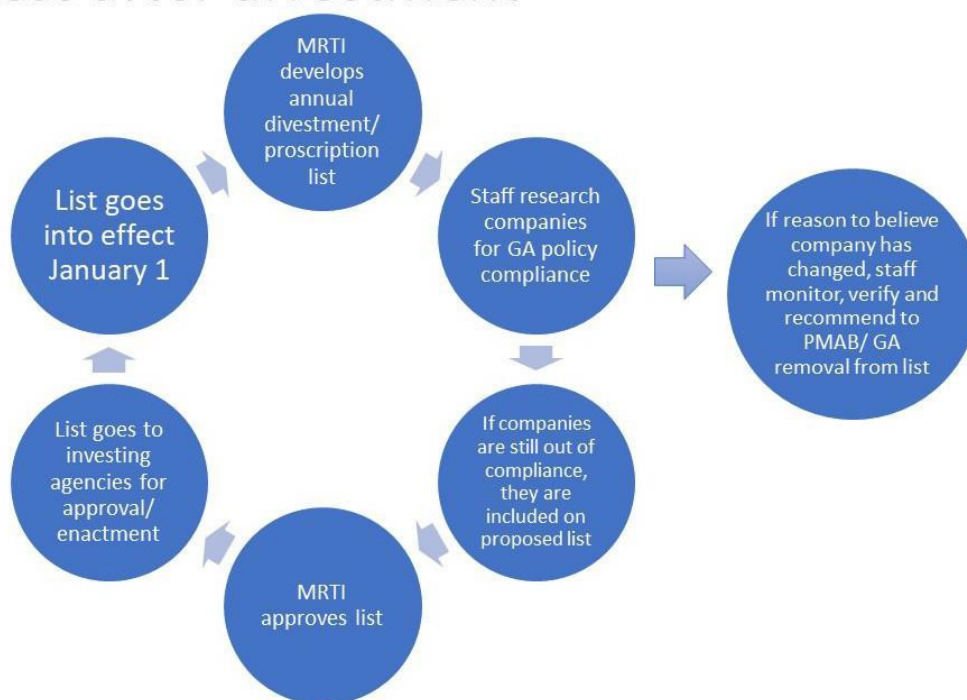
MRTI recommends adding the following companies to its list for focused engagement: American Airlines, Delta Airlines, Occidental Petroleum, and United Airlines. These companies are all on the CA100 list and are in the portfolios of the Board of Pensions and/or the Presbyterian Foundation.

After Divestment

Once MRTI recommends adding companies to the GA Divestment/ Proscription list, the new recommendations must be approved by the GA. Once approved, MRTI finalizes the list according to GA policy and sends it to the boards of the Board of Pensions and the Foundation. Each investing agency has its own implementation process. They can either approve it in full or in part. In following years, MRTI staff research companies for GA policy compliance. If companies remain out of compliance, they will stay on the proscription list. If there is reason to believe a company has improved, staff will monitor, verify and recommend to the PMAB/ GA the company be removed from the list. See Figure 5 for this process.

Figure 5

Process after divestment



Next Steps

MRTI will continue to engage and monitor the companies recommended for focused engagement and complete two years of Guideline Metrics.

In addition to engaging companies through the shareholder process, MRTI weighed in with regulatory bodies on rulemaking through the EPA on methane regulations and the SEC on shareholder rights. MRTI advocated with policymakers on issues ranging from shareholder rights to banking and finance reform.

The climate crisis is the greatest problem humanity has faced. MRTI recognizes addressing it will take different strategies and wide-scale efforts, including policy advocacy, direct action, grassroots pressure, and more. MRTI also addressed how fossil fuel companies are financed and engaged AIG, a large insurance company, on their investment portfolio and financing of oil and gas companies. MRTI joined engagements led by other faith- and values-based investment partners in talking to banks about their financing policies related to climate change risk.

MRTI engaged companies, like Ford and GM, on their public policy advocacy regarding clean air standards and engaged oil and gas companies on their lobbying and political spending. MRTI weighed in on methane emission policy rollbacks and engaged companies on this.

Investing Agency “Green” Program Participation

Participation in fossil fuel free investing programs with the Foundation and the Board of Pensions is strong. The New Covenant Trust has thirteen accounts invested in the Fossil Fuel Free portfolio with a market value of \$5.3 million. The Presbyterian Foundation has \$13.6 Million invested in clean energy. The Presbyterian Investment and Loan program reports 114 churches have taken advantage of the Restoring Creation Loan with \$8,594,656 disbursed. At the end of 2019, of the 13,104 participants in the Retirement Savings Plan with \$842 million in assets through the Board of Pensions, 510 had invested \$4.35 million in the Pax Fund. The Impax portfolio, with the same fossil fuel free investment strategy as the Pax Environmental Fund, had a market value of \$163 million on December 31, 2019.

Review of General Assembly Criteria for Use of Divestment as an Ethical Strategy

The 196th General Assembly (1984) adopted the policy, “The Use of Divestment as an Ethical Strategy” (*Minutes*, UP-CUSA, Part I, pp. 193–207). It outlined seven criteria guiding divestment recommendations, and to guide trustees of related institutions and organizations throughout the church. This policy underpins MRTI’s work. A review of the criteria is included in figure 6:

Figure 6

1984 Divestment Policy Criteria:	MRTI response:
1. The issue on which divestment is proposed should be one reflecting central aspects of the faith.	Faithfully caring for God’s creation is essential to our Christian vocation, and the threat of climate change to God’s creation is well-established. This is discussed more in Section 2.
2. The issue on which divestment is proposed should be one that the church has addressed by a variety of educational and action efforts, such as: correspondence with companies, discussion with company managers and directors, statements, questions, and shareholder resolutions at stockholder meetings, and legal action against companies.	MRTI and partners for decades have engaged corporations regarding environmental responsibility and climate change. This has produced positive changes in some corporate policies and stagnation in others. The three companies MRTI recommends adding to the GA Divestment/ Proscription list have stagnated. It is believed further engagement at this time will not yield meaningful movement towards compliance with GA standards.
3. The analysis supporting the proposed action: (a) should be clearly grounded in the church’s confession and unambiguously present in the social policy of the GA; (b) should clearly define the behavior and stance of the corporate entities whose policies or practices are at issue; and (c) should state the ends sought through divestment.	Per GA directive, MRTI’s work focuses on key components of a robust response to climate change: governance, strategy, implementation, transparency and disclosure, and public policy. The Guideline Metrics, described in Section 3A, outline the church’s policy guidance and how the behavior of individual companies compares. This framework and company scores led MRTI to recommend the three lowest- scoring companies for addition to the GA Divestment/ Proscription list. By incorporating the GA’s policy of phased selective divestment (as outlined in the 1984 policy and summarized here), MRTI hopes to make a public announcement about those companies least aligning to GA policy and raise peer pressure against the other high-emitting companies to reduce emissions and make real commitments to reducing their climate impact.
4. The decision should be taken after consultation with the ecumenical community, whenever possible. The implementation of a divestment action should ordinarily be in solidarity with other Christian bodies.	MRTI’s engagements are carried out in partnership with partners within and outside faith communities. While some partners have adopted positions on fossil fuel divestment others have not, all are committed to addressing the climate crisis. MRTI’s recommendations for divestment have been discussed with ecumenical partners.
5. Efforts should be made to examine the probable effects and consequences of the action with affected communities, particularly Presbyterians.	Since 2016, MRTI discussed climate issues and corporate engagement strategy several times with Presbyterians from both Fossil Free PCUSA and Faithful Actions. Representatives from both attended most MRTI meeting since June 2016. These meetings highlighted the importance of a multi-faceted approach to climate change and corporate engagement. MRTI staff and committee members held 15 meetings with members of the mid-councils where the companies included in the recommendation are headquartered.
6. The proposed action should be sufficiently precise that the effect of its application can be evaluated.	When completed for a company, the Guideline Metrics evaluate that company’s progress on environmental, social and governance issues. The tool includes company-disclosed information, analysis from dialogues, as well as external sources and media reports to help paint a complete picture of corporate behavior.

02 RECOMMENDED REFERRALS TO THE 225TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2022)

<p>7. Any proposed divestment action should include provision for: (a) informing appropriate church constituencies; (b) giving appropriate public visibility to the action; (c) engaging other governing bodies and members in advocacy for the ends that prompt the divestment; (d) giving pastoral care to those directly affected.</p>	<p>MRTI staff and committee members are in contact with representatives from the appropriate church constituencies, including the affected mid-councils and the advocacy / advisory committees through MRTI's membership. MRTI worked in concert with communications staff of the Presbyterian Mission Agency and prepared plans for publicly sharing the GA decisions regarding this recommendation.</p>
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Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) of the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. Guideline

Metrics - Company Scoring Evaluation

January 2020

KEY

Priority weighting scale: 5 = high; 3 = medium; 1 = low Company

Scores: 2 = company is actively implementing; 1= company partially implementing; 0 = no evidence of implementation

Weighted score: priority weight * company score

Metrics

Environment

1. Climate-related risks and opportunities identified over short, medium and long term (TCFD) (CA 100)

2. The impact of climate-related risks and opportunities on the organization's businesses, strategy and financial planning described (TCFD) (CA 100)

3. Business strategy in place to manage operations in manner consistent

Priority weight

3

3

Companies

Chevron		Conoco Phillips		Duke		Exxon		Ford		GM		Marathon		Phillips 66		Valero	
Score	Weighted Score	Score	Weighted Score	Score	Weighted Score	Score	Weighted Score	Score	Weighted Score	Score	Weighted Score	Score	Weighted Score	Score	Weighted Score	Score	Weighted Score
2	6	2	6	2	6	2	6	1	3	2	6	2	6	1	3	1	3
2	6	2	6	2	6	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3	0	0
0	0	0	0	2	10	0	0	2	10	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1	5	1	5	2	10	1	5	1	5	2	10	1	5	1	5	1	5
1	5	1	5	1	5	0	0	0	0	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	1	5	2	10	0	0	2	10	2	10	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	6	1	3	2	6	1	3	2	6	2	6	1	3	2	6	1	3
1	5	1	5	2	10	1	5	1	5	2	10	2	10	2	10	2	10
2	6	1	3	2	6	1	3	2	6	2	6	2	6	1	3	1	3
1	5	1	5	1	5	1	5	2	10	2	10	1	5	1	5	0	0
1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3	2	6	2	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	10	2	10	1	5	2	10	2	10	2	10	2	10	1	5	0	0
2	6	2	6	1	3	2	6	2	6	1	3	2	6	2	6	1	3
1	3	2	6	1	3	0	0	2	6	2	6	1	3	1	3	1	3
1	3	1	3	0	0	1	3	1	3	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1

Scored

with limiting warming to 2 degrees Celsius (GA)(CA 100) 5

4. Business strategy in place and efforts made to limit temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius (GA) (CA 100) 5

5. Scenario analysis and measurement, including risk assessment on

99

demand and supply, within key business processes and investment decisions incorporated. (GA) (CA 100)	5
6. Puts an adequate internal price on carbon and uses this price to make decisions on long-term projects (GA 2018) (CA 100) (*Footnote will be inserted explaining the carbon pricing overtone from the GA and the TCFD recommendations on carbon pricing.)	5
7. Sets robust goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions that include increase use of renewable energy sources (GA)(CA 100)	5
8. Evidence of energy efficient investments (GA)	3
9. Evidence of more rapid integration of new technologies designed to reduce the company's overall carbon footprint (GA)(CA 100)	5
10. Organization discloses metrics used to assess climate-related risks and opportunities in line with its strategy and risk management process (TCFD) (CA 100)	3
11. Discloses Scope 1, Scope 2 and if appropriate, Scope 3 GHG emissions, and related risks (TCFD) (CA 100)	5
12. Describes the targets used to manage climate-related risks and opportunities and performance against targets. (TCFD)(CA 100)	3
13. Issues annual reports on the company's view of and response to material climate change risks and opportunities (GA)(CA 100)	5
14. Provides outlook on energy (GA)	3
15. Outlines how strategy can adjust for significant changes in demand for oil, gas and coal (GA)	3
16. Carbon intensity of proven and probable reserves (including breakeven oil price) categorized by nature of projects' environment (ultra-deep waters, oil sands, etc.) (GA)	3
Other possible areas of interest (from S&P)	
17. <i>Water use:</i> 17a. Is water included in company's business strategy planning? 17b. What are water usage requirements for the company? 17c. Does the company operate in water-stressed areas? 17d. Are mitigation programs in place for efficient water use? 17e. Is the company using or developing water-efficient technology for operations?	1

18. Land and Biodiversity:

- 18a. Do operations adversely impact biodiversity?
- 18b. Is there a corporate policy and risk management process in place concerning energy, land and biodiversity?
- 18c. Do operations lead to deforestation?

19. Possible Supply Issues

- 19a. Company evaluates impact of its products on the environment (MRTI)
- 19a. Company evaluates impact of its products on the environment (MRTI)

20. Regarding Waste:

- 20a. Company discloses management of hazardous materials/ waste.
- 20b. Solid waste reduction efforts are in place. (MRTI)

Social

- 1. Company has the following in place:
 - a) Policy commitment to respect human rights; b) A human rights due diligence process to identify, prevent, mitigate, and account for how they address their impacts on human rights;
 - c) Processes to enable the remediation of any adverse human rights impacts they cause or which they contribute (above from UN) ; d) Public commitment to prevent human trafficking and upholding human rights;
 - e) Evaluation of impact of its products on human rights (MRTI)

- 2. Do operations distress neighboring communities and/or historically marginalized/ oppressed communities (often communities of color)? If so, what steps are taken to mitigate those impacts? (S&P) (GA) (*Foot-note will be added referencing the GA directive on environmental racism.)

- 3. Risk management program includes environmental and social impacts on neighbors (e.g., emissions' impact on local air quality, lending impact on local communities). (S&P) (GA)

- 4. Operations are considered from the perspective of their impact on local communities and society and employee safety. (S&P and MRTI) (GA)

- 5. Company regularly engages with customers to learn their needs and satisfaction. (S&P)

- 6. Do operations and/or products create reputational issues for the

- company? If so, how are those issues managed and mitigated? (S&P).

- 7. Does company participate in the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights? <http://www.voluntaryprinciples.org/for-companies/>

- 8. Does company operate in conflict zones? (GA 2008)

- 9. Corporate Human Rights Benchmark 2017 score

- 10. Additional human rights concerns?

- 11. Company takes steps in terms of occupational health, safety, and wellbeing and the advancement, protection and enforcement of human rights, including suppliers (S&P).

- 12. Other comments

Governance

- 1. CEO to employee pay ratio: <http://www.payscale.com/data-packages/ceo-pay/full-list>

- 2. Clearly defines board and management governance processes that acknowledge the scientific evidence of climate change (GA) and importance of other social issues. (CA 100)

- 3. Ensures adequate oversight of climate change risk (GA) and human

- rights issues (CA 100)

- 4. Strategic implications of a transition to low carbon energy system (GA)

- 5. Board member analysis (MRTI) (includes board diversity) (CA100)

- *(diversity refers to diversity of demographics, experience/expertise, and inclusion of domestic and international experience)

	Chevron		Conoco Phillips		Duke		Exxon		Ford		GM		Marathon		Phillips 66		Valero	
Priority weight	Score	Weighted Score	Score	Weighted Score	Score	Weighted Score	Score	Weighted Score	Score	Weighted Score	Score	Weighted Score	Score	Weighted Score	Score	Weighted Score	Score	Weighted Score
1	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	2	2	0	0
1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	0	0
5	0	0	1	5	1	5	0	0	2	10	1	5	0	0	1	5	0	0
5	0	0	1	5	1	5	0	0	1	5	2	10	0	0	1	5	1	5
5	1	5	1	5	2	10	1	5	2	10	1	5	0	0	1	5	1	5
1	0	0	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	0	0	1	1	2	2
1	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
1	2	2	2	2	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	info only		info only		info only		info only		info only		info only		info only		info only		info only	
1	info only		info only		info only		info only		info only		info only		info only		info only		info only	
1	info only		info only		info only		info only		info only		info only		info only		info only		info only	
1	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	1	1
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1
5	2	10	2	10	2	10	1	5	2	10	2	10	1	5	1	5	2	10
5	1	5	2	10	1	5	1	5	2	10	2	10	1	5	1	5	1	5
3	1	3	2	6	2	6	1	3	2	6	1	3	0	0	1	3	0	0
3	2	6	2	6	1	3	2	6	1	3	2	6	1	3	1	3	2	6

6. Engages constructively with public policymakers and other stakeholders [in support of cost-effective policy measures to mitigate climate change risks and support low-carbon investments] (GA)

7. Ensures there is broad oversight and transparency about the company's lobbying activity and political spending, including activity by trade associations to which the company belongs, on climate change and related energy and regulatory issues (GA), and other human rights and social issues. (CA100)

8. Company discloses positions on policy issues such as carbon pricing, renewable energy targets, and international negotiations on climate change (GA).

9. Company regularly engages with regulatory and other legal authorities to keep abreast of legal, regulatory and compliance developments. (S&P)

10. Relevant transparency (executive pay; drug pricing; spending on marketing vs R and D) (MRTI)

11. Company is transparent on which office to contact regarding environmental/ social concerns and includes contact information. (MRTI)

Priority weight	Chevron		Conoco Phillips		Duke		Exxon		Ford		GM		Marathon		Phillips 66		Valero																	
	Score	Weighted Score	Score	Weighted Score	Score	Weighted Score	Score	Weighted Score	Score	Weighted Score	Score	Weighted Score	Score	Weighted Score	Score	Weighted Score	Score	Weighted Score																
3	1	3	1	3	1	3	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0																
5	0	0	1	5	1	5	0	0	2	10	0	0	1	5	1	5	1	5																
3	1	3	2	6	0	0	1	3	1	3	2	6	0	0	0	0	0	0																
1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1																
1	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	1																
3	0	0	0	0	1	3	0	0	1	3	0	0	2	6	1	3	0	0																
		117.00		53.00		151.00		51.00		159.00		36.00		94.00		58.00		180.00		54.00		170.00		30.00		90.00		36.00		102.00		27.00		77.00

Total Score

Recommended score key

Red: Overall, company may have poor record of shareholder engagement, poor record on environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues. Company may or may not acknowledge importance of ESG issues.

0-100

Orange: Company acknowledges importance of ESG issues, may or may not adopt policies to address the issues. Has conducted some shareholder engagement or is open to it. May not have displayed much progress in shareholder engagement.

101-135

136-170

Yellow: Company may show more progress on shareholder engagement; may begin to implement ESG policy with programs/plans, goals and targets; develops metrics, starts measuring and disclosing information.

171-205

Blue: Good track record of shareholder engagement. Company benchmarks its progress against others in industry/sector; conducts independent verification of its data and operations. Policies, programs, goals and targets in place for ESG issues and regularly discloses information.

206-240

Green: Company showing great efforts on shareholder engagement; is actively addressing ESG issues and there are few concerns. Company's strategic focus leads to demonstrable positive impact

(Adopted from ICCR hierarchy of impact)

Sources and Notes:

223rd General Assembly (2018) of the PC(USA) (GA 2018). The 223rd General Assembly (2018) received an MRTI report that included pursuing engagement with companies on climate change issues. Excerpt from the General Assembly's response to the MRTI report: "Direct MRTI to continue its engagement process with deliberate haste and continue to utilize its Guideline Metrics with corporations in the 2019 and 2020 proxy seasons and report back [three years of metrics] to the 224th General Assembly (2020) with divestment recommendations for the companies who are not moving towards compliance with the General Assembly's criteria established by the 222nd General Assembly (2016). Companies previously identified by MRTI for this focused engagement include, but are not limited to, Chevron, ExxonMobil, ConocoPhillips, Marathon Petroleum, Valero Energy, Phillips 66, Duke Energy, Ford, General Motors."

223rd General Assembly (2018) of the PC(USA) (GA 2018 Carbon). The 223rd General Assembly (2018) directed MRTI to continue engaging companies on climate change, "especially in support of carbon pricing."

223rd General Assembly (2018) of the PC(USA) (GA 2018). "On Responding to Environmental Racism and to Promote Environmental Justice." Excerpt from "On Responding to Environmental Racism and to Promote Environmental Justice." 2018. "3. Listen to the perspectives and voices of people most impacted by environmental racism with awareness to cultural diversity domestically and internationally. 4. In accordance with the Gospel, position the church's approach to environmental problems to include responses to the voices most directly impacted by environmental racism."

General Assembly of the PC(USA) (GA). "Action on Fossil Fuel Divestment by the 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church U.S.A." Excerpt from MRTI report to the 222nd General Assembly (2016)'s Assembly Committee on Environmental and Immigration Issues. 2016. "Directs MRTI to pursue its focused engagement process on climate change issues with all corporations, particularly with those in the oil, gas, and coal sectors, and report back to the 223rd General Assembly (2018) with recommendations, including possible selective divestment if significant changes in governance, strategy, implementation, transparency and disclosure, and public policy are not instituted by the corporations during the engagements of MRTI and ecumenical partners."

218th General Assembly (2008) of the PC(USA) (GA 2008). The 218th General Assembly (2008) received an MRTI report that included continued engagement with companies on Israel/ Palestine. In response, the GA recommended the following: "Call upon all corporations doing business in the region to confine their business activity solely to peaceful pursuits, and refrain from allowing their products or services to support or facilitate violent acts by Israelis or Palestinians against innocent civilians, construction and maintenance of settlements or Israeli-only roads in East Jerusalem and the West Bank, the Israeli military occupation of Palestinian territory, and construction of the Separation Barrier as it extends beyond the 1967 'Green Line' into Palestinian territories." (Minutes, 2008, Part 1, p. 1223)

Climate Action 100+. Available here: <http://www.climateaction100.org/>

ICCR. "Hierarchy of Impact." Available here: <http://www.iccr.org/our-approach/iccrs-hierarchy-impact>

S&P Global Ratings, RatingsDirect. "Proposal for Environmental, Social, And Governance (ESG) Assessments." 2016. Available here: <https://www.spglobal.com/our-insights/Proposal-For-Environmental-Social-And-Governance-ESG-Assessments.html>.

TCFD (Task Force on Climate-Related Financial Disclosures). "Recommendations of the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures." 2016. Available here: <https://www.fsb-tcfd.org/publications/recommendations-report/>

United Nations Human Rights, Office of the High Commissioner. "Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights." 2011. Available here: http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/GuidingPrinciplesBusinessHR_EN.pdf

Source for sector-specific questions: "21st Century Engagement." BlackRock and Ceres. 2015. Available here: <https://www.blackrock.com/corporate/en-us/literature/publication/blk-ceres-engagementguide2015.pdf>

Ceres. "The 21st Century Corporation: The Ceres Roadmap For Sustainability." 2010. Available here: https://www.ceres.org/sites/default/files/2017-05/Ceres_Roadmap_for_Sustainability_2010.pdf Text in orange reflects the latest Sustainability ESG Report.

PC(USA)'s Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI), internal communication between MRTI committee members and staff. The Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment approved this score on January 16, 2020.

BOP COMMENT ON ITEM 02-097

Board of Pensions Comment on Mission Responsibility Through Investment: Response to the 223rd General Assembly (2018) Directive on Applying Environmental Policy and Recommending Selective Divestment—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

The Board of Pensions supports the recommendation from the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI). The Board appreciates the work of MRTI, particularly as the PC(USA) and predecessor denominations celebrate fifty years of this witness and engagement. The Board has always followed MRTI's consistent application of the General Assembly's Divestment Strategy, Principles and Criteria, and the implementation of the General Assembly Divestment List.

Therefore, upon review of the MRTI recommendation, the Investment Committee of the Board of Pensions passed the following resolution at their March 6, 2020 meeting:

Should the 224th General Assembly accept the MRTI response to referrals, and MRTI then adds Exxon Mobil, Marathon Petroleum and Valero Energy to the General Assembly Divestment List, this action would meet the Policy on Prohibited Securities; therefore, the Investment Committee commits to include Exxon Mobil, Marathon Petroleum and Valero Energy to the Board of Pensions Prohibited Securities List for 2021.

It is the work of the Investment Committee to receive the General Assembly Divestment List, and to the adopt the Board of Pensions Prohibited Securities List.

Item 02-098

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 304.]

Amendments to Portions of the Directory for Worship—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendments to the Directory for Worship to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

1. Amend the third paragraph of W-3.0205 (Confession and Forgiveness) as follows: [Text to be inserted is shown as italics.]

“W-3.0205: Confession and Forgiveness ...

“Other actions may follow—a song of praise, such as “Glory be to the Father” or “Glory to God”; a summary of the law or call to faithfulness; *the sacrament of Baptism*; and the sharing of peace as a sign of reconciliation in Christ.”

2. Amend the fifth paragraph of W-3.0409 (Theology of the Lord's Supper) as follows: [Text to be inserted is shown as italic.]

“W-3.0409: Theology of the Lord's Supper ...

“The opportunity to eat and drink with Christ is not a right bestowed upon the worthy, but a privilege given to the undeserving who come in faith, repentance, and love. All who come to the table are offered the bread and cup, regardless of their age or understanding. If some of those who come have not yet been baptized, an invitation, *when appropriate*, to baptismal preparation and Baptism should be graciously extended.”

3. Amend W-3.0412 (Great Thanksgiving) and W-3.0413 (Breaking the Bread) as follows: [Text to be inserted is shown as italics.]

“W-3.0412: Great Thanksgiving

“Following the offering and the preparation of the table, a minister of the Word and Sacrament† invites worshipers to the Lord's Supper using sentences of Scripture (*including the words of institution, if not used elsewhere*). ... [Rest of paragraph remains unchanged.]

“W-3.0413: Breaking the Bread

“At the table, in full view of the people, the minister of the Word and Sacrament† breaks the bread and pours the cup, or lifts a cup that has already been filled. These actions may be accompanied by sentences of Scripture (*including the words of institution, if not used elsewhere*) or performed in silence. ... [Rest of paragraph remains unchanged.]”

4. Amend the second paragraph of W-3.0414 (Communion) as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be inserted is shown as italic.]

“W-3.0414: Communion ...

“When all have received the bread and cup the remaining elements are placed on the table. ~~The minister of Word and Sacrament† then leads the people in prayer~~ *A prayer follows*, thanking God for the gift of the Sacrament and asking for grace to live and serve faithfully until the coming of Christ’s realm in fullness.”

5. Amend the first paragraph of W-5.0104 (Household Worship) as follows: [Text to be inserted is shown as italic.]

“W-5.0104: Household Worship

“We respond to God’s grace in the context of personal relationships, particularly when Christians who live together worship together. *Historically, household worship has been a central and important practice within the Reformed tradition, an important means of faith formation.* Opportunities for household or family worship include: sabbath-keeping and rhythms of daily prayer; Bible reading, study, or memorization; prayers before meals; singing hymns, psalms, and spiritual songs; and expressions of giving, sharing, and service to others. Congregations are encouraged to nurture and equip households and families for these practices.”

6. Add a new third paragraph to W-5.0104 (Household Worship) as follows: [Text to be added is shown as italic.]

“W-5.0104: Household Worship ...

“Prayers of thanks and blessing at the household table draw upon ancient Jewish practice and the examples of Jesus, his disciples, and the early Christian community. Mealtimes provide opportunities to give thanks to God’s works of creation and redemption by which we are sustained for Christ’s service. We respond with heartfelt thanks and praise in the sharing of our daily bread.”

7. Amend the third paragraph of W-5.0204 (Pastoral Care) as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added is shown as italic.]

“W-5.0204: Pastoral Care ...

“All members are called to take part in the ministry of pastoral care, visiting the sick, supporting the weak, and comforting those who mourn. Ruling elders, deacons, and ministers of the Word and Sacrament† have particular responsibility for the exercise of pastoral care within the community of faith. Those with special gifts and appropriate training may be called to ~~the particular specialized~~ *ministries such as spiritual direction*, pastoral counseling, or chaplaincy. In certain circumstances, persons may need to be referred to other qualified and credentialed professionals to receive appropriate counseling and care.”

8. Amend the fourth paragraph of W-5.0204 (Pastoral Care) as follows [text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be inserted is underlined and italicized]:

“W-5.0204: Pastoral Care ...

“Services of wholeness and healing are one way of enacting the church’s ministry of pastoral care. The central element in these services is prayer, calling upon God’s saving grace or giving thanks for healing received, *in life and in death, in body, mind, or spirit*. A service of wholeness includes the proclamation of the Word, focusing on the promise of ~~abundant~~ *peace and ultimate well-being through life in Christ*. Prayer may be enacted through the laying on of hands and anointing with oil, provided that these actions are carefully introduced and interpreted: healing ~~always~~ *in its many forms* comes as a gift from God, not as ~~a product~~ *an accomplishment* of human prayer. The Lord’s Supper is a fitting way to seal the promise of wholeness proclaimed in the Word. Services of wholeness are to be authorized by the session and are under the direction of the minister of Word and Sacrament†, but may involve leadership from ruling elders, deacons, and others with gifts for prayer. They may take place on a regular basis, as an occasional event, or as a part of the Service for the Lord’s Day.”

9. Amend W-5.0201 (The Church’s Ministry within the Community of Faith) and W-5.0301 (The Church’s Mission in the World) as follows: [Text to be inserted is shown as italic.]

“W-5.0201: The Church’s Ministry within the Community of Faith

“God calls the Church in the name of Jesus Christ to mutual love, *discipleship*, and service. Jesus’ ministry and the church’s worship are deeply connected; indeed, worship is ministry. The church’s ministry springs from its worship, where God builds up the body of Christ through the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The church’s ministry flows back into worship as we bring to God the celebrations and concerns of the community of faith.

“Within the church, we seek to love and serve one another through the rhythm of daily prayer, the ministries of Christian education and pastoral care, the activities of councils of the church, and other gatherings of believers. The church’s ministries are shaped and nourished by the Word and Sacraments, and are to be carried out in the spirit of *faithful discipleship and constant prayer* (F-1.0301; F-1.0302a; F-1.0303; F-1.0403).

“...

“W-5.0301: The Church’s Mission in the World

“God sends the Church in the power of the Holy Spirit to join the mission of Jesus Christ in *discipleship and service* to the world. Jesus’ mission and the church’s worship are deeply connected; indeed, worship is mission. The church’s mission springs from its worship, where we glimpse the reality and the promise of God’s eternal realm. The church’s mission flows back into worship as we bring to God the joy and suffering of the world.

“Through its mission in the world, the church, *as a community of disciples*, seeks to bear witness to God’s reign through the proclamation of the gospel, acts of compassion, work for justice and peace, and the care of creation. The church’s mission is shaped and nourished by the Word and Sacraments, and represents the living out of our prayer for the world (F-1.01; F-1.0303; F-1.0304).”

Rationale

These recommendations are in response to the following referral: *2018 Referral: Item 14-02. On Amending Portions of the Directory for Worship. Recommendation 1–10. The Assembly Referred Recommendations 1–10. To the Presbyterian Mission Agency, Office of Theology and Worship—From the Presbytery of Santa Fe* (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 14, 17, 355–58 of the print copy, pp. 1198–1205 of the electronic copy).

Rationale for Recommendation 1

This amendment acknowledges the common practice of celebrating the sacrament of Baptism early in the Service for the Lord’s Day while retaining the Reformed emphasis on Baptism as a response to the Word.

Rationale for Recommendation 2

This amendment provides for gracious hospitality at the Lord’s Supper, emphasizes the theological connection between the sacraments, and underscores pastoral discretion in the invitation to Baptism.

Rationale for Recommendation 3

This amendment highlights the three options for the placement of the words of institution in the Reformed practice of the Lord’s Supper.

Rationale for Recommendation 4

This amendment provides for more flexibility in the prayer after communion, including the use of a unison congregational prayer.

Rationale for Recommendation 5

This amendment asserts the importance of household worship in faith formation.

Rationale for Recommendation 6

This amendment stresses the significance of mealtime prayers in household worship.

Rationale for Recommendation 7

This amendment includes spiritual direction among the examples of specialized ministries of pastoral care while seeking to avoid the appearance of an exhaustive list.

Rationale for Recommendation 8

This amendment offers theological and pastoral perspective on the nature of healing and wholeness: that healing happens in a variety of ways, and wholeness is not necessarily synonymous with physical recovery.

Rationale for Recommendation 9

This amendment contributes an emphasis on communal discipleship in the church's practice of ministry and mission.

Background

At the 223rd General Assembly (2018), the Presbytery of Santa Fe presented a series of recommendations to amend the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Directory for Worship. The General Assembly answered each recommendation with the following action: "That the recommendation be referred to the Presbyterian Mission Agency, Office of Theology and Worship, and be brought back to the 224th General Assembly (2020)." After consultation with the original overture advocate and careful review of comments from the Advisory Committee on the Constitution in 2018, the Presbyterian Mission Agency's Office of Theology and Worship offers the nine recommendations listed above.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 02-098

This item from the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board is the response to a referral from the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

The item consists of multiple parts. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution will advise on each numbered item separately.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution reminds the assembly of the following general principles of constitutional interpretation that inform our advice:

- That which is not prohibited is permitted.
- Itemized lists are presumed to be exhaustive unless otherwise stated. Recent revisions of the Form of Government and Directory for Worship have tried to replace lists containing specific elements with broader categories that suggest possibilities.
- The Directory for Worship is a combination of the theology, practice, and polity of this church's worship. While all of it is constitutional and therefore authoritative for this church, not all of its content is polity.
- The *Book of Order*, including its parts, should be read as a whole. No section contains all the information pertinent to a particular topic.

1. Recommendation 1: On Amending W-3.0205

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) to disapprove Recommendation 1 of Item 02-98.

Recommendation 1 seeks to amend W-3.0205, a section in the Directory for Worship that describes confession and forgiveness as an element of the worship service. The proposed language would articulate the possibility that the sacrament of Baptism might be administered following confession and proclamation of forgiveness in the worship service.

Although the language of this recommendation is clear and consistent with its intent, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that it is unnecessary. Reformed theology commonly links Word and Sacrament as in W-1.0106, but W-

3.0307 already provides for the sacrament of Baptism to *ordinarily* be in response to the Word. It does not *require* that the sacrament only be administered at that time in the service.

2. *Recommendation 2: On Amending the Fifth Paragraph of W-3.0409*

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) to disapprove Item 02-98, Recommendation 2.

This recommendation seeks to amend W-3.0409 to emphasize pastoral discretion regarding an invitation to baptismal preparation when persons who have not previously been baptized participate in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that the proposed change has the potential to weaken the link between Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The use of "should," rather than the mandatory "shall," already provides latitude for pastoral discretion in determining the appropriateness of an invitation to baptismal preparation.

3. *Recommendation 3: On Amending W-3.0412 (Great Thanksgiving) and W-3.0413 (Breaking of the Bread)*

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) to disapprove Item -02-98, Recommendation 3.

This recommendation would add the words "(including the words of institution, if not used elsewhere)" in one place in each paragraph (W-3.0412 and W-3.0413), describing the components of the Lord's Supper.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that the language of W-3.0412 already requires "Jesus' institution of the Sacrament" and allows its placement in various places in the service: "... as well as Jesus' institution of the Sacrament (if not otherwise spoken at the invitation to the table or the breaking of the bread)." Adding "(including the words of institution, if not used elsewhere)" places the same information in two consecutive sentences and does not alter the meaning of the paragraph. The phrase is likewise unnecessary in W-3.0413 because it is already stated in W-3.0412.

4. *On Amending W-3.0414*

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) to approve Item 02-98, Recommendation 4.

Recommendation 4 in this overture would eliminate the requirement that the prayer after Communion be led only by a minister of the Word and Sacrament or ruling elder authorized by the presbytery to administer Communion.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that the language of W-3.0414 is unnecessarily restrictive and amendment is advisable.

5. *On Amending W-5.0104: Household Worship*

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) that this item does not present issues of polity.

Recommendation 5 in Item 02-98 would add a sentence emphasizing the role of household worship.

If the 224th General Assembly (2020) believes that the intent of Item 02-98, Recommendation 5 is appropriate, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that the proposed language is clear and consistent with that intent.

6. *On Amending W-5.0104 by Adding a Third Paragraph*

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) that this item does not present issues of polity.

Recommendation 6 in Item 02-98 would add a paragraph emphasizing the role of mealtime prayers to the section on household worship.

If the 224th General Assembly (2020) finds Recommendation 6 is appropriate, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that the proposed language is clear and consistent with that intent.

7. *On Amending the Third Paragraph of W-5.0204 Pastoral Care*

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) that Item 02-98, Recommendation 7, presents issues that the assembly should consider.

This recommendation would add “spiritual direction” to the already named ministries of pastoral care. It has added “particular specialized” and “such as” so that the list created by the addition of “spiritual direction” would not be presumed to be exhaustive. However, the addition of more language is counter to recent constitutional changes that give various councils parameters and responsibility to define their own practices. Decisions about appropriate validated ministries are properly left to the individual presbyteries. In addition, the creation of a list invites more items to be added to it.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that if the assembly believes it is appropriate to expand the understanding of pastoral care ministries, it can be better accomplished, while addressing the issues presented above, by striking “the ministries of pastoral counseling or chaplaincy” in W-5.0204 and inserting “*particular specialized pastoral care ministries*” so that it would read “Those with special gifts and appropriate training may be called to [~~the ministries of pastoral counseling or chaplaincy~~] [*particular specialized pastoral care ministries*].”

8. *On Amending the Fourth Paragraph of W-5.0204 Pastoral Care*

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) to approve Item 02-98, Recommendation 8.

This recommendation would amend the paragraph describing services of wholeness and healing.

The ACC finds that the first proposed amendment, the insertion of the words “*in life and in death, in body, mind, or spirit,*” the deletion of “abundant” and insertion of “*ultimate well-being through*” are unnecessary stylistic changes that do not present issues of polity.

The ACC finds that (a) deletion of the word “always” and insertion of “*in its many forms*” and (b) deletion of “a product” and insertion of “*not an accomplishment of human prayer*” are helpful clarifications.

9. *On Amending W-5.0201 and W-5.0301*

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) to approve the amendment to W-5.0201 and disapprove the amendment to W-5.0301.

Recommendation 9 in this item would introduce the concept of discipleship in various places in paragraphs describing (a) the church’s ministry within the community of faith (W-5.0201) and (b) the church’s mission in the world (W-5.0301).

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that sections W-5.0201 and W-5.0301 should be seen as complementary, not contradictory or mutually exclusive. It is unnecessary to amend W-5.0301 to incorporate discipleship as this is sufficiently addressed by the proposed amendment to W-5.0201.

Item 02-099

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 304.]

Sam and Helen R. Walton Awards for 2018 and 2019—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board reports the recipients of the Sam and Helen R. Walton Awards for 2018 and 2019 and recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) recognize the recipients as outstanding new church developments:

2018

Faith Presbyterian Church, Blue Ridge, Georgia, Presbytery of Cherokee, Synod of South Atlantic

Serious Ju Ju Skate Works, Kalispell, Montana, Presbytery of Glacier, Synod of the Rocky Mountains

2019

New Creation Presbyterian Church, Hendersonville, Tennessee, Presbytery of Middle-Tennessee, Synod of the Living Waters

Rationale

In late December 1991, Sam and Helen Walton made a generous gift through the Presbyterian Foundation of \$6 million that included \$3 million to be used for new church developments that have placed an emphasis on site acquisitions. All nominees must meet the qualifications as set forth in the application. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, acting on behalf of the General Assembly between meetings, approved the above recipients.

Item 02-100

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 306.]

Approval of Part 1 of the 2021–2022 Mission Work Plan for the Presbyterian Mission Agency—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Part 1 of the 2021–2022 Mission Work Plan for the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

The 2021–2022 Mission Work Plan (Part 1)*Executive Summary*

The Manual of Operations and Organization of the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) states “the primary purpose of the Presbyterian Mission Agency is to lead and coordinate the total mission program.” In fulfilling its purpose, the Presbyterian Mission Agency develops and proposes a Mission Work Plan (MWP) for General Assembly approval. The MWP reflects the mission directions, goals, objectives and priorities of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, considering the mission work being done by sessions, presbyteries, and synods. The nature of overtures submitted to the General Assembly for the past decade were also considered in the development of the priorities for the 2021–2022 MWP.

In keeping with the Manual of Operations, in September 2019, the PMA Board directed the President/Executive Director of the PMA to create a proposed 2021–2022 MWP. The Mission Work Plan outlined in this document contains such a plan. After reviewing the nature of overtures sent to the General Assembly within the past decade, and upon the advice and direction coming from mid council leaders attending a meeting called by the PMA Board of Directors a decision on mission priorities is being made. The PMA recommendation to the General Assembly is that the priorities for the 2021–2022 MWP remain the same as the priorities for 2019–2020. The three priorities are:

- Building Congregational Vitality
- Dismantling Structural Racism
- Eradicating Systemic Poverty

Building congregational vitality refers to the intentional and continuous faith development of pastors, ruling elders, and members of a congregation that leads disciples who are members of a church to actively engage with their community and to make new disciples as a result of their witness and work.

The PMA’s work in congregational vitality for 2021–2022 will be focused on the following outcomes:

- Loving neighbor: Congregations exhibit ministries of justice, compassion and service in witness to Jesus Christ.
- Loving God: Congregations exhibit ministries of teaching, nurture and vibrant worship that attracts new disciples or “those yet to come” to faith in Christ.
- Loving one another: Congregations engage in mutual relationship of learning and leading, accompanying partnership that demonstrates a quality of life rooted in faith.

Dismantling structural racism involves breaking down the laws, policies, practices, and structures that reinforce and perpetuate discrimination, bias, prejudice, and oppression of people of color.

The PMA’s work in the area of racism for 2021–2022 will focus on these four outcomes:

- Working with mid councils and congregations: Presbyterians will have antiracism training as well as cultural humility skills.
- Working with white Presbyterians: White Presbyterians will become aware of white privilege in the church and in society and how they may advocate for a more just and peaceable world.
- Working in society: Presbyterians will lead in antiracism work.
- Working within the Presbyterian Mission Agency: Staff of color can be their authentic cultural selves in every setting.

Eradicating systemic poverty refers to the elimination of the economic exploitation of impoverished people through laws, policies, practices and systems that perpetuate an impoverished state.

The PMA's work in poverty for 2021–2022 will focus on these five outcomes:

- Presbyterians understand a biblical and theological framework for dismantling poverty.
- Presbyterians have genuine, equitable, and non-paternalistic relationships with and learn from people who struggle with poverty.
- Presbyterians understand the intersectional, root causes of poverty and racism.
- Presbyterians participate in advocacy toward dismantling poverty.
- Presbyterians be generous in supporting efforts to lift communities out of poverty.

The theological and biblical basis for the three priorities comes from the Gospel of Matthew 25:31–46. In this passage of Scripture, Jesus judges the nations by how they respond to “the least of these”— people experiencing hunger, thirst, nakedness, sickness, and imprisonment, as well as strangers in need of welcome. The least of these are the beloved of Jesus. The least of these are people who live on the margins of society and have the least access to the justice and mercy that Jesus expects believers to demonstrate. The least of these are not judged for the condition; rather, the nations are judged for their refusal to respond to them.

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) called for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to be “Matthew 25 people.” The Presbyterian Mission Agency now lifts the vision of Matthew 25, which calls for faithful followers of Jesus to actively engage in the world, responding with compassion and justice toward the least of these. This response of compassion and justice toward the most marginalized folks in our world is not only to be made by individuals, but the nations in which we live. Thus, the Matthew 25 vision is one that aligns with the three priorities of building congregational vitality, eradicating systemic poverty and dismantling structural racism.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Mission Agency

Mission Work Plan 2021–2022

Introduction

In September 2019, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board directed the President/Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency to create a proposed 2021–2022 Mission Work Plan (MWP) using the following priorities as a framework:

- Building Congregational Vitality
- Dismantling Structural Racism
- Eradicating Systemic Poverty

These priorities are the same for the 2019–2020 MWP. The MWP reflects the mission directions, goals, objectives, and priorities of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and is created in consideration of the mission work being done by sessions, presbyteries, and synods. In the development of the priorities of this 2021–2022 MWP, the nature of overtures submitted to the General Assembly for the past decade were considered. Finally, the decision to continue with the same priorities of building congregational vitality, dismantling structural racism, and eradicating systemic poverty into the 2021–2022 MWP came through a consultation with mid council leaders who were called together by the PMA Board in August 2019 to discuss mission priorities. Given the time it takes to embed a vision throughout the denomination, extending the work on these priorities gives the

church an opportunity to develop and work toward fulfilling them. The three foci now constitute the basis for the Matthew 25 vision, which was launched by the Presbyterian Mission Agency in April 2019 and continues to be shared with the denomination today.

Theological Framework

The tenets of the Matthew 25 vision are embedded in our denomination's spiritual DNA. The Presbyterian and Reformed tradition is marked by a deep concern for the flourishing of all people. Our confessions make this clear. For instance, the Confession of 1967 condemns the evil of systemic poverty in our world. The Confession of Belhar challenges us to confront racism in the Church and society. A Brief Statement of Faith imagines congregations fully alive in the glory of God. The vision of Matthew 25, which emphasizes congregational vitality, racism, and poverty, aligns with the beliefs and confessions of the PC(USA). It is offered, above all, for the sake of the whole world God loves.

The PMA believes the Matthew 25 vision will help the PC(USA) in three ways: to connect, clarify, and celebrate. First, the Matthew 25 vision allows us to connect with other Presbyterians throughout this nation and with partners in mission around the world, providing a common language to articulate our ministry in Jesus' name. Second, the Matthew 25 vision enables us to clarify our self-understanding, so we can begin to live out our calling as followers of Jesus to make disciples, teaching folks to share the love and justice of God among those who are most marginalized. Third, being a part of the Matthew 25 vision is a way to celebrate the witness and work that unites us as followers of Christ in the PC(USA), a vision large enough to embrace us all, yet specific enough to respond to the needs of local communities.

The framework for this MWP is centered on Matthew 25:31–46, which was a mandate of the 222nd General Assembly (2016). Matthew 25 provides a theological and biblical framework for our emphasis on building congregational vitality, eradicating systemic poverty, and dismantling structural racism. The mandate came to the General Assembly from the Presbytery of the Cascades, with concurrences from five presbyteries, including Hudson River, Long Island, Monmouth, National Capital, and Sheppards and Lapsley. The rationale for the overture said:

This is a moment of great opportunity for our church. Momentum is building within our denomination and throughout our society to courageously confront the challenges of our time. A new civil rights movement, a new peace movement, a new economic justice movement is on the rise and we are in a position to stand in solidarity with the poor in a uniquely powerful way. It is a time for us to define who we will be for decades to come. May we choose to be a church committed to the gospel of Matthew 25. (*Minutes*, 2016, Part I, pp. 700–701)

The Presbyterian Mission Agency wholeheartedly embraces this call and, on behalf of the General Assembly, invites other parts of the church to join in God's mission.

The themes of Matthew 25 are grounded in the gospel of Jesus Christ. In Matthew 25:31–46, the story of the sheep and goats, Jesus calls us to serve with and for “the least of these” (Matthew 25:40)—not as a group to be pitied, but as people who are deeply loved by Jesus. The fact is the least of these are not being judged in this Scripture. It is those who withhold resources who receive severe judgment. Thus, it is not the least of these who are to be pitied, but those who fail to respond to them with compassion, justice, and mercy. The least of these de-center our assumptions about what it means to be a beloved child of God. In this passage of Scripture, Jesus issues a challenge to the authenticity of discipleship, which is demonstrated in how the sheep and goat respond to the least of these. The disciples mandate to hear and do the Word of God stated in Matthew 7:24, which is underscored again in Matthew 25:31–46. Jesus makes it clear that his followers must display compassion toward those in need. Furthermore, given that Jesus is judging nations in his story of the sheep and goats, the commitment of believers to advocate and develop systems that demonstrate compassion toward those most in need also becomes apparent. To put it simply, in Matthew 25 we see the importance of being the people of God and doing the work God calls us to do.

Matthew 25 reminds us of the life of Jesus in which we learn how God actively engages the world, challenging systems that hurt and take away the hope of God's people. We accept Jesus' call to respond to the suffering of those around us because we believe who he is and what he stands for. This call to create a more just and peaceable world is not easy. It may be difficult to make the least of these central to our ministry. Moreover, speaking truth to power and creating more compassionate systems can involve suffering and heartache. It did for Jesus, so it will be for his followers. Yet, the blessings pronounced by Jesus upon those who hear and do God's word compel us to do this work, perhaps because believers know and have already experienced Christ's work in us. By focusing on building congregational vitality, dismantling racism and eradicating poverty, the Presbyterian Mission Agency seeks to lead the PC(USA) in being faithful disciples of Jesus Christ.

Building congregational vitality refers to the intentional and continuous faith development of pastors, ruling elders, and members of a congregation that leads disciples who are members in a church to actively engage with their community and to make new disciples as a result of their witness and work. The source of vitality and energy is rooted in Jesus and comes through the Holy Spirit at work in the life of believers who labor in the church and in the world, meeting the needs of the poor and “the least of these” as demonstrated by the sheep in Matthew 25:31–46. Both the sheep and goats do not recognize Jesus in the face of the hungry, thirsty, naked, stranger, sick, and imprisoned, yet the sheep respond to such people with compassion, bearing witness to the vitality, character, and charisma of Christ present in them.

Congregational vitality, as the PMA defines it, is not solely determined by the size of a church or its budget. It is more concerned with a church's faithfulness in demonstrating the love and justice of Jesus. It is directly related to the vitality of faith exuded in believers who trust in Jesus and are committed to carrying out his mission in the world.

This vision of vital congregations in which believers actively engage in the world is underscored in Scripture and can be seen in the actions of the 220th General Assembly (2012)'s report regarding the role of congregations in the world. The report states:

Regarding Living Out Our Faith Publicly

1. Call on the PC(USA) to focus its ministry and resources on the society-at-large and to mobilize its agencies/entities, councils, congregations, and members/disciples to reach out holistically with the Gospel of Jesus Christ to participate in God's just peace and sociopolitical transformation.
2. Call on the PC(USA) to mobilize our agencies/entities, councils, congregations, and members/disciples to prayerfully discern afresh where and how God is calling the whole church to live out our faith.
3. Call on pastors, sessions, and Christian educators to equip Presbyterians to live out their Christian faith publicly through their various social roles and spheres of influence in practical demonstration of the love and teachings of Jesus, in concrete ways (as citizens, consumers, family, and individuals). Our budgets and programs must reflect our commitment to mission and focusing outwardly.
4. Call on local pastors, sessions, and congregations to engage in hands-on ministry outside the walls of their buildings and in their neighborhoods.

The church bears witness to faith in Christ when congregations actively engage in the world, providing a compassionate response to people in need and becoming involved in correcting the injustice that leads to the marginalization of such people. Active engagement in the world also allows the church to expand its influence and to create new disciples from those who benefit from the congregation's involvement in the community. One good test of a congregation's vitality is to see how its members and neighbors answer the question, "If this church were to close, who would miss it and why?" Congregational vitality is aligned with the words of Jesus, who calls us to "go and make disciples of all nations."

The PMA's work in congregational vitality will be focused on the following outcomes:

- Loving neighbor: Congregations exhibit ministries of justice, compassion, and service in witness to Jesus Christ.
- Loving God: Congregations exhibit ministries of teaching, nurture, and vibrant worship that attracts new disciples or "those yet to come" to faith in Christ.
- Loving one another: Congregations engage in mutual relationship of learning and leading, accompanying partnership that demonstrates a quality of life rooted in faith.

Dismantling structural racism involves breaking down the laws, policies, practices, and structures that reinforce and perpetuate discrimination, bias, prejudice, and oppression of black people and other people of color.

While racism did not exist in the early Church as it does today, the teaching of Matthew 25 reveals God's concern for people who are poor and marginalized. In this nation, people of color suffer a disproportionate level of poverty. As documented in books such as Michelle Alexander's *The New Jim Crow*, bell hooks' *Killing Rage: Ending Racism*, and Ibram X. Kendi's *Stamped from the Beginning*, racism remains an impediment to equity and justice in this country for African Americans and other people of color to this day. The documented disparities with African Americans and other people of color in every area—including housing, education, employment, health, immigration, and incarceration—are indicative of institutional injustice. White Americana still fares better than blacks and other people of color in the same positions and circumstances. The advantage of whites over blacks and people of color, given the same circumstance, is commonly referred to as "white privilege."

Racism and white privilege are sin, violating the truth that all people are created in the image of God. This sin results in fear, violence, neglect, and destruction of God's people and must be dismantled. The 222nd General Assembly (2016) reaffirmed the PC(USA)'s stance on the issue of racism in the adoption of the Confession of Belhar, which states in part:

We believe ... that unity is, therefore, both a gift and an obligation for the church of Jesus Christ; that through the working of God's Spirit it is a binding force, yet simultaneously a reality which must be earnestly pursued and sought: one which the people of God must continually be built up to attain;

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[We believe] ... that this unity must become visible so that the world may believe that separation, enmity and hatred between people and groups is sin which Christ has already conquered, and accordingly that anything which threatens this unity may have no place in the church and must be resisted; (*Book of Confessions*, 10.3)

We believe... that the credibility of this message is seriously affected and its beneficial work obstructed when it is proclaimed in a land which professes to be Christian, but in which the enforced separation of people on a racial basis promotes and perpetuates alienation, hatred and enmity. (*Book of Confessions*, 10.5)

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) also approved the following antiracism policy:

The Bible insistently reveals that God loves diversity and justice. This is seen in the wide variety of creation in which God delights. It is heard in the words of the prophets, who reject oppression and commend justice as true worship. It is embodied in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, who resists the power of empire and values all persons, regardless of status, as children of God. Jesus gathered a community of people around him that crossed over every social and cultural boundary. ...

Racism is the opposite of what God intends for humanity. It is the rejection of the other, which is entirely contrary to the Word of God incarnate in Jesus Christ. It is a form of idolatry that elevates human-made hierarchies of value over divinely given free grace. Through colonization and slavery, the United States of America helped to create and embrace a system of valuing and devaluing people based on skin color and ethnic identity. The name for this system is white supremacy. This system deliberately subjugated groups of people for the purpose of material, political and social advantage. Racism is the continuing legacy of white supremacy. Racism is a lie about our fellow human beings, for it says that some are less than others. It is also a lie about God, for it falsely claims that God favors parts of creation over the entirety of creation.

Because of our biblical understanding of who God is and what God intends for humanity, the PC(USA) must stand against, speak against and work against racism. Antiracist effort is not optional for Christians. It is an essential aspect of Christian discipleship, without which we fail to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ. (*Minutes*, 2016, Part I, p, 772)

In Matthew 25, Jesus' judgment of nations underscores the importance of developing disciples who respond to the condition of "the least of these." When a nation's system of laws and governance are biased against black people and other people of color, new systems that demonstrate the compassion and justice of God toward all are required. Matthew 25 provides a theological and biblical basis for the dismantling of structural racism as a system that is indifferent to those in need of the love, justice and liberation offered in Jesus Christ.

The PMA's work in the area of racism will focus on these four outcomes:

- Working with mid councils and congregations: Presbyterians will have antiracism training as well as cultural humility skills.
- Working with white Presbyterians: White Presbyterians will become aware of white privilege in the church and in society and learn how they may advocate for a more just and peaceable world.
- Working in society: Presbyterians will lead in antiracism work.
- Working within the Presbyterian Mission Agency: Staff of color can be their authentic cultural selves in every setting.

Eradicating systemic poverty refers to the elimination of the economic exploitation of impoverished people through laws, policies, practices, and systems that perpetuate an impoverished state.

Addressing systemic poverty includes the important acts of compassion listed in Matthew 25. However, eradicating systemic poverty moves beyond compassionate acts to the confrontation of systems that create and perpetuate poverty. For while it is important to serve a meal to people who are hungry, the deeper issue is why a person is without food. The Presbyterian concern for addressing the root causes of poverty is demonstrated in the establishment of such ministries as Self-Development of People, which came into being fifty years ago. Poverty also intersects with other issues, such as racism and discrimination in gender, sexual identity, age, citizenship, and immigration status. In Matthew 25:31–46, Jesus makes it clear that he is present with people who are poor and marginalized. He expects no less from his followers.

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) called on the church to:

Recommit ourselves at the congregational level, the mid council level, and the national levels of our Church to locate ourselves with the poor, to advocate with all of our voice for the poor, and to seek opportunities to take risks for and with the poor (in the soup kitchens and catholic worker houses, among the immigrants, with those working to end mass incarceration, and with those who seek to protect all of us, especially the poorest of the poor around the world, from the vagaries of climate change). (*Minutes*, 2016, Part I, p. 700)

The PMA seeks to lead the church in eradicating systems that perpetuate poverty and instead ministering with compassion to those in need of God's love.

The PMA's work with respect to poverty will focus on these five outcomes:

- Presbyterians understand a biblical and theological framework for dismantling poverty.
- Presbyterians have genuine, equitable, and non-paternalistic relationships with and learn from people who struggle with poverty.
- Presbyterians understand the intersectional, root causes of poverty and racism.
- Presbyterians participate in advocacy toward dismantling poverty.
- Presbyterians are generous in supporting efforts to lift communities out of poverty.

The rationale section of the overture, which is a plea to the church to stand with people who are poor, is no less urgent today:

We see the Spirit blowing through our society, bringing to fruition seeds of peace and justice long dormant. The harvest will be plentiful. Let us heed the call to service and recommit ourselves to the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ in deeds as well as in words. (*Minutes*, 2016, Part I, p. 701)

As a benediction and charge for this theological framework, hear these “Beatitudes for a Matthew 25 Church” from the “Worship in a Matthew 25 Church: Resources for Congregations and Presbyteries” booklet:

“Beatitudes for a Matthew 25 Church”

Systemic Poverty

Blessed are those who serve the poor,
they will be called the children of God.

Blessed are those who share the wealth,
they will be called the children of God.

Blessed are those who work for good,
they will be called the children of God.

Structural Racism

Blessed are those who open doors,
they will be called the children of God.

Blessed are those who break down walls,
they will be called the children of God.

Blessed are those who challenge hate,
they will be called the children of God.

Congregational Vitality

Blessed are those who live their faith,
they will be called the children of God.

Blessed are those who speak the truth,
they will be called the children of God.

Blessed are those who show Christ’s love,
they will be called the children of God.

Mission Engagement and Support

Becoming a Matthew 25 Church with its foci of building congregational vitality, eradicating systemic poverty, and dismantling structural racism guides the PMA’s plan for mission engagement and support. As Presbyterians are informed, inspired, and engaged by the Matthew 25 vision, they will be more apt to support the work of the PC(USA) with faithful stewardship.

Stewardship pertains to how we manage and share the gifts entrusted to us. It includes the gifts of faith, prayer, labor, and service to God. Indeed, the vitality and impact of the church's mission is driven by the developing faith of disciples and their generous donation of time, skills, and social networks shared with the church. Stewardship also includes the management of financial resources to support the work of the church.

Clarity of vision impacts the financial provision given to any entity, including the church. People want to know why they are giving and what their gifts will accomplish. Matthew 25 calls believers to re-present Christ and actively engage in the world by serving "the least of these." It compels believers in our denomination and beyond to see Jesus in the face of the hungry, thirsty, and naked. Matthew 25 challenges us to love our neighbor, continually reaching out and taking risks to serve them. The gifts that support our denomination, *at every level*, allow us to build ministries, meet the needs of our communities and reach out to the world with the good news of Jesus Christ. But that is only part of the picture. Taking risks and moving beyond our comfort zone are important ways to increase our faith.

Already, by the grace of God, the national level of our church receives an outpouring of generosity in financial gifts. As the PMA allocates those gifts, we are living out of a renewed sense of gratitude, energy, intelligence, imagination, and love. The identity, hope, and partnership with God in the PC(USA) is being revitalized. Faithful stewardship of those gifts—the receiving, managing, allocating, and interpreting the use of those gifts—is part of our individual and institutional transformation. The gifts entrusted to us become a tangible expression of the work of the Body of Christ that is Presbyterian. We are claimed by God and we have the responsibility to partner with God in the transformation of the world.

The *Book of Order* tells us:

The funding of mission ... demonstrates the unity and interdependence of the church. The failure of any part of the church to participate in the stewardship of the mission of the whole church diminishes that unity and interdependence. All mission funding should enable the church to give effective witness in the world to God's new creation in Jesus Christ and should strengthen the church's witness to the mission of God. (G-3.0106)

Scripture tells us: "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:21, New Revised Standard Version [NRSV])

[Note: The budget section of this document (to come in April 2020) will include focused revenue targets that will be necessary to accomplish this plan.]

As partners in God's mission, the Presbyterian Mission Agency will engage the church in the following ways:

- An annual publication that reports how gifts are used for both the mission and the administration of the PC(USA). The report will include a thank you for past support and a solicitation for future support of Shared Mission, Special Offerings, and Per Capita, as well as a report on giving for congregations and mid councils.
- A quarterly "Interpretation and Stewardship" packet sent to all congregations.
- A Congregational Leaders Guide and support materials for all four Special Offerings including Minutes for Mission—mailed to all congregations with standing orders.
- Recognition of "4 for 4 Congregations" (those who support all four Special Offerings) when mission engagement advisors attend presbytery meetings and ask for support of all congregations.
- Quarterly updates on giving to Special Offerings sent to all presbyteries and congregations (this is a well-established current practice).
- An annual personal call (either in person or by phone) with every mid council leader.
- Attending as many mid council meetings as possible, asking for agenda time to bring greetings and staffing an exhibit table if possible.
- Distributing mission interpretation and materials for Matthew 25.
- Outreach calls to thank churches and individuals for their support of Presbyterian Mission, including Special Offerings.
- Outreach calls to engage with congregations who have lapsed in support for Special Offerings.
- Calls to cultivate and equip church leaders to interpret the mission of the church.

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Mission engagement at regional/national events:

- The presence of and support by staff at all national conferences/events. This may include bringing greetings, providing a presentation/workshop, hosting a gathering, supporting PMA leadership/program staff, and providing information folders, etc., as well as an ask for support of Presbyterian Mission.
- The processing, recording, and acknowledgement of all gifts in support of Presbyterian Mission.
- Attending and presenting at Mission Network Meetings.

Mission engagement with individuals:

- Direct mail solicitations that invite financial support of the mission priorities of the church.
- Interpretation of the church’s mission and effectiveness through the Presbyterian Giving Catalog.
- The processing, recording, and acknowledgment of all gifts in support of Presbyterian Mission.

Staffing Rationale

The PMA staffing rationale is designed to help accomplish the Matthew 25 vision and lead the PC(USA) in its mission and purpose as it relates to fulfilling the work plan emphasis of building congregational vitality, eradicating systemic poverty, and dismantling structural racism.

Work in support of the MWP is distributed across the various ministry areas, with support from the Communications, Executive Director’s Office, and Mission Engagement & Support areas. From the 2019 budget analyses, the follow distribution of resources may be seen:

Areas:	Compassion, Peace & Justice		Racial Equity & Women's Intercultural Ministries		Theology, Formation & Evangelism (including Stony Point Center)		World Mission (including Mission Co-Workers)		Communications, Executive Director's Office and Mission Engagement & Support		Total	
	Headcount:		Headcount:		Headcount:		Headcount:		Headcount:		Headcount:	
MWP Foci:	Budget (\$M)	% of Area	Budget (\$M)	% of Area	Budget (\$M)	% of Area	Budget (\$M)	% of Area	Budget (\$M)	% of Area	Budget (\$M)	% of Total
Racism	2.4	16%	1.8	25%	1.1	9%	5	25%			10.4	15%
Poverty	8.5	58%	0.8	11%	0.6	5%	6.8	35%			16.8	23%
Congregational Vitality	3.1	21%	3.4	48%	10.7	86%	5.9	30%			23.0	32%
Other	0.7	5%	1.1	15%	0	0%	2	10%	17.5	100%	21.4	30%
Total	14.7	100%	7.1	100%	12.4	100%	19.7	100%	17.5	100%	71.6	100%

Additionally, in the fall of 2019, staff were exposed to the Theory of Change method, which helps organizations develop clear paths to lofty goals. As a part of Theory of Change, three tables were created with senior and mid-level staff members to address building congregational vitality, eradicating poverty, and dismantling structural racism. The director of Racial Equity & Women’s Intercultural Ministry leads the dismantling racism table. The director of Theology, Formation & Evangelism leads the building congregational vitality table, and the director of Compassion, Peace & Justice leads the dismantling poverty table. Thus far, the PMA is utilizing current staff to help fulfill the Matthew 25 vision. However, in 2020 the Executive Director’s Office will hire staff to help further facilitate, develop, and embed the Matthew 25 vision within the PC(USA).

Rationale

The Manual of Operations of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board directs that a Mission Work Plan be developed for each two-year budget cycle, and that it be submitted for approval by the General Assembly.

The Mission Work Plan is to include:

- Priorities for the budget cycle,
- General Assembly Mission Budget for the two-year cycle,
- Staffing rationale,
- A mission engagement plan,
- A theological framework.

A detailed financial analysis is not available until March, therefore at this point only Part 1 of the Mission Work Plan is being submitted for recommendation to the General Assembly. Part 1 includes the narrative sections of the Mission Work Plan:

- The priorities,
- A theological framework,
- A mission engagement plan,
- The beginnings of a staffing rationale.

Part 2 of this report will be submitted to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board in April for recommendation to the General Assembly. Part 2 will include the proposed General Assembly Mission Budget (including revenue and expense projections and assumptions) and an updated staffing rationale.

ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-100

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-100—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) to approve Item 02-199.

ACWC advises approval of the Mission Work Plan with comment. At the 223rd General Assembly (2018), it was pointed out not only by ACWC, but our sibling advocacy committee, the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC), that the work being presented was lacking in gender justice. We again draw this to the General Assembly's attention.

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) approved Item 11-03 that has laid the foundation for the formation of the Matthew 25 Initiative. This plan was then presented to the 223rd General Assembly (2018) and was approved with comment, which led to the initiation and introduction of the Matthew 25 Initiative. Both ACWC and REAC commented on the Presbyterian Mission Agency 2019–2020 Mission Work Plan that the gender justice lens had been omitted and should not be overlooked. From REAC (then called the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns):

[This comment addresses the Justice and Reconciliation portion of the Mission Work Plan.] While the item overtly names white supremacy and racist systemic structures, it does not name violence against women in a time when the United States of America society is grappling with the violence perpetrated against women. If not now, when? When violence intersects with poverty and racism, women have experienced hurt and harm. The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) supports the need for the PC(USA) to put into practice the PC(USA)’s confession and beliefs.

From the same item, ACWC’s comment:

[The Mission Work Plan,] written in the form of worship, allows for repentance (confession) and a way forward. The focus on an intentional mission plan with specific areas of intention (Evangelism & Discipleship, Leader Formation, and Justice and Reconciliation) allows for a radical turn in the mission of the denomination. Addressing structured racism and white supremacy is emphasized, and yet the lens of gender justice is omitted.

The Gender and Leadership in the PC(USA) Report, written by Research Services of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, states:

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Although male and female members are equally likely to be asked to serve in a leadership role, the nature of that role varies by gender. Men are more likely to hold an official leadership role, in which they have an official title and/or receive a paycheck, and women are more likely to be heavily involved in a voluntary capacity. Women still comprise only about 38% of all active PC(USA) teaching elders, and only 29% of teaching elders overall. These percentages are slowly increasing. If the rate remains the same, we won't achieve gender parity among active teaching elders until 2027. (<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/gender-leadership-pcusa/>).

REAC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-100

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-100—From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee.

The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) to approve Item 02-100 with the following comments:

Require all PC(USA) churches and entities considering Matthew 25 affirm all three priorities, (1) Building Congregational Vitality, (2) Dismantling Structural Racism, and (3) Eradicating Systemic Poverty supported in Matthew 25 initiative to be recognized as a Matthew 25 church or entity.

Comments from 223rd General Assembly (2018) shall be incorporated: While the item overtly names white supremacy and racist systemic structures, it does not name violence against women in a time when the United States of America society is grappling with the violence perpetrated against women. If not now, when? When violence intersects with poverty and racism, women have experienced hurt and harm. The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) supports the need for the PC(USA) to put into practice the PC(USA)'s confession and beliefs.

According to the *Organization for Mission*, "REAC shall be a prophetic voice for involving people of color in the formation of public policy and monitor the implementation of policies approved by the church that impact the quality of life of people of color in the church and in the world" (*Organization for Mission*, VI.1). A three-legged stool cannot stand if one leg is missing. All three Matthew 25 initiatives are interrelated and interdependent. What good does it do when a racially biased church supports building congregational vitality but not dismantling structural racism. As with the Trinity all are one.

Item 02-101

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 304.]

On Encouraging Our Churches to Counter Polarization in Our Society—From the Presbytery of Chicago.

The Presbytery of Chicago overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) to encourage our churches to counter polarization in our society by:

1. Praying for God's guidance and healing touch as we seek to reduce pain and conflict from broken relationships.
2. Studying the call of Scripture and our confessions to join Christ's mission of reconciliation to the world.
3. Seeking to become wiser and more generous in spirit as we go out into the world as ambassadors of Christ.
4. Becoming more sensitive to our own choice of words and actions and aware of how they might be interpreted (or misinterpreted) by others.
5. Repenting for words and actions that demonstrate little respect for others with whom we disagree, both inside and outside of the church.
6. Learning, practicing, and teaching skills that build trust and respect between people.
7. Respectfully and honestly exploring our disagreements while maintaining our love for God and our neighbors as our dearest priority.

Rationale

This overture is a challenge to live out a better way together. We are at our least happy and most empty when we fail to seek relationship with God and with each other. Polarization is a symptom of a larger need: we are losing our yearning for leading more Christ-centered lives.

The American culture is becoming increasingly polarized, according to studies by the Pew Research Center and the Public Religion Research Institute. We often entrench ourselves in our own side of polarizing issues, widening partisan divides in our communities, congregations, and in our homes. Rather than seeking relationship, we're not talking—or listening—to each other. Even worse, we hear in our neighbor's words a different narrative imposed by the lens of our own opinions. Rather than seeking constructive dialogue, we recoil with contempt for those with whom we disagree.

Through our scriptures and confessions, God calls us to a different way of life. Passages such as Matthew 5:23–24, John 17:20–26, Romans 12:9–18, 2 Corinthians 5:11–21, Ephesians 2:14–16, and Colossians 3:13–14 remind us that we are at our most faithful when we are working toward reconciliation with God and with others. The Confessions of Belhar (especially 10.3) and of 1967 (especially 9.10 and 9.31) urge us to remember that the love of God is inextricably tied with the love of neighbor. (See addendum for the texts of these scriptures and confessions.)

As a denomination, we in the PC(USA) have not always treated each other with respect in our many disagreements. We have battled over difficult concepts and too often have split apart rather than become reconciled. We need to learn again to listen with genuine interest in and respect for those with whom we disagree, to counter any attempt to bully, shut down, or belittle our conversation partners, and to model Christian love to the world in the name of Christ who gives us the ministry of reconciliation.

This overture calls us to be part of the solution in halting the deliberate, selfish rending of relationships that ultimately drives us away from relationship with God. We propose that leadership in our churches conduct training to strengthen our abilities: to seek to understand the other sides of each story, to find in our hearts empathy where we once felt contempt, to pivot and befriend our neighbors with different viewpoints, to cooperate in civil discussion, and to learn how to best intercede in unconstructive conflict.

Among many other such resources, the following list of websites, organizations, and books can be helpful for building skills in these areas:

- Golden Rule 2020: A Call for Dignity and Respect in Politics (www.goldenrule2020.org)
- Better Angels (www.better-angels.org),
- Weave: The Social Fabric Project (<https://www.aspeninstitute.org/programs/weave-the-social-fabric-initiative/>)
- House United: Coming Together for the Common Good (www.houseunitedmovement.org)
- *Holy Disunity* by Layton Williams
- *A House United* by Allen Hilton
- *Love Your Enemies* by Arthur Brooks

This is not an effort to persuade those who differ in allegiance or opinion. Rather, it is an attempt to fully realize and to celebrate the rich gifts that diversity can provide in an environment of love and human relationships where dialog can lead us where the Spirit guides us.

As we gain experience with tools, we can live more fully and more faithfully into our calling to be ambassadors of reconciliation, both demonstrating lives of peace and teaching the skills we have learned into our social networks, neighborhoods, communities, and world.

Addendum

References to Scripture and the PC(USA) *Book of Confessions*

Cited Above

Matthew 5:23–24

“So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift.”

John 17:20–26 (Jesus speaking)

“I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. Father, I desire that those also,

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whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

“ ‘ Righteous Father, the world does not know you, but I know you; and these know that you have sent me. I made your name known to them, and I will make it known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them. ’ ”

Romans 12:9–18

“Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

“Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.”

2 Corinthians 5:11–21

“Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we try to persuade others; but we ourselves are well known to God, and I hope that we are also well known to your consciences. We are not commending ourselves to you again, but giving you an opportunity to boast about us, so that you may be able to answer those who boast in outward appearance and not in the heart. For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. For the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them.

“From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

Ephesians 2:14–16

“For Christ is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it.”

Colossians 3:13–14

“Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.”

The Confession of Belhar

(10.3) We believe

- *that Christ’s work of reconciliation is made manifest in the church as the community of believers who have been reconciled with God and with one another;*
- *that unity is, therefore, both a gift and an obligation for the church of Jesus Christ; that through the working of God’s Spirit it is a binding force, yet simultaneously a reality which must be earnestly pursued and sought: one which the people of God must continually be built up to attain;*
- *that this unity must become visible so that the world may believe that separation, enmity and hatred between people and groups is sin which Christ has already conquered, and accordingly that anything which threatens this unity may have no place in the church and must be resisted;*
- *that this unity of the people of God must be manifested and be active in a variety of ways;*
 - * *in that we love one another;*
 - * *that we experience, practice, and pursue community with one another;*

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- * *that we are obligated to give ourselves willingly and joyfully to be of benefit and blessing to one another;*
 - * *that we share one faith, have one calling, are of one soul and mind;*
 - * *have one God and Father, are filled with one Spirit, are baptized with one baptism, eat of one bread and drink of one cup, confess one name, are obedient to one Lord, work for one cause, and share one hope;*
 - * *together come to know the height and the breadth and the depth of the love of Christ;*
 - * *together are built up to the stature of Christ, to the new humanity;*
 - * *together know and bear one another's burdens, thereby fulfilling the law of Christ;*
 - * *that we need one another and upbuild one another, admonishing and comforting one another;*
 - * *that we suffer with one another for the sake of righteousness; pray together; together serve God in this world; and together fight against all which may threaten or hinder this unity;*
- *that this unity can be established only in freedom and not under constraint; that the variety of spiritual gifts, opportunities, backgrounds, convictions, as well as the various languages and cultures, are by virtue of the reconciliation in Christ, opportunities for mutual service and enrichment within the one visible people of God;*
 - *that true faith in Jesus Christ is the only condition for membership in the church.*

The Confession of 1967

(9.10) The risen Christ is the Savior for all [humanity]. Those joined to [Christ] by faith are set right with God and commissioned to serve as [God's] reconciling community. Christ is the head of this community, the church, which began with the apostles and continues through all generations.

(9.31) To be reconciled to God is to be sent into the world as [God's] reconciling community. This community, the church universal, is entrusted with God's message of reconciliation and shares [God's] labor of healing the enmities which separate [us] from God and from each other. Christ has called the church to this mission and given it the gift of the Holy Spirit. The church maintains continuity with the apostles and with Israel by faithful obedience to his call.

Concurrences to Item 02-101 from the Presbyteries of de Cristo, Tropical Florida, and Twin Cities Area.

Concurrence to Item 02-101 from the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee with Additional Rationale.

The Presbytery of Middle Tennessee recognizes that calls for “reconciliation” have at times been used to silence dissenting or discomfiting voices in order to rush to a fabricated “peace.” By contrast, this overture is a summons to engage in the hard work of true repentance and the restoration of just and righteous relationships. In affirming the critical importance of honest and direct communication about our deep convictions, *especially when we disagree*, this overture reiterates the call of Christ to love our enemies and treat others as we would want to be treated—even when we are frustrated, angry, or polarized. There is no reconciliation without justice, nor can justice be accomplished through division. As Jesus’s disciples, we (re)commit ourselves to a *koinonia* of reconciliation *and* justice, marked by relationships of dignity, repentance, and compassion.

GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 02-101

General Assembly Committee on Representation Comment on Item 02-101. On Encouraging Our Churches to Counter Polarization in Our Society

This item has been recommended to be referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). However, should the assembly determine that this item of business needs to be considered by the 224th General Assembly (2020), GACOR provides this comment.

General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) applauds the Presbytery of Chicago for rightly identifying the issue of increased political and ideological polarization within the church. We face a *kairos* moment in which we are called to be “repairers of the breach,” and it is worth noting that our denomination has faced such moments in the past. In the denomination’s social witness policy, *Reformed Faith and Politics* (1983), the 195th General Assembly (1983) notes: “Human history through which God works to realize divine purposes is subject also to the politics of human beings ... so we are inevitably political and religious.” They continue: “The best hopes for our political life reside in knowing our sin as well as the sin of

others and acting accordingly to minimize sin's effects." The guidance of *Reformed Faith and Politics* shows us that Christian political ethics must be "regarded from the perspective of how it serves the concrete good of our neighbor."

Thus, in seeking to address polarization, it is our Christian duty to regard how our rhetoric and/or ideology concretely impacts our neighbors, particularly those neighbors who come from marginalized identity groups. As a predominately white denomination in a nation that has historically favored the bodies of cisgender,* heterosexual, able-bodied males over all other bodies, members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) should cautiously consider any resolution that centers the voice or perspectives of the dominant culture to ensure that the experiences of the marginalized are not erased, thereby endangering them.

*Cisgendered persons are people whose gender identity matches the sex they were assigned at birth.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation is made up of sixteen persons, elected by the General Assembly, who are drawn from members and elders, ruling and teaching, from across the church in accordance with F-1.0403. Its constitutional mandate and central functions are described in G-3.0103 of the Book of Order (Form of Government).

Item 02-102

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 303.]

Survivors of Sexual Misconduct Task Force

The Survivors of Sexual Misconduct Task Force recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020)

1. Regarding Boundary and Child Protection Training for Ministers of the Word and Sacrament

Direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall G-2.0607e be amended by adding a new section "e." to read as follows: [Text to be added is shown as italic.]

"e. a certificate of completion of boundary training for spiritual leaders, which includes the topic of sexual misconduct and child sexual abuse prevention training. The presbytery shall determine which trainings are approved to meet the criteria of these two requirements. In order for a minister to remain in good standing, they shall successfully renew approved clergy boundary training and child sexual abuse prevention training at least every thirty-six months."

2. Regarding Boundary and Child Protection Training for Commissioned Ruling Elders

Direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall G.2.1002 be amended as follows: [Text to be inserted is shown as italic.]

"G-2.1002 Training, Examination and Commissioning

"A ruling elder who seeks to serve under the terms of G-2.1001 shall receive such preparation and instruction as determined by the presbytery to be appropriate to the particular commission. Such preparation shall include a certificate of completion of boundary training for spiritual leaders, which includes the topic of sexual misconduct, and child sexual abuse prevention training. The presbytery shall determine which trainings are approved to meet the criteria of these two requirements. In order for a term of service to be renewed, the ruling elder shall successfully renew approved clergy boundary training and child sexual abuse prevention training at least every 36 months. The ruling elder shall be examined by the presbytery as to personal faith, motives for seeking the commission, and the areas of instruction determined by presbytery. A ruling elder who has been commissioned and later ceases to serve in the specified ministry may continue to be listed as available to serve, but is not authorized to perform the functions specified in G-2.1001 until commissioned again to a congregation or ministry by the presbytery."

3. Regarding Boundary and Child Protection Training for Educators

Direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall G-2.1103b be amended as follows:

“G-2.1103b. Presbytery Responsibility

“The presbytery shall establish minimum requirements for compensation and benefits for Certified Christian Educators and Certified Associate Christian Educators and shall provide access to the area of the presbytery that oversees ministry (G-3.0307). During their term of service in an educational ministry under the jurisdiction of the presbytery, Certified Christian Educators *and Certified Associate Christian Educators in good standing* are entitled to the privilege of the floor with voice only at all presbytery meetings, and in the case of Certified Christian Educators who are ruling elders, the privilege of voice and vote at all its meetings. *In order to remain in good standing, contact information must be updated with the national certifying body, including proof of current membership in the PC(USA), and renewal of boundary training for spiritual leaders, which includes the topic of sexual misconduct, and child sexual abuse prevention training at least every thirty-six months.*”

4. *Regarding Confidence and Privilege*

Direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall G-4.03 be amended as follows:

“G-4.03 Confidence and Privilege

“G-4.0301 *Guiding Principles*

“*In the exercise of spiritual care, any member of this church engaged in ordered ministry and any certified Christian educator employed by this church or its congregations, shall work to create communities of trust, accountability, confidentiality, and protection of the vulnerable. Confidentiality is never an excuse to hold secret the knowledge of harm, or the risk of harm, related to the physical abuse, neglect, and sexual molestation or abuse of a minor or an adult who lacks mental capacity. The purpose of confidentiality is to create safe and sacred space for individuals to share concerns, questions, or burdens. Confidentiality is important for establishing communities of trust, but trust for the entire body of Christ is broken when the church fails to protect the vulnerable by keeping abuse secret. Moreover, the church does not have the skills or resources necessary to respond alone when disclosures of abuse occur. Therefore, there are times when disclosure of confidential information is necessary within the church and to civil legal authorities to protect the vulnerable and to hold abusers accountable.*

“G-4.0302 *Mandatory Reporting*

“Any member of this church engaged in ordered ministry and any certified Christian educator employed by this church or its congregations, shall report to ecclesiastical and civil legal authorities knowledge of harm, or the risk of harm, related to the physical abuse, neglect, and/or sexual molestation or abuse of a minor or an adult who lacks mental capacity when ~~(1) such information is gained outside of a confidential communication as defined in G-4.03001, (2) she or he is not bound by an obligation of privileged communication under law, or (3) she or he reasonably believes that there is risk of future physical harm or abuse.~~ *This provision also applies in cases where time has elapsed, and an adult survivor discloses that they were abused as a minor. Potential crimes against minors or adults who lack mental capacity shall always be reported.*

“~~G-4.0301~~ *G-4.0303 Trust and Confidentiality*

“In the exercise of pastoral care, ministers of the Word and Sacrament and ruling elders who have been commissioned by a presbytery to limited pastoral service (G-2.10), shall maintain a relationship of trust and confidentiality, and shall hold in confidence all information revealed to them in the course of providing care and all information relating to the exercise of such care *when that information does not fall under the provision for mandatory reporting as defined in G-4.0301.*

“When the person whose confidences are at issue gives express consent to reveal confidential information, then a minister of the Word and Sacrament or a commissioned pastor (also known as *a* commissioned ruling elder) may, but cannot be compelled to, reveal confidential information.

“A minister of the Word and Sacrament or a commissioned pastor (also known as *a* commissioned ruling elder) ~~may~~ *shall* reveal confidential information when she or he reasonably believes that there is a risk of imminent bodily harm to any person.”

5. *Regarding Plan to Provide Support*

a. Due to the nature and scope of the work yet to be completed, the Survivors of Sexual Misconduct Task Force recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) continue the work of the task force and direct them to report back to the 225th General Assembly (2022).

b. Direct the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency, in consultation and coordination with the Survivors of Sexual Misconduct Task Force, to develop a plan for providing support to presbyteries and sessions as they respond to allegations of sexual misconduct, to be proposed to the 225th General Assembly (2022). This plan should include:

- (1) guidelines and a protocol for a consistent denominational response when governing bodies receive allegations, building on the work of the Survivors of Sexual Misconduct Task Force;
- (2) resources for providing trauma-informed pastoral accompaniment to individuals, families, congregations, and communities affected by sexual misconduct, building on the work of the Survivors of Sexual Misconduct Task Force; and
- (3) an effective and sustainable means of providing well-trained, trauma-informed human resources necessary for a prompt and appropriate response when requested.

c. Direct the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency, in consultation and coordination with the Survivors of Sexual Misconduct Task Force, to continue the development and dissemination of training materials for awareness and prevention.

6. *Regarding Rules of Discipline Approval*

Note from the Survivors of Sexual Misconduct Task Force: The Survivors of Sexual Misconduct Task Force concurs with and urges approval of the recommendations of the Rules of Discipline Task Force, including their proposal of an appendix to assist clerks of session and stated clerks in responding to cases specifically involving sexual misconduct.

Rationale

Recommendations 1–4 and 6 are in response to the following referral: *2018 Referral: Item 11-09, A Resolution on Sexual Misconduct in the PC(USA). Recommendation 5. The Task Force Will ... Undertak[e] a Comprehensive Examination of Presbyterian Policy, Judicial Process, and Rules of Discipline—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (Minutes, 2018, Part I, p. 1024.*

Recommendation 5 is in response to the following referral: *2018 Referral: Item 11-09, A Resolution on Sexual Misconduct in the PC(USA). Recommendation 3. Direct the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Provide and, When Necessary, Develop Pastoral, Trauma-Informed Clinical Care Based and Theologically-Grounded Resources for Healing Survivors and Their Families, Congregations, and Presbyteries from Sexual Misconduct in the Church and Evaluate the Need for a Sexual Assault Response Coordinator within Each Presbytery—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (Minutes, 2018, Part I, pp. 1024–25).*

Rationale for Recommendation 1

The FaithTrust Institute, which provides “Healthy Boundaries” training, and the national organization, Darkness to Light, which provides the “Stewards of Children” child sexual abuse prevention training, have both discovered that regular, required training is the most effective way to prevent sexual misconduct and abuse in the church.

One of the best ways to provide justice for those who have already been harmed, is to require prevention training so that sexual misconduct doesn’t happen again.

Therefore, the Survivors of Sexual Misconduct Task Force is recommending this constitutional change to require participation in boundary training and child sexual abuse prevention training as a part of a candidate’s preparation for ministry.

Rationale for Recommendation 2

The task force concluded that the denomination needs to mandate boundary training and child protection training for commissioned ruling elders and that training needs to be updated every thirty-six months.

Rationale for Recommendation 3

The task force concluded that the denomination needs to mandate boundary training and child protection training for Christian Educators since they often have the most contact with children. That training needs to be updated every thirty-six months.

Rationale for Recommendation 4

The task force expanded the “Guiding Principles” section, revised the requirements for mandatory reporting, and placed it before the section on confidentiality. We changed the order of the two to highlight the priority of protecting those who are the most vulnerable.

Our privilege of confidentiality is not an invitation to sweep abuse under the rug to protect the institution or to protect perpetrators of misconduct. The scriptures are clear, our mandate to protect the vulnerable and the victimized is greater than our responsibility to those who hold power.

God has taken his place in the divine council; in the midst of the gods he holds judgement: “How long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked? Give justice to the weak and the orphan; maintain the right of the lowly and the destitute. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.” (Ps. 82: 1–4)

[Jesus says.] “If any of you put a stumbling-block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe to the world because of stumbling-blocks! Occasions for stumbling are bound to come, but woe to the one by whom the stumbling-block comes! ... Take care that you do not despise one of these little ones. ...” (Mt. 18:6–7; 10)

In light of these biblical mandates, when talking about confidence and privilege, it is essential that we begin with protecting the vulnerable. Ergo, we recommend reordering this section and placing the language about our mandate to report abuse ahead of language about privilege and confidentiality. Concerns about the need for confidence in pastoral care and to confess sin do not outweigh the need to protect those who’ve been victimized.

Rationale for Recommendation 5

The initiation and continuation of a response to sexual misconduct by leadership in the PC(USA) requires well-trained individuals who understand each phase of the response. “Congregations that experience this sort of trauma need to be supported by skilled leadership ...” (Laurie Kraus, David Holyan, & Bruce Wismer: *Recovering from Un-Natural Disasters*. Westminster John Knox Press, 2017) 57.)

There is still much work to be done around the creation of trauma-informed resources and a plan for providing well-trained, trauma-informed pastoral accompaniment. It is essential to have the voices of the Survivors of Sexual Misconduct Task Force formally at the table in this work.

We found that presbyteries respond to sexual misconduct allegations according to the individual presbytery’s policy. After the task force’s evaluation, we concluded our denomination needs to have a consistent plan of response when incidents of sexual misconduct occur. Due to the seriousness and complexity of situations involving sexual misconduct in the church, a qualified and competent response is essential to safeguard those affected—both those directly harmed and those in the community.

Because of the high level of training required, the task force does not recommend a sexual assault [or misconduct] response coordinator within each presbytery. Some presbyteries do not have adequate resources to recruit and train a coordinator, and turnover will likely disrupt those who can. A response coordinated at the national level to resource presbyteries will help to safeguard our denomination from negligence or an inappropriate response when incidents of sexual misconduct are alleged and reported within the PC(USA).

When a spiritual leader or governing body receives an allegation of misconduct, the Office of the General Assembly is well-equipped to help councils understand and navigate the disciplinary process, but affected persons and communities have pastoral needs that go beyond the judicial requirements. In previous years, staff positions in PMA addressed the essentials, but the positions have not been maintained.

There are different possibilities for the shape of a plan to meet this critical need; for example:

- Establishing a position, full- or part-time, in OGA or PMA, to train and coordinate a response team of volunteers to provide trauma-informed care and consultation;

- Contracting with an expert individual or organization to collaborate with current OGA and/or PMA staff positions to be deployed when requested to support those responding in presbyteries;
- Assisting presbyteries and congregations to identify appropriate local resources to provide competent support for the long term; or
- A combination of selected aspects of the above.

The PC(USA) has an obligation to support those affected by sexual misconduct with a high degree of compassion, sensitivity, and skill. The OGA and PMA need to explore further the most effective means of providing this ministry, in consultation and coordination with the Survivors of Sexual Misconduct Task Force.

Rationale for Recommendation 6

As the Survivors of Sexual Misconduct Task Force worked on this mandate, we broadened the focus from sexual assault to sexual misconduct. Sexual misconduct includes assault, abuse, harassment, unwanted sexual contact, the use of pornography in a public or church setting, exposure, or any other act of a sexual nature that violates the sanctity and dignity of our sexuality. The *Book of Order* uses the terms sexual abuse and sexual misconduct; we chose to use sexual misconduct, since it is a term that encompasses both sexual assault and sexual abuse.

Our task force sent our recommendations to the Rules of Discipline (ROD) Task Force and consulted with them. They responded to most of our concerns.

For the concerns that they could not address, the ROD Task Force recommended that an appendix on judicial process in cases specifically involving sexual misconduct be created. They maintained that the Rules of Discipline should not get too specific regarding one type of offense but saw the need for more guidance on how to handle cases involving sexual misconduct. We agree that the appendix should be added and recommend that the Survivors of Sexual Misconduct Task Force consult them on the creation of it.

Narrative

Comprehensive Review of Polity

The Survivors of Sexual Misconduct Task Force completed a comprehensive review of Presbyterian polity. We believe the PC(USA) needs to make a few constitutional changes that would help to ensure our denomination is safe and sacred space for those most vulnerable in our midst.

Rules of Discipline

We first undertook a review of the Rules of Discipline and identified several areas of concern. Because the General Assembly had already established a Rules of Discipline (ROD) Task Force to undertake a comprehensive review of the judicial process, we felt that our recommendations should focus on their work. It seemed a bit tedious for our task force to create separate recommendations if a comprehensive overhaul of the current Rules of Discipline occurs at this General Assembly. Ergo, we sent our recommendations to the Rules of Discipline Task Force.

At first reading, they agreed to incorporate several of our concerns, some in a briefer form. Most of their suggestions were acceptable to our task force. However, a few concerns felt essential to give voice to survivors of sexual misconduct within the PC(USA). We arranged a conference call with the Rules of Discipline Task Force to share our continued concern and revised recommendations. The ROD Task Force gracefully listened and responded to our concerns. Within a day, the ROD Task Force agreed to incorporate our revised recommendations.

The Survivors of Sexual Misconduct Task Force eagerly supports the ROD Task Force recommendation to add an appendix to the *Book of Order* on the judicial process in cases explicitly involving sexual misconduct. We share the concern that the Rules of Discipline should not get too specific regarding one particular type of disciplinary offense, which could impact the way they interact with other kinds of disciplinary cases. But, we wholeheartedly agree that there needs to be more guidance on how those utilizing the Rules of Discipline can and should proceed with great compassion and care in cases involving sexual misconduct.

Boundary and Child Protection Training

Although experts assert that regular, required training is the best way to prevent sexual misconduct and abuse in the church, as we shared our stories, it became clear that many people don't want to talk about issues of power and sexuality in spiritual leadership. But, when we don't talk about these issues, they remain hidden subjects and perpetuate a culture of silence and secrecy.

We can do better. For all those who've been harmed in this church, we must do better. As Darkness to Light has discerned, the best way to do that is to be knowledgeable: to know the facts, to know how to minimize opportunities for sexual misconduct or abuse, to talk about healthy boundaries and healthy sexuality, to learn how to recognize the signs of abuse, and to respond in a smart and competent way when abuse does occur.

We discovered that presbyteries and churches have inconsistent training requirements, and often there were no requirements for those who have the most contact with children. So, we hope to expand the training to include boundary training and child protection training for those who are ready to begin ministry, ministers, commissioned ruling elders, and certified Christian educators. We also recommend required renewal of these two trainings at least every three years for ministers and commissioned ruling elders, and we highly encourage renewal for Certified Christian Educators. In accordance with our polity, each presbytery shall be responsible for discerning which training opportunities will be approved to meet these two training requirements for ministers and commissioned ruling elders, and the national certifying body shall be responsible for determining approved trainings for those seeking certification as Christian educators. Many of our presbyteries and other denominations have already made this move. It is time for the PC(USA) to join the movement to make this a church that is truly safe and sacred space.

Confidence and Privilege

Our task force also found that our polity was inadequate in protecting victims when it came to matters of confidence and privilege.

The premises supporting confidentiality are strong, but they cannot support practices of secrecy—whether by individual clients, institutions, or professionals—that undermine and contradict the very respect for persons and for human bonds that confidentiality was meant to protect (Bok, Sissela. “The Limits of Confidentiality.” *The Hastings Center Report* 13, no. 1 (1983): 24–31. doi:10.2307/3561549)

It is critical also to keep in mind the context of sexual and physical child abuse as the reference point for this discussion. There are aspects of these criminal behaviors which must be considered:

- Batterers or incest offenders will re-offend unless they get specialized treatment.
- Offenders against children minimize, lie about, and deny their abusive behavior.
- Offenders cannot follow through on their good intentions or genuine remorse without outside help.
- Treatment of offenders is most effective when it is ordered and monitored by the courts.
- The secret of the child's abuse must be broken in order to get help to the victim and offender.
- Clergypersons do not have all the skills and resources necessary to treat offenders or to assist victims.
- Quick forgiveness is likely to be “cheap grace” and is unlikely to lead to repentance. (Fortune, Rev. Dr. Marie. “Confidentiality and Mandatory Reporting: A Clergy Dilemma?” <https://www.faithtrustinstitute.org/resources/articles/Confidentiality-and-Mandatory-Reporting2014.pdf/?searchterm=mandatory%20reporting>)

Theologically, it makes no sense to hold confessions of the sin of the abuse of children or vulnerable adults as secrets as it will not lead to true repentance and reconciliation. Proverbs 28:12–13 says, “When the righteous triumph, there is great glory, but when the wicked prevail, people go into hiding. No one who conceals transgressions will prosper, but one who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy.” Further, Jesus says in Matthew 5:23–24, “So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift.”

Repentance and reconciliation can only happen when we face the consequences of our sin and seek forgiveness from those we've harmed. “Confidentiality is not intended to protect abusers from being held accountable for their actions or to keep them from getting the help that they need. Shielding them from the consequences of their behavior likely will further endanger their victims and will deny them the repentance which they need” (Fortune, Rev. Dr. Marie. “Confidentiality and Mandatory Reporting: A Clergy Dilemma?” <https://www.faithtrustinstitute.org/resources/articles/Confidentiality-and-Mandatory-Reporting2014.pdf/?searchterm=mandatory%20reporting>).

Trauma-Informed and Theological-Grounded Resources

As we engaged in providing resources, we first needed to explore what materials already existed. In our first in-person meeting, members were presented with a list of resources for trauma-informed responses. These examples included manuals from the Institute for Collective Trauma and Growth, web-based articles from FaithTrust Institute, book suggestions, websites

(including our denominational sites), and other media. We examined what other denominations offer in terms of resource content, and what is most visible on the topic of clergy sexual misconduct on the Internet.

Members of the task force included an abridged, single-page collection of resources from that presentation at the Mid-Council Gathering in October in a workshop on “Healing Communities.” Resources from this presentation are in consideration for use on the denominational websites, such as “Creating Safe Ministries” (<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/legal-resources/creating-safe-ministries/>).

Other task force objectives included the formation of trauma-informed resources geared toward church leadership. Our work includes the following:

- *Compendium*: Links to up-to-date online articles, blogs, book suggestions, podcasts, other media on topics of clergy sexual misconduct, trauma, and healing. Once thoroughly vetted, one task force aim is to increase visibility of these resources across PC(USA) web pages.
- *Liturgical Resources*: Worship service outlines, prayer vigils, and musical suggestions that may be used in the wake of sexual misconduct allegations or other forms of unnatural trauma, as well as during the ongoing process of recovery.
- *Guidelines and Best Practices* manual: This document provides resources focused on response to victims and survivors, as well as families, congregations, sessions, communities, and others affected by incidents of misconduct within our denomination. Practices are not stated policy but may be adopted by a judicatory and modified as necessary to add to (but not diminish) its purpose. These *Guidelines and Best Practices* were created in consultation with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance and founded on the theological concept of seasons/phases that direct responses to be appropriate and timely to the present circumstance.

—Phase 1 (*Devastation and Betrayal*): An incident becomes known, is reported, confessed, or discovered. Phase 1 focuses on the immediate response from pastors or governing bodies. Worship resources include themes of lament, or “the season of Christ’s Betrayal.”

—Phase 2 (*Disillusionment and Death*): The second response addresses many components affecting the victim/survivor and the church community. Relationships are fragmented, church programs come under question; guilt arises from the failure to prevent an incident. Worship resources include themes of mourning, or “the season of Crucifixion and Death.”

—Phase 3 (*Reforming and New Life*): The process of restorative justice is introduced in this phase for all involved. Phase 3 responds to the needs of spiritual renewal and restoring of trust and reliance on leadership. Worship resources include themes of hope and reconciliation, or “the season of Resurrection.”

—Phase 4 (*Wisdom and New Spirit*): Reflection invites action and responsibility within the leadership of the church, and growing advocacy for sexual wholeness and preventative practices renew sacred space. Worship resources include themes of wisdom and justice, or “the season of Pentecost.”

- *Appendix to the Rules of Discipline*: If the 224th General Assembly (2020) concurs with the importance of an appendix to the Rules of Discipline regarding cases specifically involving sexual misconduct, our task force is ready and willing to aid in the creation of this appendix in consultation and coordination with the Office of the General Assembly.

The development of trauma-informed and theological grounded resources is ongoing. This work is a collaboration between members of the task force, worship leaders, the Office of the General Assembly, and the Presbyterian Mission Agency, including the Office of Theology and Worship and Presbyterian Disaster Assistance.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 02-102

Advisory Committee on the Constitution Advice on Item 02-102. The Report of the Special Committee on Survivors of Sexual Misconduct

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) that Recommendations 1–3 of Item 02-102 raise constitutional issues.

Tying a minister’s or educator’s “good standing” to boundary and child protection training requirements raises constitutional concerns. The phrase “good standing” is not defined in the Constitution, but is consistently used in the context of disciplinary charges or an order of censure against a minister or member of a congregation. A minister who is not “in good standing” may not be granted release from the exercise of ordained ministry (G-2.0507).

Using a phrase associated with disciplinary process in a non-disciplinary context creates confusion. Failure to obtain a certificate of timely renewal of boundary and child protection training should not result in labeling the minister or educator as “not in good standing,” which may imply that disciplinary action has been taken or is pending against the minister or educator. All disciplinary determinations require due process and fundamental fairness, including a right to be heard. No such process is included in the proposed amendments.

As noted in the Advisory Committee on the Constitution’s advice on Item 02-108, the phrase “in good standing” uses the term in a new way that differs from other uses in the Constitution, creating ambiguity and uncertainty. Further, the consequences of not being “in good standing” are not clear in the amendment, or elsewhere in the Constitution. The status may cause confusion about the pastor’s present call and status, even causing some to question the validity of acts by the minister in the exercise of ordained office.

In addition, Recommendation 3 introduces language that would grant Certified Associate Christian Educators the privilege of voice on the floor of presbytery. Certified Associate Christian Educators currently do not have that privilege, and this proposal has nothing to do with the remainder of the recommendation. This subject is addressed through another item before this assembly (Item 02-091) and is properly considered in that item. Granting voice privileges to Certified Associate Christian Educators is not relevant to the purpose of this overture and that language should be removed from the recommendation.

The goal of requiring regular renewal of boundary and child protection training can and should be accomplished without using the concept of being or not being in “good standing.” Changes to requirements for ongoing training and certification of ordained ministers may be included in the provisions related to preparation of candidates for ministry, but any requirements for regular renewal of such certification, should be included in chapters applicable to ordained ministers of the Word and Sacrament. If the assembly agrees with the intent of item 02-102, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that the proposed language for G-2.0607e be amended and new language be added to G-3.0307 as follows:

G-2.0607e “e. a certificate of completion of boundary training for spiritual leaders[, acceptable to the presbytery, completed within the last thirty-six months.] which includes the topic of sexual misconduct and child sexual abuse prevention training. The presbytery shall determine which trainings are approved to meet the criteria of these two requirements. [~~In order for a minister to remain in good standing, they shall successfully renew approved clergy boundary training and child sexual abuse prevention training. This certification shall be renewed at least every thirty-six months.~~].”

[G-3.0307 “Presbytery sexual misconduct policies and youth and child protection policies shall have provisions to address requirements for member Ministers of the Word and Sacrament to obtain and present to the presbytery a certification of completion of boundary and child protection training for spiritual leaders at least once every thirty-six months.”]

“G-2.1103b. Presbytery Responsibility

“The presbytery shall establish minimum requirements for compensation and benefits for Certified Christian Educators and Certified Associate Christian Educators and shall provide access to the area of the presbytery that oversees ministry (G-3.0307). During their term of service in an educational ministry under the jurisdiction of the presbytery, Certified Christian Educators [~~and Certified Associate Christian Educators in good standing~~] are entitled to the privilege of the floor with voice only at all presbytery meetings, and in the case of Certified Christian Educators who are ruling elders, the privilege of voice and vote at all its meetings. [~~In order to remain in good standing, contact information must be updated with the national certifying body, including proof of current membership in the PC(USA), and renewal of~~] [Certified Christian Educators and Certified Associate Christian Educators shall provide to the presbytery in which they serve a certificate of completion of] boundary training for spiritual leaders[, acceptable to the presbytery], which includes the topic of sexual misconduct[.] and child sexual abuse prevention training at least every thirty-six months.”

ACC Advice on Confidence and Privilege (Recommendation 4)

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) to disapprove Recommendation 4 of Item 02-102.

The categorical statement that “Confidentiality is never an excuse to hold secret the knowledge of harm, or the risk of harm, related to the physical abuse, neglect, and sexual molestation or abuse of a minor or an adult who lacks mental capacity” negates the remainder of the paragraph: There can be no “safe and sacred place for individuals to share concerns, questions, or burdens,” when there is also a requirement that every disclosure of harm or risk of harm (whether past, present, or future) must be reported to ecclesiastical and civil authorities. The current language in G-4.0302 preserves clergy-parishioner privilege except when there is a reasonable belief that there is risk of imminent harm.

The amendment mandates reporting to ecclesiastical and civil authorities even when there is not a reasonable belief of any imminent harm. In particular, the last sentence of the proposed language for G-4.0302 is overly broad. The current language of

G-4.0302 contains mandatory reporting requirements when the information about possible abuse arises outside a confidential relationship or when there is an imminent risk of bodily harm. The proposed language eliminates any prospect of ever having a confidential communication with anyone about sexual abuse. The practical and spiritual consequences of this proposed language would require clergy to caution every person who seeks counseling or guidance that the conversation cannot be kept confidential under any circumstances. Eliminating any privilege or protection for clergy who engage in spiritual and other counseling fundamentally changes the role of clergy as pastoral caregivers with parishioners and will have long-lasting consequences for all clergy. For example, clergy who serve as mediators and have specific confidentiality obligations would be subject to conflicting requirements about disclosure. Making any person engaged in ordered ministry, and any certified Christian educator employed by this church or its congregations, a “mandatory” reporter in all circumstances exposes all of them to the civil law consequences of failure to report possible abuse, and may result in steps to compel them to provide court testimony even if they did not reasonably believe the information was true, complete or correct, and even when there was no risk of imminent physical harm.

The proposed amendment retains the language “when she or he is not bound by an obligation of privileged communication under law,” giving the impression there is still some type of privileged or protected communication possible. Civil and common law reflect respect for and recognition of the special types of communication that may arise in the ecclesiastical setting. The civil law recognizes the church’s own rules for confidentiality, it does not create them. Thus, when clergy become mandatory reporters in all circumstances for all information imparted to them in any setting and by any means, there simply is no remaining circumstance when he or she may assert such a privilege. The civil law does not recognize a privilege where the church has negated it. By changing “may” to “shall” in G-4.0303 that consequence is solidified.

ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-102

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-102—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) to approve Item 02-102.

All sexual abuse is, at the core, an abuse of power. That is why certain populations—such as children and youth, developmentally disabled adults, and immigrant night shift workers—are more vulnerable to abuse and are often the targets of sexual misconduct.

Within the church, gender inequities rooted in theological misunderstandings and based in patriarchy have left women particularly vulnerable to sexual misconduct from clergy as well as from male members of their congregations. To the extent that the church of Jesus Christ is grounded in white supremacy and patriarchy, it creates situations ripe for the abuse of power. Clergy sexual misconduct sends out ripple effects beyond individual victims to impact spouses and children, families and marriages, congregations and presbyteries.

As the makers of Resolution [Item 11-09] on Sexual Misconduct in the PC(USA) approved by the 223rd General Assembly (2018), the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns commends and strongly concurs with the recommendations of the Survivors of Sexual Misconduct Task Force. To date, much of its time has been dedicated to working with the Rules of Discipline Task Force on its recommended revisions to the *Book of Order*.

Because the Survivors of Sexual Misconduct Task Force had only little over a year to work together, it is particularly important for its work to continue beyond the 224th General Assembly (2020) to report back to the 225th General Assembly (2022).

The work of the Safe and Sacred Task Force, now finished, is incomplete because its primary focus is on prevention rather than justice for and healing of victims, secondary victims, and congregations. It is essential that the first PC(USA) responders to sexual abuse accusations come from a pastoral care perspective, rather than an insurance perspective that inevitably focuses on liability and institutional protection. (See Recommendation 5.a. thru c.)

The PC(USA) has a responsibility to support those affected by sexual misconduct with trauma-informed pastoral accompaniment and trauma-informed resources that have yet to be made widely available. This includes the involvement of the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency, with the Survivors of Sexual Misconduct Task Force, in developing guidelines and a protocol for a consistent denominational response when governing bodies receive allegations.

ACWC also agrees that, because presbyteries and churches have inconsistent training requirements, regular, mandated boundary training and child protection training to prevent sexual misconduct and abuse in the church needs to be updated every thirty-six months. ACWC therefore urges the approval of Recommendations 1, 2, and 3 regarding Boundary and Child Protection Training for ministers of the Word and Sacrament, commissioned ruling elders, and educators.

Item 02-103

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 304.]

On Creating the Presbyterian Tree Fund—From the Presbytery of Scioto Valley.

The Presbytery of Scioto Valley overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) to direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA), no later than June 30, 2021, to develop and implement a carbon offset program for carbon emission generated as the result of work-related air travel by personnel of the PMA, that includes the following components:

1. The PMA will establish a “Presbyterian Tree Fund,” in collaboration with the Compassion, Peace and Justice office, the Presbyterian World Mission office, and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, board, which shall hold carbon offset donations that are received, and fund grants for tree-planting and other climate-friendly projects.
2. For every flight taken by personnel of the PMA, a specific dollar amount calculated based on generally recognized standards would be taken from the travel budget of the staff person’s work area and transferred to the Presbyterian Tree Fund.
3. Presbyterians throughout the church (including but not limited to commissioners to General Assembly, attendees at Ecumenical Advocacy Days, Presbyterians traveling to mission network meetings, and participants at Presbyterian-sponsored conferences) will be invited to voluntarily contribute to the fund to offset their own carbon emissions related to their own air travel, and/or to contribute to reforestation efforts on a global scale above and beyond any relation to their air travel or other greenhouse gas emissions.
4. The Presbyterian Mission Agency, through its Compassion, Peace and Justice office and in collaboration with the Presbyterian World Mission office, will identify global partners, U.S. Presbyterian entities (local congregations, presbyteries, synods), and partner projects engaged in reforestation programs, and other carbon sequestration projects eligible to apply for funding from the fund to support and expand their reforestation efforts or may determine that a existing program could administer this initiative.
5. The Presbyterian Mission Agency, through its Compassion, Peace and Justice office, will report to all future General Assemblies regarding disbursement of funds from Presbyterian Tree Fund and the impact of such disbursements on reforestation efforts.

Rationale

This overture seeks to offset carbon emissions due to work-related air travel by personnel of the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) and support the ongoing work of PC(USA) partners in addressing climate change by establishing a fund within the Presbyterian Mission Agency to support reforestation efforts of PC(USA) global partners and other Presbyterian entities in the United States.

Greenhouse gases generated by human activity are almost unanimously considered to be the cause of global warming and climate change. Carbon dioxide emissions from air travel constitute approximately 2 percent of all such human-generated greenhouse gases. The carbon emissions attributed to a single passenger on one mid-range flight are greater than the average annual carbon emissions attributed to individuals in many of the countries of PC(USA) global partners. Some of these countries are among the most vulnerable to climate change. Any efforts to curb climate change must include reducing human generated greenhouse gas emissions and amplifying efforts to remove such gases from the air. Trees surpass any human made technology in their efficiency and capacity to extract carbon dioxide from the air. Reforestation not only helps to mitigate climate change, in many cases it also helps adaptation to climate change because of trees’ capacity to hold water in the soil. The creation of a Presbyterian Tree Fund would provide a mechanism through which the Presbyterian Mission Agency could continue its travel intensive work more responsibly while also strengthening its global partnerships and stimulating passion for the care of God’s Creation.

Concurrences to Item 02-103 from the Presbyteries of de Cristo, Monmouth, and New Covenant.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-103

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-103—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) to approve Item 02-103.

There is previous PC(USA) policy to support this overture. The 217th General Assembly (2006) urged all Presbyterians to immediately make a bold witness by aspiring to live carbon neutral lives and purchase carbon offsets to compensate for those carbon emissions that could not be eliminated.

The 218th General Assembly (2008) approved *The Power to Change*, “which encouraged Presbyterians to purchase Green-e certified energy and/or carbon offsets in the pursuit of a carbon-neutral lifestyle.” The 222nd General Assembly (2018) endorsed the Collaborative Agenda for Environmental Stewardship, in which the Office of the General Assembly committed to offer optional carbon offset purchase for attendees each assembly and other churchwide gatherings it coordinates.

This overture extends the purchase of carbon offsets to the Presbyterian Mission Agency and enforces the connectional nature of the PC(USA) by recommending that the funds be used to support global partner projects in World Mission as well as projects of U.S. congregations, presbyteries, and synods.

Item 02-104

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 307.]

On Reducing the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Carbon Imprint—From the Presbytery of Des Moines.

The Presbytery of Des Moines overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) to do the following:

1. Call upon the whole Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to reduce our carbon imprint by 25 percent in the next four years.
2. Call upon the church to use existing resources to evaluate and calculate our impact on God’s Creation and take the actions necessary for reducing carbon output.
3. Call upon all church councils and agencies to examine their policies and procedures to identify ways to reduce our carbon imprint.
 - a. The six agencies of the church identify best practices and policies for reducing carbon imprint.
 - b. The synods and presbyteries examine their own practices and actions for reducing carbon imprint.
 - c. All congregations assess their carbon imprint and ways to lessen its impact on the environment.
 - d. All faithful disciples reflect on their own individual practices and ways to reduce our carbon imprint.
4. That every council share and celebrate with the higher judicatory every two years about how their carbon imprint has been reduced.

Rationale

This specific and concrete call is rooted in our faithful discipleship and commitment to Jesus the Christ.

“For in Christ all things were created: *things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through Christ and for Christ. Christ is before all things, and in Christ all things hold together.*” [Emphasis added.] Colossians 1:16–17

At this point in history, we face the existential threat of climate change destroying God’s Creation and the future of humanity and living creatures on this planet. Already more vulnerable communities of color and the poor are experiencing profound effects. The immensity of the challenge often leads to despair and despondency. Now is the time for the church to commit to a faithful discipleship with concrete actions addressing the challenge before us. Now is the time to act.

The problem of climate change requires a spiritual, cultural, technological, and economic transformation of the whole of society. The overwhelming scientific evidence indicates we are at a significant point in not simply preventing climate change but striving to mitigate its effects on the environment. Now is the time to act.

The church in its theology and liturgy has contributed to a worldview where Creation is treated as something to be subjugated and used by human beings rather than the web of life that interconnects all things in Christ. A primary focus on personal salvation diminishes the biblical tradition of God’s Reign where

“The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them” (Isaiah 11:6); and

“We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now” (Romans 8:22).

In 2016 the international community embraced a commitment to significantly reduce carbon emissions in the Paris Climate Accord with concrete goals and objectives to address this crisis. World leaders in politics, business, and science are acting to address this crisis. We should join in this effort. Now is the time to act.

The General Assembly in the past few decades has called upon the church to faithfully engage these issues through education, advocacy, and individual choices. The 223rd General Assembly (2018) approved Item 08-06, “*The Earth is the Lord’s—Not Ours to Ruin*,” that expresses a call to:

“Let all of us incarnate the changes for which we long. Now is the time for congregations and for every person of faith to set a moral example through our own words and actions. As individuals and as communities, let us commit to making decisions of integrity in our energy choices, even as we commit to hold all our religious, political, corporate, and global leaders accountable to do the same” (*Minutes*, 2018, Part I, p. 712).

Now is the time to act with concrete and measurable actions as a church and as disciples.

Concurrence to Item 02-104 from the Presbytery of de Cristo.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-104

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-104—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) to approve Item 02-104.

This overture calls the church to continue long-standing General Assembly policy to care for God’s creation. Specific to this overture, *The Power to Change* (2008) should be used to examine practices for individuals and mid councils to find ways to reduce their carbon footprints. Additionally, the six agencies can review the *Collaborative Agenda for Environmental Stewardship* developed after the 220th General Assembly (2012), noting the deep concern about urgent environmental challenges expressed by many commissioners. This document is designed to call attention to ongoing efforts by the PC(USA) to confront the underlying causes of climate change, and to resources available through the six agencies to congregations, mid councils, and other mission and ministry groups wishing to join in the effort.

As a social justice witness to the world, as well as to synods, presbyteries, and congregations of the PC(USA), ACSWP urges the 224th General Assembly (2020) to encourage the six agencies of the denomination to consolidate offices where possible and convert to the use of renewable energies without delay. This would be a significant witness in Kentucky, where the power grid is still heavily coal dependent, and the payback time (of solar paneling the Presbyterian Center, for example) might be surprisingly short.

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 02-104

Presbyterian Mission Agency Comment on Item 02-104. On Reducing the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Carbon Print.

Wikipedia defines a carbon footprint as the following: “A carbon footprint is historically defined as the total greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions caused by an individual, event, organization, or product, expressed as carbon dioxide equivalent.”^[1] “Greenhouse gases, including the carbon-containing gases carbon dioxide and methane, can be emitted through the burning of fossil fuels, land clearance and the production and consumption of food, manufactured goods, materials, wood, roads, buildings, transportation and other services.”^[2]

In our 2006 General Assembly policy on becoming carbon neutral, we were encouraged to lower the fossil fuel energy we consume and then to purchase carbon offsets for any carbon emissions that couldn’t be lowered or switched to renewable power sources. For resources to lower carbon footprints, go to pcusa.org/climate. Since 2003, major portions of each of our General Assembly carbon footprint have been offset and since 2014 registrants to General Assembly have been given an opportunity to participate in purchasing carbon offsets for their flights. The national offices at 100 Witherspoon St, Louisville, KY, have been ENERGY STAR awarded in 2009, 2016, and 2019, and awarded by the local Kilowatt Crackdown Awards in 2018 and 2019. More than 250 certified Earth Care Congregations in the PC(USA) have made efforts to lower their energy consumption.

It would be difficult to ascertain what an overall decreased carbon footprint for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) would look like without having a baseline established to which to compare in another time period. Also, it is hard to define what the carbon footprint is for the whole Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) because individual/home energy use, transport/air travel energy use, church building energy use, food waste, and more could all be implicated in a broad-scale understanding of the denomination's carbon footprint. Therefore, it seems like the first recommendation could be more easily assessed and then compared if it were more specific and measurable, such as church building use.

Some wording to consider incorporating would be:

Recommendation One:

Direct PMA to create and implement a plan to survey Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) buildings in 2020 to estimate current carbon footprint of our PC(USA) buildings' energy use, and to repeat this data collection in 2024, for the purpose of reducing our PC(USA) building-use carbon footprint by 25 percent in four years.

Recommendation Two:

Call upon the PC(USA) to use the next four years to significantly reduce our overall carbon footprint by reducing our energy consumption, incorporating renewable energy, and purchasing carbon offsets.

Recommendation Three:

Call upon all church councils and agencies to examine their policies and procedures to create strategic plans to reduce dependence on fossil fuel energy in the next four years, and a process for implementing and evaluating those plans.

Item 02-105

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 303.]

On Benefit Equity Among Mid Council Executive Staff—From the Presbytery of John Calvin.

The Presbytery of John Calvin overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) to instruct the Board of Pensions to allow ruling elders serving in mid council executive staff positions the option of enrolling in the Pastor's Participation Plan of the Board of Pensions.

[Note: Definition of Mid Council Executive Staff: For purposes of this overture, mid council executive staff is defined as any ruling elder employed by a mid council of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) who, if ordained as a teaching elder/minister of the Word and Sacrament, would qualify for enrollment in the Pastor's Participation Plan of the Board of Pensions. Descriptive (not prescriptive) examples include: executive, general, pastoral, or associate presbyter; stated clerk; director or coordinator.]

Rationale

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has, both in polity and tradition, held parity between ruling elders and teaching elders/ministers of the Word and Sacrament. As a denomination, we have recognized that both ruling and teaching elders bring unique gifts to the work of ministry at all levels of church leadership. In particular, ruling elders have a long history of serving the mid councils of our denomination as executive staff.

Until recently, ruling elders serving in mid council executive staff positions were eligible to participate in what is now termed the "Pastor's Participation Plan" of the Board of Pensions. However, with the introduction of the Menu Plan in 2017, this eligibility was ended and these individuals were shifted to the Menu Plan. While the Menu Plan offers the possibility of the same coverage as the Pastor's Participation Plan, in some cases the cost of this coverage is significantly higher. In the case of one executive staff person in the Presbytery of John Calvin, the cost difference between the Menu Plan and the Pastor's Participation Plan was nearly \$20,000 per year for medical coverage alone.

In conversations between the Presbytery of John Calvin and the Board of Pensions, it was shared by the board representative that this experience is the minority experience and for many cases the Menu Plan is no more expensive than Pastor's Participation Plan. The Presbytery of John Calvin is deeply thankful that this is a minority experience; however, in conversations with other mid council leaders, we understand that we are not alone in this experience. Our hope is by allowing the option

(but not the requirement) for ruling elders in mid council executive staff positions to enroll in the Pastor's Participation Plan that we can minimize the financial impact of this minority situation.

In the latest edition of "Living by the Gospel," the Board of Pensions presents a Theology of Benefits on the first page, which states in part:

The very character of God as revealed in the Scriptures compels those who worship and serve God to "maintain justice, and do what is right." Hence, from its inception the Church has affirmed just compensation for its servants. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has repeatedly confirmed this commitment to support its servants with compensation that includes salary, benefits, vacation, and opportunities for spiritual growth and renewal. ... We call people to varied forms of service and covenant to support them so they may devote their best gifts and energies to the work of God's kingdom.

By opening the option to enroll in Pastor's Participation Plan to those ruling elders in mid council executive staff positions, we are making it possible for all mid councils to live up to the calling presented by the Board of Pensions in their Theology of Benefits, supporting all those who are called to "varied forms of service" as we "support them so they may devote their best gifts and energies to the work of God's kingdom." The current situation leaves some mid councils in the challenging position of having to choose between meeting budgetary obligations or providing benefits to ruling elders, or even worse, having to decide between the ideal individual for an executive staff position who happens to be a ruling elder or someone who might be a less-ideal fit, but who is cheaper to provide benefits for as a minister of the Word and Sacrament.

Among ministers there is "call neutrality" when it comes to the provision of benefits to make it easier for a smaller congregation to call a qualified individual. It is the hope of the Presbytery of John Calvin that we could return to the pre-2017 pattern of a similar "neutrality" for mid council executive staff to empower our smaller mid councils to call the best person for the work of ministry in their context.

Concurrences to Item 02-105 from the Presbyteries of de Cristo, Giddings-Lovejoy, Glacier, and Hudson River; and from the Synods of Lincoln Trails and of the Sun.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-105

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-105—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) to approve Item 02-105 with amendment as follows:

"The Presbytery of John Calvin overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) to instruct the Board of Pensions to allow ruling elders serving in mid-council [~~executive~~] staff positions the option of enrolling in the Pastor's Participation Plan of the Board of Pensions."

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve overture 038 with amendment. PC(USA) polity is clear on the parity between ruling elders and ministers of the Word and Sacrament. The *Book of Order*, F-1.0403, states, "There is therefore no place in the life of the Church for discrimination against any person." The cost differential between benefits plans for ruling elders versus ministers of Word and Sacrament may influence mid councils to only consider ministers for staff positions. This prevents ruling elders from employment in jobs they are well qualified for and can best share their gifts with the church.

Referring again to F-1.0403, limiting this option to executive positions discriminates against ruling elders serving in a position not considered to be executive.

BOP COMMENT ON ITEM 02-105

Board of Pensions Comment on Item 02-105. Benefit Equity Among Mid Council Executive Staff—From the Presbytery of John Calvin.

The Board of Pensions does not support the overture "On Benefit Equity Among Mid Council Executive Staff."

Eligibility for certain provisions of the Benefits Plan are reserved for ministers of the Word and Sacrament of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Employers, through the Benefits Plan, can offer certain benefits to a minister in church plans since the Internal Revenue Code defines a minister as a separate employee classification. There is no distinction for a ruling elder.

The General Assembly and the Board of Pensions operate under a Memorandum of Understanding (Structural Design for Mission, 205th General Assembly (1993), *Minutes*, Part I, 1993, p. 51) which defines the respective roles and responsibilities of each. Under the terms of this MOU, the Board of Directors of the Board of Pensions has sole responsibility for determining

the parameters and pricing of the Benefits Plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Further, recognizing that thousands of members of the Benefits Plan are not Presbyterians, this MOU states “The Board is to administer these programs for the sole and exclusive benefit of its participants and members.”

Operating under this authority, the Board created Pastor’s Participation as a specific package of benefits an employer may provide for Minister Members, including non-contributory participation in the Defined Benefit Pension Plan, Death and Disability Plan, Temporary Disability Benefits, Medical Plan eligible family PPO Benefits, the offer of participation in the Retirement Savings Plan through voluntary elective salary deferral contributions, and, on either a contributory or non-contributory basis, Dental Plan and Vision Eyewear Plan.

After seeking and hearing feedback from as many as 2,000 geographically diverse Presbyterians in 2015 and 2016, the Board voted to fundamentally change the design and pricing structure of the Plan for 2017 and beyond. A significant objective was to commercially price the Medical Plan coverage acknowledging the real cost difference between single and family coverage. Further, by allowing employers to share the cost of coverage with their employees, both employers and employees gained much more flexibility in making choices based on individual context and need. Since the 2017 Plan change, more than 4,000 new members have enrolled in the Plan, a testament to the benefits of more affordable and flexible enrollment options.

During our cross-country conversations within the Church, it also became clear to us that call neutrality and community nature, long held tenets of the Plan, were a significant part of the provision of benefits for called and installed pastors, as defined in the *Book of Order*. Designed specifically as a way for a congregation to care for their pastor, regardless of means or family status, such a plan only works when all are included, so that those who are paid more help support those who are paid less through the differential dues amounts. This overture seeks to establish Medical Plan dues as the lesser of Pastor’s Participation or the actual costs, thus seeking a subsidy where no offsetting revenue exists. It is the opposite of equality and fairness; instead it would result in special financial privilege for a select group of mid council leaders.

The Board operates the Medical Plan on a pay-as-it-goes or a breakeven basis (some years -1 percent and others +1 percent based on unpredictable claims experience). It is clearly the Board’s responsibility to set the price for the medical benefits on an annual basis such that it can continue to deliver to the Church and all its workers the first growing benefits program in a generation.

Finally, while providing ecclesiastical guidance is clearly General Assembly’s role, dictating business direction to the Board of Pensions falls outside the scope of General Assembly’s authority. Legislating through General Assembly to obtain a subsidy for one small group would be as unwise as it is unfair to thousands of other members of the Plan. The Board does not support this overture, nor can the Board implement it should it be passed.

Item 02-106

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 304.]

On Responding to the Human Needs of Those Affected by the Violence in Cameroon—From the Presbytery of Palo Duro.

The Presbytery of Palo Duro overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) to respond to the violence and civil unrest in Cameroon by doing the following:

1. Focus the attention of the PC(USA) on the Cameroon crisis, by endorsing
 - a. H. Res. 1111 (October 2, 2018), a bipartisan resolution to the U.S. House of Representatives dated October 2, 2018, calling for the Cameroonian government, armed separatist groups, and all Cameroonian citizens to “respect human rights and adopt nonviolent approaches to conflict resolution;”¹ and
 - b. the December 7, 2018, letter from ten U.S. senators to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, citing the rule of law; political instead of violent solutions; the importance of free, transparent elections; and endorsing U.S. offers to assist in mediating the conflict.²
2. Urge the United States government to encourage Cameroonians to decide on a Cameroonian peaceful solution through inclusive listening, restorative actions, and mediated dialogue.
3. Support a peaceful solution to the conflict by urging a mediated dialogue with a mediator acceptable to all sides.

4. Support the Presbyterian Mission Agency, especially the Office of Compassion, Peace and Justice and the Office of World Missions, to actively engage with international ecumenical effort to address this crisis in Cameroon.

Rationale

There is a difficult and violent conflict currently underway in Cameroon where the Francophone majority government has undermined the terms of the reunification agreement of 1961 and the Constitution of 1996, leading to resistance, a call for a return to federalism, and a push among some Anglophones for nationhood (Ambazonia). Several observers reported on the crisis, for example:

- Dionne Searcey of the *New York Times* cites violence and abuses by government and separatist forces in Cameroon that came about because of the marginalization of the Anglophone areas and people. The article asks if the UN Charter includes the right to exist of Ambazonia (the independent state called for by some Anglophone separatists).³

- Mircea Lazar of the *Washington Post* (3/25/19) notes shifts in opinions about the Cameroonian government since the Francophone crackdown and the Anglophone response. Opinions indicate some abandonment of “belief in the country’s unity” but also the need for “time and skilled inclusive leadership to mend.”⁴

- Cornelius Fontem Esua, Archbishop of Bamenda & Michael Miabesue Bibi, Auxiliary Bishop of Bamenda, in a 3/6/19 pastoral letter, positions the Cameroonian situation within a biblical foundation of sacredness and dignity of human life. The letter calls for the parties to put down arms, to refrain from communications that further exacerbate the situation, and to engage in meaningful dialogue.⁵

- Jon Lunn & Louisa Brooke-Holland 4/17/19 provides a British view in a House of Commons briefing update. They note that some Anglophones support secession, others support the restoration of Federalism, but that it is impossible to know how many supports these positions. They indicate that the Catholic Church mediation efforts have “led nowhere.” There is a need for French efforts.⁶

- In an interview on TV station Canal 2 International with U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Tibor Nagy, March 19, 2019, Mr. Nagy indicated that inclusive dialogue without preconditions is needed and that it is for Cameroonians to decide on a Cameroonian solution.⁷

As well, there has been agitation from Boko Haram with dislocations into and out of Cameroon:

- Boko Haram incursions. Alexis Arieff, 4/6/19, reports on the instability and uncertain future of Cameroon because of the crackdown on Anglophone areas and the incursions of Boko Haram into Cameroon.⁸

- Boko Haram & CAR refugees.⁹

- Nigerian and Central Africa Republic refugees are entering Cameroon.

- Cameroonian refugees fleeing to Nigeria.¹⁰

This overture originated in Covenant Presbyterian Church, Lubbock, Texas, a Congregation of concerned Presbyterians whose membership includes several Cameroonian families who are U.S. citizens. They and their relatives and friends in Cameroon are deeply affected by the conflicts and violence. For example, a West Texas Purpose Medical Mission (Covenant Hospital, University Medical Center, Grace Clinic of Lubbock) for the past four years has been unable to continue to operate the formerly successful and only English-speaking clinic.

Endnotes

1. <https://www.congress.gov/115/bills/hres/1111/BILLS-115hres1111ih.pdf>

2. <https://www.cardin.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Cameroon%20Letter%20FINAL.pdf>

3. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/28/world/Africa/cameroon-secession.html?searchResultPosition=1>

4. https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2019/03/25/camerouns-citizens-are-losing-hope-thattheir-countrv-can-remain-united/?utm_term=.9b2c628f9d84.

5. <http://180306-BoB-PLSacradnessandDignityofHumanLife.pdf>.

6. <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CB-P-8331/CBP-8331.pdf>

7. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-n3qH_SxEEI&app=desktop

8. <https://fas.org/s2p/crs/row/IN10881.pdf>
9. <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/country/cmr>
10. <http://unhcr.ng/cameroon-situation.php>

Concurrence to Item 02-106 from the Presbytery of de Cristo.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-106

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-106—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) to approve Item 02-106 with the following amendments:

“1. Focus the attention of the PC(USA) on the Cameroon crisis, by endorsing

“a. H. Res. 1111 (October 2, 2018), a bipartisan resolution to the U.S. House of Representatives dated October 2, 2018, calling for the Cameroonian government, armed separatist groups, and all Cameroonian citizens to ‘respect human rights and adopt nonviolent approaches to conflict resolution;’¹ and

“b. the December 7, 2018, letter from ten U.S. senators to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, citing the rule of law; political instead of violent solutions; the importance of free, transparent elections; and endorsing U.S. offers to assist in mediating the conflict.²

“2. Urge the United States government to encourage Cameroonians to decide on a Cameroonian peaceful solution through inclusive listening, restorative actions, and mediated dialogue. [*That solution must include Anglophone armed-separatist groups and nonviolent civil-society leaders*.ⁱ]

“3. Support a peaceful solution to the conflict by urging a mediated dialogue with a mediator acceptable to all sides.

“[4. Encourage the United States government to work with the United Nations Security Council members and the African Union towards a joint plan and make concerted efforts towards the end of the crisis in Cameroon.

“[5. Consider targeted sanctions against government leaders and senior army officers who continue to obstruct dialogue (travel bans, asset freeze) and separatists who encourage or organize violence (judicial proceedings).ⁱⁱ]

“[4.] [6.] Support the Presbyterian Mission Agency, especially the Office of Compassion, Peace and Justice and the Office of World Missions, to actively engage with international ecumenical effort to address this crisis in Cameroon.

“[7. Support the Presbyterian Mission Agency, especially the Office of Compassion, Peace and Justice, to provide humanitarian support to internally displaced people and communities affected by the Anglophone crisis.]

“[i. Bishops From all Over World ask President Biya to Participate in Peace Talks. See <https://zenit.org/articles/call-for-action-on-anglophone-crisis-in-cameroon/>.

“[ii. From “Cameroon Anglophone crisis: How to get to talks?” Report N° 272, May 2019.]”

This overture can be seen as recommending a timely application of Item 02-015, which we also endorse—encouraging the U.S. government to use non-military solutions to international conflict situations as much as possible. The overture itself pictures the situation accurately and ACSWP does not need to amplify, beyond the additions we have recommended in consultation with Cameroonians following the situation as closely as possible—news from the occupied regions is sometimes very hard to obtain. We also pray with our historic partner churches, both English and French speaking.

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 02-106

Presbyterian Mission Agency Comment on Item 02-106. On Responding to the Human Needs of Those Affected by the Violence in Cameroon.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency is grateful for the supportive words in Item 02-106. We have been very concerned about the situation in Cameroon. In addition to raising awareness, urging the United States government, supporting a peaceful solution,

and working with the international community, the assembly may wish to direct that the Presbyterian Mission Agency engage in advocacy at the United Nations on this matter, since the conflict in Cameroon is accelerated due to many international actors.

Item 02-107

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 304.]

Developing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana and the PC(USA)—From the Presbytery of New York City.

The Presbytery of New York City overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) to direct the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations (GACEIR), in partnership with the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency, to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana (EPCG). This MOU will be developed in consultation with the EPCG and presbyteries having significant members within their bounds from the EPCG. The GACEIR is directed to report back to the 225th General Assembly (2022).

Rationale

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana (EPCG) are denominations with common roots in the Reformed tradition and both share membership in the World Communion of Reformed Church and the World Council of Churches. Missionaries visited the Ewe-speaking persons in Ghana beginning in 1837. The denomination was formally organized in 1922.

The PC(USA) began sending mission personnel to West Africa and later established working relationships between the two denominations. Before and since Ghana's independence in 1957, Ghanaian Presbyterians have migrated to the United States. Among those migrating were persons who had roots in the EPCG. Moderators from the EPCG denomination have visited their diaspora congregations in the U.S.

Members of the EPCG have been welcomed into PC(USA) congregations and presbyteries in New York, Virginia, Maryland, and Illinois, among other states in the United States. Many found a need to worship in language and ethnic-specific fellowships and congregations. This allowed them to hold onto specific faith practices related to language, liturgy, and lifestyle. For Ewe-speaking persons, faith and church life extends to every aspect of their life and is a central part of their communities.

A PC(USA)-EPCG partnership can be lost when there is no PC(USA) congregation that is able to embrace the cultural and linguistic faith tradition of Ewe-speaking persons who leave for other churches outside their Presbyterian and Reformed tradition. In addition, even when PC(USA) Ewe-speaking fellowships and congregations are formed, it is often difficult to find Ewe-speaking pastors to serve and care for these members. This presents a challenge for both denominations that can find agreements in an MOU.

The EPCG desires that their diaspora members in PC(USA) congregations and presbyteries continue to be nurtured in the Reformed faith. Both the PC(USA) and EPCG desire to work cooperatively and not competitively. With an understanding of mutuality in mission, EPCG desires to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the PC(USA) and develop a process for supporting the PC(USA) in nurturing Ewe-speaking members in America.

Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana: <https://www.epcgh.org/index.php>

World Council of Churches: <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/member-churches/evangelical-presbyterian-church>

PC(USA) World Mission: <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/global/ghana/>

PC(USA) Ghana Mission Network flyer: <https://s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/pbylakeerie/Newsletters/eNews+Flyers/2018/Ghana+Mission+Network+Brochure+2018.pdf>

Concurrence to Item 02-107 from the Presbytery of de Cristo.

Item 02-108

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 303.]

On Instructing the Office of the General Assembly to Create an Appendix to Church Discipline That Details the Process of Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Misconduct—From the Rules of Discipline Task Force.

The Rules of Discipline Task Force recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) instruct the Office of the General Assembly to create an appendix to Church Discipline that details the process of dealing with allegations of sexual misconduct. The appendix should reflect the need for particular sensitivity to needs, rights for safety, dignity, and privacy of all involved in accordance with the purpose of church discipline as defined in D-1.0301 of Church Discipline.

Rationale

Through the course of its consultations across the church, the Rules of Discipline Task Force has heard from persons who have been harmed by sexual misconduct and those who advocate on their behalf. The task force has become aware that there are particular needs, including clear definition of rights and pastoral sensitivity in dealing with accusers and those alleged to have been harmed as well as those accused, in the process of dealing with sexual misconduct allegations. In several instances, the task force has attempted to provide that clarity in the fourth section of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) as revised. It has become clear, however, that a general set of rules for disciplinary process cannot fully address these particular needs in cases of sexual allegations while at the same time providing the clarity needed for dealing with all other disciplinary cases. For these reasons, the task force recommends an appendix for guidance to all involved in the particular needs for clarity, for pastoral sensitivity regarding safety, and for confidentiality in the sharing of information in allegations of sexual misconduct.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 02-108

Advisory Committee on the Constitution Advice on Item 02-108. On Instructing the Office of the General Assembly to Create an Appendix to Church Discipline That Details the Process of Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Misconduct

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) to approve with amendment Item 02-108.

The recommendation of the Rules of Discipline Task Force to the 224th General Assembly (2020) is to instruct the Office of General Assembly to create an appendix to Church Discipline that details the process of dealing with allegations of sexual misconduct and should include particular sensitivity to the needs, rights for safety, dignity, and privacy of all involved.

The use of the term “appendix” implies the document is part of the *Book of Order*. “Resource guide” does not carry such implications. If created, any resource guide would not be part of the *Book of Order* and would not have the force and status of the *Book of Order*. Care should be taken to avoid any conflict or inconsistency between the Rules of Discipline and the proposed resource guide. Once completed, the resource guide may be listed in Appendix D to the *Book of Order*.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) to amend the recommendation of the Rules of Discipline Task Force as follows:

“... instruct the Office of the General Assembly to create [~~an appendix~~] [*a resource guide*] [~~to Church Discipline that details~~] [*for*] the process of dealing with allegations of sexual misconduct. The [~~appendix~~] [*resource guide*] should reflect the need for particular sensitivity to needs, rights for safety, dignity, and privacy of all involved in accordance with the purpose of church discipline as defined in D-1.0301 of Church Discipline.”

ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-108

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-108—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 02-108.

As the makers of the original resolution [Item 05-09 from the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to Ensure Adoption and Implementation of Child/Youth Protection Policies and Resources in the PC(USA)] and the resolution [Item 11-09 from the 223rd General Assembly (2018) on Sexual Misconduct in the PC(USA)], the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns has long been on the forefront of advocating for policy changes that will prevent sexual abuse within the PC(USA).

Because all sexual abuse is an abuse of power, certain populations—such as children and youth, and developmentally disabled adults—are more vulnerable to abuse and are often the targets of sexual misconduct within the church. To the extent that the church of Jesus Christ is grounded in white supremacy and patriarchy, it also creates situations that leave women vulnerable to sexual misconduct from clergy as well as from male members of their congregations.

Work within the PC(USA) on justice for and healing of victims, secondary victims, and congregations remains incomplete. The PC(USA) has a responsibility to support those affected by sexual misconduct with the trauma-informed pastoral accompaniment and trauma-informed resources that are could be made available through this appendix. For healing to occur, this appendix is needed to provide guidance for responding to allegations of sexual misconduct with pastoral sensitivity. To this end, it is also essential that the work of the Survivors of Sexual Misconduct Task Force be extended so they can report back to the 225th General Assembly (2022) on the development of these resources.

Item 02-109

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 302.]

On Amending D-7.0201 and D-7.1501 of the Revision to the Rules of Discipline to Remove Time Limits for Filing Allegations in All Disciplinary Cases—From the Rules of Discipline Task Force.

The Rules of Discipline Task Force recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendments to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

[If approved by the General Assembly and adopted by the presbyteries, this would apply to cases where allegations are filed following June 27, 2021. This action would change D-7.0201 and D-7.1501 of the revision to the Rules of Discipline, which the task force is also recommending.]

1. Shall D-7.0201 of the proposed Church Discipline be stricken as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through.]

“D-7.0201 Allegation

“For filing an allegation in a disciplinary matter, the following applies:

a. Time Limit

~~“No written allegation shall be filed later than five years from the time the alleged offense was committed except in cases of sexual abuse of another person as defined in D 7.0901, in which case the five year time limit shall not apply. There is also no time limit to file an allegation that a person who knew or reasonably should have known of the reasonable risk of sexual abuse of another as defined in D 7.0901 failed to take reasonable steps to minimize the risk.”~~

Sections “b.” through “f.” shall be re-alphabetized as “a.” through “e.”.

2. Shall D-7.1501 amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“D-7.1501 Time Limits for Filing Charges

“Once a written allegation has been submitted, no charges shall be filed later than one year from the date of the investigating committee’s first meeting, except as noted below.

“a. In those instances where civil proceedings have commenced, the investigating committee may request of its session or permanent judicial commission and may receive an extension of its time for filing charges of up to six months from the conclusion of any investigation or resulting trial undertaken by the civil authorities. The clerk of session or stated clerk of the council shall maintain contact with civil authorities to determine when such civil proceedings have concluded.

~~“b. For instances of sexual abuse of another person as defined in D 7.0901 the five year time limit for filing an allegation shall not apply. There is also no time limit for alleging that a person who knew or reasonably should have known of the reasonable risk of sexual abuse of another as defined in D 7.0901 failed to take reasonable steps to minimize the risk. Charges in these instances may be brought regardless of the date on which an offense is alleged to have occurred.~~

“~~c.~~ *b.* For instances where a former minister of the Word and Sacrament who renounced jurisdiction while being accused in a disciplinary case rejoins the church, ~~no time limit from the time of the commission of the alleged offense to the filing of charges shall apply.~~ *C* charges based on all accusations that had been made by the time that the former minister of the Word and Sacrament had renounced jurisdiction may be brought ~~regardless of the date on which any such offense is alleged to have occurred.~~”

Rationale

As we consulted across the church regarding changes to the Rules of Discipline, the task force came to see that the church is divided over whether there should be time limits for bringing allegations in all disciplinary matters. The power vested in Christ's church in discipline is a dispensation of mercy that all children of God may be presented faultless in the day of Christ (current *Book of Order*, D-1.0102).

On the one hand, people and congregations damaged by betrayal of trust experience frustration when they find that the time limit for filing allegations has passed. In some instances of betrayal of trust, it takes years for the betrayal to become known, such as for embezzlement. In such cases, congregations can move on only after justice has been served.

However, the requirement to deal with disciplinary matters in a manner that is just, timely, and economical argues for time limits for filing allegations. Years after a betrayal of trust it may not be possible to find evidence or witnesses to pursue the matter and achieve justice through disciplinary process.

Currently, the Rules of Discipline provide that there is no time limit (other than the one-year time limit for investigations) for filing charges of sexual abuse or of failing to minimize the risk of sexual abuse. All other offenses bear a time limit of five years. The Rules of Discipline Task Force (the task force) recommends that this five-year limit also be removed prospectively—that is for all offenses that occur after the effective date of this amendment, June 27, 2021. Recognizing the division in the church regarding time limits, the task force presents this recommendation separately for the General Assembly and the presbyteries' consideration.

Nothing in this recommendation changes the requirement that charges must be filed within a year of an investigating committee's first meeting nor the duty of an investigating committee to determine "whether the offense alleged can be proved" (proposed Church Discipline, D-7.1003d; *c.f.* *Book of Order*, D-10.0202i).

The task force believes that the current practice of exempting the one narrowly defined offense of sexual abuse while all other offenses have a strict five-year limit has sometimes resulted in broken trust and deep, unresolved hurt. The 223rd General Assembly (2018) responded to one such situation when it amended the Rules of Discipline to remove all time limits from a second, narrowly defined offense of failing to minimize the risk of sexual abuse. It appears to the task force that it is a wiser decision to remove the five-year limit altogether rather than amending Church Discipline year by year as difficult situations arise.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 02-109*Advisory Committee on the Constitution Advice on Item 02-109.*

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) that Item 02-109 be disapproved.

The removal of the five-year limitation of time to file an accusation except in cases of sexual abuse presents substantial issues of fairness, justice, and lack of due process. While the Advisory Committee on the Constitution recognizes the intention to preserve the possibility for reconciliation and restoration regardless of the passage of time, the proposed amendment represents a noble view of the church discipline process that does not necessarily reflect its practical application in councils. Indeed, the proposed language creates a greater likelihood for potential abuse of the disciplinary process by those with maleficent intent.

As the rationale in support of the recommendation recognizes:

the requirement to deal with disciplinary matters in a manner that is just, timely, and economical argues for time limits for filing allegations. Years after a betrayal of trust it may not be possible to find evidence or witnesses to pursue the matter and achieve justice through disciplinary process.

The accused's rights to due process and fundamental fairness also are extremely likely to be negatively impacted by the complete elimination of time limits for filing accusations. With the passage of time, witnesses may become unavailable, memories may fade, and potentially exculpatory evidence may be lost, destroyed, or no longer exist in a format fully accessible with current technology.

If the assembly determines that the five-year limitation for filing an accusation should be removed, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that it should limit the application of this rule, except in cases of sexual abuse, to offenses alleged to have occurred after June 27, 2016, to preserve some measure of fundamental fairness and due process for the accused.

ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-109

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-109—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 02-109.

As the makers of the original resolution [Item 05-09 from the 222nd General Assembly (2016)] to Ensure Adoption and Implementation of Child/Youth Protection Policies and Resources in the PC(USA) and the resolution [Item 11-09 from the 223rd General Assembly (2018)] on Sexual Misconduct in the PC(USA), the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns has long been on the forefront of advocating for policy changes that will prevent sexual abuse within the PC(USA).

Because all sexual abuse is an abuse of power, certain populations—including children and youth, and developmentally disabled adults—are more vulnerable to abuse and are often the targets of sexual misconduct within the church. To the extent that the church of Jesus Christ is grounded in white supremacy and patriarchy, it creates situations that also leaves women vulnerable to sexual misconduct from clergy as well as from male members of their congregations.

Powerful offenders are able to intimidate victims into a silence so strong that it can incapacitate them to the extent that they are unable to file accusations until later in life. As a result, a strict five-year limit for filing allegations of sexual misconduct has too often led to broken trust, unresolved hurt, and a failure of justice.

ACWC therefore concurs with the Rules of Discipline Task Force recommendation to revise the Rules of Discipline by removing time limits for filing allegations in all disciplinary cases. It is of important for the 224th General Assembly (2020) to approve the removal of time limits to protect the vulnerable. ACWC is particularly appreciative that the Rules of Discipline Task Force worked cooperatively with ACWC for input on these important policy changes.

Item 02-110

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 302.]

On Replacing the Current Rules of Discipline Section with a New Church Discipline Section—From the Rules of Discipline Task Force.

The Rules of Discipline Task Force recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall the current Rules of Discipline section be deleted and a Church Discipline section be inserted in its place. The new Church Discipline section shall read as follows:

CHURCH DISCIPLINE

CHAPTER I PRINCIPLES OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE

PREAMBLE

D-1.01 Power Vested in Christ’s Church

The power that Jesus Christ has vested in his Church, a power manifested in the exercise of church discipline, is one for building up the body of Christ, not for destroying it, for redeeming, not for punishing. It should be exercised as a dispensation of mercy and not of wrath, so that the great ends of the Church may be achieved, that all children of God may be presented faultless in the day of Christ.

D-1.02 Church Discipline Defined

D-1.0201 Church Discipline Defined

Church discipline is the church’s exercise of authority given by Christ, both to guide, control, and nurture its members, and for the constructive criticism of offenders. The church’s judicial process does not exist as a substitute for the secular judicial system, but to do what the secular judicial system cannot do. The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is infused with principles and standards to which all active members voluntarily submit.

D-1.0202 Limits of Church Discipline

Church discipline alone is not adequate to mediate intrinsic differences of theology, polity, policy, power, or trust. Broader issues of conflict are also addressed by constitutional amendment, mediation, administrative review, and administrative commissions. Church discipline through the judicial process shall be used when individuals or councils of the church are unable to bring about settlement of issues or when such settlement would be unwise, unjust, or ineffective, and have determined after prayerful deliberation that judicial process is necessary to ensure that individuals or councils are held accountable for their actions or inactions.

D-1.03 Purpose of Church Discipline*D-1.0301 Purpose of Church Discipline*

Thus, the purpose of church discipline is:

- to honor God by making clear the significance of membership in the body of Christ;
- to preserve the purity of the church by nourishing the individual within the life of the believing community;
- to achieve justice and compassion for all participants involved;
- to correct or restrain wrongdoing in order to bring members to repentance and restoration;
- to uphold the dignity of those who have been harmed by offenses;
- to restore the unity of the church by removing the causes of discord and division; and
- to secure the just, speedy, and economical determination of proceedings.

D-1.0302 Due Process

In all respects, participants are to be accorded procedural safeguards and due process consistent with these Principles of Church Discipline.

D-1.04 Conciliate and Mediate

The traditional biblical obligation to conciliate, mediate, and adjust differences without strife is not diminished by church discipline. Although these rules describe the way in which judicial process within the church shall be conducted, it is not their intent or purpose to encourage judicial process or to make it more expensive or difficult. Those contemplating the use of judicial process shall recall the biblical duty to “come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are on the way to court . . .” (Matthew 5:25). They shall attempt prayerfully and seriously to bring about an adjustment or settlement of the issue asserted and avoid formal proceedings under judicial process unless after prayerful deliberation, it is determined to be necessary to preserve the peace, unity, and purity, or accomplish the purposes of the church. Nor shall this duty to consider other forms of resolution end upon the commencement of judicial process.

CHAPTER II JUDICIAL PROCESS DEFINED

D-2.01 Judicial Process*D-2.0101 Processes of Accountability*

Church discipline in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is accomplished through judicial processes of accountability. Accountability of councils is accomplished through remedial process. Accountability of individuals is accomplished through disciplinary process.

D-2.0102 Councils of the Church

The councils of the church are sessions, presbyteries, synods, and the General Assembly. Sessions conduct trials of church members in disciplinary processes. Presbyteries, synods, and the General Assembly conduct trials and appeals of both remedial and disciplinary processes through permanent judicial commissions.

D-2.02 Remedial Process*D-2.0201 Accountability of Councils*

Remediation is the process by which councils are held accountable to the church, to their members, and to each other. Through remediation, actions or omissions contrary to the Constitution by a lower council or an entity of the General Assembly may be corrected by a higher council.

D-2.0202 Irregularities and Delinquencies

As defined in D-4.0201, actions contrary to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) are known as “irregularities,” while omissions contrary to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) are known as “delinquencies.”

D-2.03 Disciplinary Process*D-2.0301 Accountability of Individuals*

Disciplinary process is the process by which members of congregations and ministers of the Word and Sacrament are held accountable to the church and to each other, and may be censured for an offense for the purpose of restoring the wholeness of the body of Christ.

D-2.0302 Definition of an Offense

An offense as defined in D-7.0103 is any act or omission by a member of a congregation or a minister of the Word and Sacrament that is contrary to the Scriptures or the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

D-2.04 Standards and Process

Standards and procedures used in judicial processes are those contained in the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its parliamentary authority, in accordance with G-3.0105.

**CHAPTER III
PERMANENT JUDICIAL COMMISSIONS**

D-3.01 Election*D-3.0101 Composition*

The General Assembly, each synod or set of cooperating synods, and each presbytery shall elect a permanent judicial commission from the ministers of the Word and Sacrament and ruling elders subject to its jurisdiction. Each permanent judicial commission shall be composed of ministers of the Word and Sacrament and ruling elders in numbers as nearly equal as possible, nominated in accordance with the principles for the election of a nominating entity required by G-3.0111 and in conformity to the church’s commitment to unity in diversity (F-1.0403). When the permanent judicial commission consists of an odd number of members, the additional member may be either a minister of the Word and Sacrament or a ruling elder.

- a. The General Assembly commission shall be composed of one member from each of its constituent synods.
- b. Synod commissions shall be composed of no fewer than eleven members distributed equally, insofar as possible, among the constituent presbyteries. In those synods with fewer than eleven presbyteries, each presbytery shall have at least one member. When a set of two or more synods form a shared permanent judicial commission, the commission shall be composed of no fewer than twelve members, with each synod in the set electing members proportional to the number of the presbyteries in each synod, insofar as possible. The cooperating synods shall designate between them one stated clerk to process the cases filed with the shared permanent judicial commission.
- c. Presbytery commissions shall be composed of no fewer than seven members, with no more than one of its ruling elder members from any one of its constituent congregations.

D-3.0102 Reviewers and Effect on Quorum

The stated clerk shall designate a special committee of three persons to review any petition for review of the procedures of the investigating committee while the investigation in a disciplinary case is in process (D-7.11), to review any petition for

review of the decision not to file charges (D-7.1402), and to determine the need for administrative leave (D-7.0902). The special committee shall be composed of at least one current member of the permanent judicial commission, and may include up to two former members of the permanent judicial commission from the list of former commissioners required by D-3.0602b. The members of the special committee shall not take part in any subsequent trial. When a case proceeds to trial after a review, the quorum of the permanent judicial commission shall be a majority of its members who did not participate in the review, but in no case shall a quorum be fewer than five members (D-3.0602). A session shall refer any petition for review to the presbytery stated clerk, who shall follow this process for the creation of a special committee.

D-3.02 Service

D-3.0201 Classes and Terms

Permanent judicial commissions shall be arranged in three classes of six years each, with each class as equal as possible in size and with one class completing its term every two years.

D-3.0202 Vacancies

Vacancies on permanent judicial commissions shall be addressed as follows:

a. A vacancy on any permanent judicial commission due to resignation, death, or any other cause may be filled by the electing council, which may elect a person to fill the unexpired term at any future meeting.

b. In each even-numbered year, the General Assembly shall elect members for the next class of the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission and fill any vacancies then occurring. Such members' terms of office will begin with the dissolution of the General Assembly at which they are elected.

D-3.0203 Eligibility

Eligibility for service on a permanent judicial commission is subject to the following additional conditions:

a. In filling vacancies for unexpired terms, a member who has served more than half a term is considered to have served a full term, and is ineligible for immediate re-election.

b. No person who has served on a permanent judicial commission for a full term shall be eligible for reelection until two years have elapsed after the expired six-year term. No person shall serve on more than one permanent judicial commission at the same time. No person who is a member of any other entity elected by the General Assembly shall serve on the permanent judicial commission of the General Assembly until that person shall have resigned such membership. The moderator, stated clerk, or any member of the staff of a council or the staff of any of its entities shall not serve on its permanent judicial commission.

c. Continuing membership on a presbytery permanent judicial commission is dependent on membership in a congregation of the presbytery or in the presbytery.

d. Continuing membership on a synod permanent judicial commission is contingent on the synod's rules of representation, but may not include any person not a member of a congregation or presbytery of the synod.

e. Continuing membership on the General Assembly permanent judicial commission shall end when that member transfers membership to a church or presbytery outside the synod from which nominated.

D-3.03 Commission Expenses

All necessary expenses of a permanent judicial commission shall be paid by the electing council or councils. A set of cooperating synods shall pay the necessary expenses of its shared permanent judicial commission equally; however, each synod in such a set shall pay the necessary expenses for processing a particular judicial case arising within its bounds.

D-3.04 Officers

Each permanent judicial commission shall meet and elect from its members a moderator and a clerk, according to its rules or the rules of the council or councils electing its members. A permanent judicial commission may also provide by rule for additional officers.

D-3.05 Powers

In the cases transmitted to it, the permanent judicial commission shall have only the powers prescribed by the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and shall conduct its proceedings accordingly.

D-3.06 Meetings*D-3.0601 Times and Places*

The meetings of the permanent judicial commission shall be held at such times and places as the electing council or councils shall direct, or, if no directions are given, at such times and places as the commission shall determine.

D-3.0602 Quorum

The quorum of a permanent judicial commission shall be a majority of its members, except that the quorum of a presbytery commission for a disciplinary case shall be a majority of the membership other than those currently serving members assigned responsibilities under D-3.0102. In no instance shall the quorum be fewer than five members. The quorum of a session for judicial process shall be the moderator of the session and a majority of the ruling elder members.

a. Who Shall Not Participate

When a church is a party to a case, members of a permanent judicial commission who are members of that church or persons in permanent or temporary pastoral relationships with that church shall not participate in the case in any way. When a council is a party to a case, members of that council or of churches within that council shall not participate in the case in any way. Members designated under D-3.0102 shall not otherwise participate in the case.

b. Roster of Former Members

The stated clerk shall keep a current roster of those members of the permanent judicial commission whose terms have expired within the past six years. The names shall be arranged alphabetically within classes beginning with the most recent class. The stated clerk shall report the roster annually to the council or councils.

c. Ensuring a Quorum

Whenever a permanent judicial commission is required to meet for a hearing or trial, the stated clerk shall recruit a sufficient number of additional members by rotation from the roster of former members to ensure that a quorum will not be lost during the course of the proceeding. Councils may provide by rule for the method of rotation to incorporate the principles of participation and representation in accordance with G-3.0111 and F-1.0403.

d. Inability to Reach a Quorum

If, through absence, disqualification, or recusal, a sufficient number of members of a permanent judicial commission is not present to constitute a quorum, the permanent judicial commission shall recess until such time as a quorum can be ensured as stated above.

e. Participant Expenses

If a permanent judicial commission is unable to try a case for lack of a quorum, the council in whose geographic boundary the case arose shall reimburse the expenses reasonably incurred by those persons required to be present.

CHAPTER IV REMEDATION

D-4.01 Remedial Process*D-4.0101 Purpose*

The purpose of remediation is to further the peace, unity, and purity of the church by ensuring that the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is upheld, and that disputes regarding its requirements are addressed in a manner that is both fair and just to all concerned.

D-4.0102 Limitations of Judicial Process

While a remedial complaint may be filed *by* individuals, it can never be filed *against* individuals. Nor may a remedial complaint be filed against a congregation or a committee or commission of a council below the General Assembly. A session is responsible for correcting constitutional errors or omissions by its congregation in accordance with G-3.0201. As explained below, complaints may only be filed against sessions, presbyteries, synods, and entities of the General Assembly, and only by one or more individuals or councils of the church who have standing to complain.

*D-4.0103 Deadlines and Filings**a. Deadlines*

In determining whether or not a document is timely filed, the day following the event giving rise to the time limit begins the count as day one (for example, the day following the date on which a council action is taken, or on which a party receives a decision). All seven days of every week are included in the count, including holidays, and the document shall be deemed timely filed if it is received by the person or persons to whom it is required to be sent on or before the final day of the count. When the final date of the count falls on a weekend or holiday, the document shall be deemed timely filed if it is received on the next business day after the final day of the count.

b. Methods of Filing

Any document required to be filed may be sent or delivered by United States Postal Service certified mail, return receipt requested; commercial courier, with delivery receipt requested; personal delivery; or electronically when so permitted in these rules.

D-4.02 Filing a Complaint*D-4.0201 Initiation*

Remedial process is initiated by the filing of a complaint with the stated clerk of the council having jurisdiction. A complaint shall allege one or more specific irregularities or delinquencies of a council.

- a. A decision or action contrary to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is known as an irregularity.
- b. The omission or failure to act on a constitutional requirement is known as a delinquency.

D-4.0202 Stated Clerk Responsibility

The stated clerk shall immediately transmit copies of the complaint to the party against whom the complaint is filed and to the officers of the council's permanent judicial commission. If a different clerk has been designated to process judicial cases for a shared judicial commission, the stated clerk having jurisdiction shall immediately transmit the complaint to that clerk.

D-4.0203 Parties

The parties in a case of remedial process are known as the complainant or complainants (the person or persons who file the complaint) and the respondent (the council complained against).

*D-4.0204 Committees of Counsel**a. Composition*

When a council or an entity of the General Assembly becomes either a complainant or a respondent, it shall designate no more than three persons to be a committee of counsel. This committee shall represent that complainant or respondent in the case until final decision is reached in the highest council to which the case is appealed. All members of a committee of counsel shall be members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

b. Provide by Rule

A council or an entity of the General Assembly may provide by rule for the appointment of a committee of counsel. The membership of the committee of counsel, as well as any changes to its composition that may occur, shall be promptly reported to the stated clerk of the council having jurisdiction, who will notify the other party and the permanent judicial commission.

c. Who Shall Not Serve

Clerks of session or stated clerks shall not serve on a committee of counsel for the council they serve. Employees of the council hearing a case or of a higher council that would have jurisdiction in any appellate proceeding shall also not serve on a committee of counsel.

D-4.0205 Time Limits

In regard to filing a complaint in a remedial case, the following time limits apply:

a. In the case of an alleged irregularity, if a stay of enforcement is also sought, (as described below in section 4.04), then a complaint of an alleged irregularity shall be filed no later than thirty (30) days after the council's action being complained against (or in the case of an appeal, from the date on which the appealing party was notified of the decision of the permanent judicial commission). If no stay of enforcement is being requested, then a complaint of an alleged irregularity shall be filed no later than ninety (90) days after the council's action.

b. In the case of an alleged delinquency, a complaint shall be filed no later than ninety (90) days after the failure or refusal of the council to cure the alleged delinquency at its next meeting, provided that a written request to do so has been made prior to said meeting.

D-4.0206 Standing and Jurisdiction in Remedial Cases

Standing to file a complaint and jurisdiction to deal with a complaint are as follows:

a. Councils may file complaints against any other council of the same level, to the council immediately higher than the council complained against and to whose jurisdiction the latter council is subject.

b. Members of a congregation may file complaints against their session, to the presbytery.

c. Ruling elder commissioners to a presbytery may file complaints to the synod alleging irregularities or delinquencies that occurred during presbytery meetings at which they were present and enrolled.

d. Minister members of a presbytery and ruling elders elected by and enrolled with the presbytery for terms of service in accordance with G-3.0301 may file complaints against the presbytery to the synod regardless of whether or not they were in attendance when the alleged irregularity or delinquency occurred.

e. Sessions may file complaints against their presbytery, to their synod.

f. Commissioners to a synod may file complaints to the General Assembly alleging irregularities or delinquencies that occurred during synod meetings at which they were present and enrolled.

g. Ministers and ruling elders elected by and enrolled with the synod for terms of service in accordance with G-3.0401 may file complaints against the synod to the General Assembly regardless of whether or not they were in attendance when the alleged irregularity or delinquency occurred.

h. Presbyteries may file complaints against their synod, to the General Assembly.

i. Sessions, presbyteries, and synods may file complaints against entities of the General Assembly, to the General Assembly.

j. When the council of jurisdiction as defined in this section fails to act in a particular remedial case for a period of sixty days after the filing of a complaint or thirty days after the filing of a complaint with a request for a stay of enforcement, the next higher council, at the written request of any party, may assume jurisdiction in the case. It may then either return jurisdiction to the lower council with specific instructions on how to proceed, or it may retain jurisdiction and conclude the matter itself.

D-4.0207 Effects of Jurisdiction

Jurisdiction in remedial process has the following particular effects:

a. Each council shall recognize and enforce the judgments, decisions, and orders of higher councils which have jurisdiction over them under the provisions of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

b. Decisions of the permanent judicial commissions of synods and presbyteries are binding on the parties to the particular cases in which the decisions are rendered unless overturned on appeal. No synod or presbytery permanent judicial commission is able to make its decisions binding beyond the parties to the particular case by simply declaring it to be so.

c. Only the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission has the power to render decisions that are authoritative interpretations binding on the entire church (G-13.0103r).

D-4.03 Contents of a Complaint

D-4.0301 Items to be Included

Items to be included in a complaint are as follows:

- a. The name of the complainant(s) and the name of the respondent.
- b. The particular irregularity including the date, place, and circumstances thereof; or the particular delinquency including the dates of the written request to cure the delinquency and of the next meeting at which the respondent failed to do so.
- c. The reasons for complaint of the irregularity or delinquency.
- d. A statement of facts demonstrating that the complainant(s) may file the complaint in accordance with D-4.0206 above.
- e. The remedy or correction requested (called “relief”), which must be within the authority of the council receiving the complaint to grant.

D-4.0302 Method of Filing

The complaint shall be sent or delivered by United States Postal Service certified mail, return receipt requested; commercial courier, with delivery receipt requested; or personal delivery in accordance with D-4.0103b. The complainant(s) shall then file with the stated clerk a receipt signed by the addressee or an affidavit of personal service. At the written agreement of both parties, all further communication may be handled electronically.

D-4.04 Request for a Stay of Enforcement

D-4.0401 Requesting a Stay of Enforcement

A stay of enforcement is a written instruction from the permanent judicial commission having jurisdiction that orders suspension of a decision or an action until a complaint (or appeal) is finally determined. Any such request for a stay of enforcement shall be filed along with the complaint (or notice of appeal) as described above. The request must be made in one of the following forms:

- a. A request signed by one-third of the members recorded as present when the decision or action was taken by the council,
- b. A request signed by one-third of the members of the permanent judicial commission that decided a remedial case that is being appealed, or
- c. A request signed by a complainant or appellant requesting that at least three members of the permanent judicial commission having jurisdiction to hear the complaint or appeal sign the stay of enforcement.

D-4.05 Preliminary Ruling

D-4.0501 Examination of Papers

The complaint (or appeal for purposes of processing a request for a stay of enforcement on appeal) shall be promptly transmitted by the stated clerk along with the request for a stay of enforcement, if one has been received, to the permanent judicial commission moderator and clerk for their preliminary determination as to the following questions:

a. For the complaint, whether:

- (1) the council has jurisdiction,
- (2) one or more of the complainants has standing to file the case,
- (3) the complaint was timely filed,
- (4) the complaint alleges facts that if proved true would constitute an irregularity or delinquency, and

(5) the complaint states a claim upon which relief can be granted. Permanent judicial commissions may, but shall not be required, to proceed to trial when they determine that the relief requested cannot be granted but that there is potential relief, declaratory or otherwise, that could potentially be granted. Relief that a council may not grant includes but is not limited to:

- i. relief that is not within the authority of the council to grant,
- ii. monetary awards other than those that require councils to honor existing contracts,
- iii. relief that has been rendered moot,
- iv. relief that is contrary to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

b. For the request for a stay of enforcement if made under D-4.0401a or b, whether the request is complete and timely.

D-4.0502 Preliminary Ruling

A preliminary ruling is a decision by the moderator and clerk of a permanent judicial commission either to accept a case for trial or to dismiss the case because one or more of the five questions in D-4.0501a is answered in the negative.

a. If a request for a stay of enforcement is made under D-4.0401a or b, a stay of enforcement may be entered immediately by the moderator and clerk if they determine that the request is complete and timely and the preliminary issues are met for the complaint or appeal.

b. In their consideration of the preliminary questions in D-4.0501a, the officers shall assume the truth of the facts alleged.

c. Within ten (10) days after their receipt of the complaint, the officers shall report their determinations to the stated clerk of the council in a preliminary ruling. The stated clerk shall immediately distribute the preliminary ruling to the parties, and to the members of the permanent judicial commission along with the complaint (or appeal, for purposes of processing a request for a stay of enforcement on appeal) and the request for a stay of enforcement, if one has been received.

D-4.06 Processing a Request for a Stay of Enforcement If Made Under D-4.0401c.

D-4.0601 Consideration of Request

If a request for a stay of enforcement is made under D-4.0401c, a stay of enforcement may be entered by three members of the permanent judicial commission that will hear the case within ten (10) days of receiving the request, the complaint (or in an appeal, of the notice of appeal), and the preliminary ruling. Each permanent judicial commission member affirming the request shall include a summary of the specific council action(s) or decision(s) being stayed, and a statement that in their judgment:

- a. substantial harm will occur if the action or decision is not stayed, and
- b. probable grounds exist for finding the decision or action erroneous.

D-4.0602 Determination and Filings

In determining whether to grant a stay of enforcement, the following applies:

a. The statements of members of the permanent judicial commission shall be filed with the stated clerk of the council that has jurisdiction to hear the case.

b. If the stated clerk receives three or more statements from members of the permanent judicial commission, the stay shall be granted, and the stated clerk shall send a copy of the stay of enforcement to the parties and to the permanent judicial commission members.

c. The stay of enforcement shall be effective until the permanent judicial commission having jurisdiction has decided the case, except as hereafter provided.

d. If a stay of enforcement is not granted, the stated clerk shall so notify the parties and the permanent judicial commission members.

D-4.07 Response and Next Actions

D-4.0701 If the Preliminary Ruling Accepts the Case

If the officers initially accept the case, the respondent council shall prepare and file its answer as described in D-4.0703 below. When the answer has been received, the officers shall review the answer and may either affirm their preliminary ruling as filed or modify it in light of the new information received. The affirmed or modified preliminary ruling shall then be filed with the stated clerk who shall distribute it to the parties and the permanent judicial commission members, and the answer shall also be distributed to the permanent judicial commission.

a. If the preliminary ruling to accept the case is affirmed, the respondent or a member of the permanent judicial commission may challenge the determination within fifteen (15) days of receiving the notification, in which case the matter proceeds as described in D-4.0704 below.

b. If the modified preliminary ruling dismisses the case, then the case proceeds as described in D-4.0702 below.

D-4.0702 If the Initial or Modified Preliminary Ruling Dismisses the Case

In dealing with a preliminary ruling that dismisses the case, the following applies:

a. Within fifteen (15) days of notification that the officers have dismissed the case, one or more of the complainants or a member of the permanent judicial commission may file a challenge to the dismissal, in which case the respondent, if it has not already done so, shall prepare and file its answer as described in D-4.0703 below, which shall be distributed to the permanent judicial commission, and the challenge shall be processed in accordance with D-4.0704 below.

b. If no challenge is received within fifteen (15) days, the case is dismissed and any stay of enforcement is lifted.

D-4.0703 Answer to Complaint

The committee of counsel of the respondent shall file with the stated clerk of the higher council a concise answer within thirty (30) days of its notification of either acceptance of the case by the officers of the permanent judicial commission or receipt of a challenge to the officers' dismissal of the case. The answer shall admit those facts alleged in the complaint that are true, deny those that are not true or are mistakenly stated, and present other facts that may explain the situation identified as an irregularity or delinquency.

a. The answer may also raise any issues related to the determinations contained in D-4.0501a and may include a motion to dismiss the complaint.

b. If a stay of enforcement has been entered, the respondent's answer may also challenge the stay of enforcement, in which case the matter shall proceed as described in D-4.0704.

c. The stated clerk shall distribute the answer to the complainant(s) and to the permanent judicial commission.

D-4.0704 Challenge to Preliminary Ruling and Stay of Enforcement

If a preliminary ruling or a stay of enforcement is challenged under the provisions of this chapter, opportunity shall be provided to present evidence and argument on the determination(s) in question, or on the stay of enforcement. The parties shall be invited to submit briefs, and may agree to allow the permanent judicial commission to decide the matter on the basis of those briefs in place of a hearing. The permanent judicial commission shall then enter a final ruling on the matter either dismissing the case or accepting it for trial, and either affirming or lifting the stay of enforcement, if one has been entered.

CHAPTER V
TRIAL IN A REMEDIAL CASE

D-5.01 Pretrial Procedures

D-5.0101 Duties of Respondent Stated Clerk

In pretrial procedures, the duties of the respondent stated clerk are as follows:

a. Within forty-five (45) days after the receipt of a complaint, the clerk of session or stated clerk of the respondent council shall list in writing to the parties all of the papers and other materials pertaining to the case.

b. Within thirty (30) days thereafter, the complainant may request in writing that the respondent clerk file additional minutes or papers pertaining to the case. Questions as to the relevance or reasonableness of requests shall be decided by the officers of the permanent judicial commission or their designees.

c. Upon notification by the stated clerk of the higher council of jurisdiction that the case has been accepted, the clerk of session or stated clerk of the respondent council shall transmit to the stated clerk of the higher council without delay the minutes and papers pertaining to the case, along with the list of the record.

D-5.0102 Record of the Case

When the minutes and papers have been filed with the stated clerk of the higher council, the stated clerk shall organize and transmit them to the parties and to the permanent judicial commission and give notice to the parties of an estimated date for trial.

D-5.0103 Additional Filings

The permanent judicial commission may require the parties to file statements, also known as briefs, outlining the evidence to be offered at trial and the theories of the parties' respective claims and defenses.

D-5.0104 Pretrial Conference

At any time after a case is received by a permanent judicial commission, the commission may provide for the parties or their counsel, if any, to explore settlement possibilities; or, in a pretrial conference, to seek agreement on a statement of facts and disputed issues, to exchange documents and other evidence, and to take other action which might reasonably and impartially narrow the dispute and expedite its resolution. The moderator and clerk of the permanent judicial commission, or their designees, shall set a date, time and place for the pretrial conference, and conduct it on the commission's behalf.

D-5.02 Conduct of Trial

The trial of a remedial case shall be conducted by a permanent judicial commission. The trial shall be conducted formally with full decorum in a neutral place suitable to the occasion. Trials shall be held in person, except for the provision of electronically received testimony contained in D-5.04.

D-5.03 Citations and Testimony

D-5.0301 Citation of Parties and Witnesses

Citations to appear at trial for parties or such witnesses as either party may request shall be signed by the moderator or clerk of the permanent judicial commission and served by the stated clerk of the council. Witnesses may be either fact witnesses or expert witnesses (see D-5.0703b).

D-5.0302 Who May Be Cited

Only members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) may be cited to appear. Persons who are not members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and expert witnesses (regardless of their denominational membership) may only be requested to appear.

D-5.0303 Witnesses from Another Council

When it is necessary to summon witnesses who are under the jurisdiction of another council of the church, the clerk or stated clerk of the other council shall, on the application of the permanent judicial commission trying the case, through the stated clerk of its council, issue a citation to the witnesses to appear at the place of trial and give evidence as may be required.

D-5.0304 Expenses

Any witness shall be entitled to receive from the party calling the witness reimbursement of actual expenses incurred in attendance at the trial.

D-5.0305 Service of Citation

A citation shall be delivered in accordance with D-4.0103b, or by electronic delivery acknowledged by the recipient within seven (7) days. The moderator or clerk of the permanent judicial commission trying the case shall keep a record of the date of service or delivery. If a party or a witness who is a member of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) fails to obey a citation to appear or having appeared, refuses without good cause to testify, and after warning continues to refuse, the party or witness shall be considered guilty of disobedience and contempt, and for such offense may be subject to disciplinary action by the person's council of jurisdiction.

D-5.04 Electronically Received Testimony

Witnesses may appear electronically if unable to attend the trial in person, provided that the technology employed allows witnesses to be seen and heard clearly by the parties and the trial court, and to respond to their questions.

D-5.05 Procedures in Trial

D-5.0501 Counsel

Each of the parties in a remedial case shall be entitled to appear and may be represented by counsel. Counsel need not be a paid representative or an attorney. Counsel shall be a member of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). No member of a permanent judicial commission shall appear as counsel before that commission while a member.

D-5.0502 Circulation of Materials and Communication

With regard to materials pertaining to the case and communication regarding the case, the following rules apply:

a. Any materials pertaining to the case shall be filed with the stated clerk of the council. Parties to a remedial case, their counsel, or any other person shall not circulate or cause to be circulated directly to the members of the permanent judicial commission any written, printed, electronic, or visual materials of any kind upon any matter pertaining to the case before its final disposition. Notwithstanding this prohibition, the permanent judicial commission may request, or grant leave to file, additional materials.

b. Parties or their counsel shall not communicate with members of the permanent judicial commission regarding any matter related to the case unless the other party and their counsel, if any, are included.

D-5.0503 Control of Conduct of Trial

The moderator of the permanent judicial commission shall have full authority and power to control the conduct of the trial and of all parties, witnesses, counsel, and the public, including removal of them, to the end that proper dignity and decorum shall be maintained. Rulings of the moderator related to control of the trial are subject to appeal to the full commission by any member of the commission, which shall decide the question by majority vote.

D-5.0504 Procedural Questions

Questions as to procedure or the admissibility of evidence arising in the course of a trial shall be decided by the moderator after the parties have had an opportunity to be heard. A party or a member of the permanent judicial commission may appeal from the decision of the moderator to the commission, which shall decide the question by majority vote.

D-5.0505 Absences

Members of a permanent judicial commission must be present in person at trials. The absence of any member of the permanent judicial commission after a trial has commenced shall be recorded. That member shall not thereafter participate in that case.

D-5.0506 Loss of Quorum

Loss of a quorum shall result in a mistrial and the case shall be tried again from the beginning at a time and place to be determined by the permanent judicial commission.

D-5.06 Trial

D-5.0601 Announcement by the Moderator

The trial of a remedial case shall be opened with prayer, after which the moderator shall read aloud the preamble to Church Discipline (D-1), shall announce that the council is about to proceed to trial, and shall enjoin the members to recollect and regard their high character as judges of a council of the Church of Jesus Christ and the solemn duties they are about to undertake.

D-5.0602 Objections of Parties

The parties or their counsel may object and be heard on the organization and jurisdiction of the permanent judicial commission.

a. A member of a permanent judicial commission is disqualified if the member has a material interest in the outcome of the case, is related by family relationship to any party, has been active for or against any party, or is a member of a church or council which is a party.

b. Any member of a permanent judicial commission may be challenged by any party for conflict of interest, and the validity of the challenge shall be determined by a majority vote of the remaining members of the permanent judicial commission.

D-5.0603 Preliminary Determinations and Objections

The permanent judicial commission shall place all preliminary determinations and any objections on the record and shall decide all such matters by majority vote. Any objections to the preliminary determinations and any other objections affecting the order or regularity of the proceedings shall also be made part of the record and shall be decided by majority vote. A final decision is not permissible until the permanent judicial commission has heard the evidence, unless the parties have agreed in writing or at a pretrial conference on certain stipulated facts or about issues on which there is no dispute, and waive their right to present additional evidence at a trial, and are willing to have the dispute settled on the basis of their briefs and written submissions.

D-5.0604 Amendment of Complaint

The complainant shall be permitted to amend the complaint at the time of the trial, provided that the amendment does not change the substance of the complaint or prejudice the respondent.

D-5.0605 Opening Statements

The parties shall be given an opportunity to make opening statements.

D-5.07 Evidence

D-5.0701 Definition

The complainant and respondent shall be accorded the opportunity to present evidence on their behalf. Evidence, in addition to oral testimony of witnesses, may include records, writings, material objects, or other items presented to prove the existence or nonexistence of a fact. Evidence must be relevant to be received. No distinction should be made between direct and circumstantial evidence as to the degree of proof required.

D-5.0702 Records as Evidence

Written records of a council or permanent judicial commission and authenticated records of testimony are admissible as evidence.

- a. The authenticated written records of a council or permanent judicial commission shall be admissible in evidence in any proceeding.
- b. An authenticated record or transcript of testimony taken by a council or permanent judicial commission shall be admissible in any proceeding in another council.

D-5.0703 Witnesses

With regard to witnesses, the following applies:

- a. Any party may challenge whether a witness may testify, and the moderator of the permanent judicial commission shall determine the competence of the witness. The ruling of the moderator may be appealed by any party or a member of the permanent judicial commission and decided by majority vote of the permanent judicial commission.
- b. Each witness called to testify must be competent to testify. To be received by the permanent judicial commission, any testimony from any witness must be relevant and must have a proper foundation. An expert opinion or other testimony may be offered by any witness upon adequate proof of the qualifications of the witness as an expert in the field of such testimony and that such opinion or other testimony will assist the resolution of the case.
- c. No counsel for a party involved may be compelled to testify about any confidential matter, nor may any such counsel testify concerning any matter without the express permission of the party they represent.
- d. Credibility means the degree of belief that may be given to the testimony of a witness. In determining the credibility of a witness, the permanent judicial commission may consider any matter that bears upon the accuracy of the testimony or the truthfulness of the witness.

D-5.0704 Testimony

Receiving the testimony of witnesses shall proceed as follows:

- a. At the direction of the moderator or on the request of either party, no fact witness shall be present during the examination of another witness. This shall not limit the right of any party, counsel, or witness previously designated to offer only expert testimony, to be present.
- b. Witnesses shall be examined first by the party producing them, and then they may be cross-examined by the opposing party. The moderator may permit additional questions from the parties (including both re-examination, followed by re-cross-examination) if so requested. Thereafter, any member of the permanent judicial commission may ask additional questions.
- c. Prior to giving testimony, a witness shall make an oath by answering the following question in the affirmative: "Do you solemnly swear that the evidence you will give in this matter shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?"
- d. If a witness objects to making an oath, the witness shall answer the following question in the affirmative: "Do you solemnly affirm that you will declare the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth in the matter in which you are called to testify?"
- e. The testimony of each witness shall be accurately and fully recorded by a qualified reporter or other means that can be accurately transcribed, including digital voice recording.
- f. Witnesses may appear electronically if unable to attend the trial in person, in accordance with the provisions of D-5.04.
- g. A member of the permanent judicial commission before which the case is pending may testify, but thereafter shall not otherwise participate in the case.

D-5.08 Final Statements

The parties shall be given an opportunity to make final statements, the complainant having the right of opening and closing the argument, after which the trial shall be closed with prayer.

D-5.09 Decision*D-5.0901 Deliberation*

The following considerations apply in deliberations:

a. At the close of the trial, the permanent judicial commission shall then meet privately to deliberate. All persons not members of the commission shall be excluded.

b. No complaint in a remedial case shall be sustained unless it has been proved by a preponderance of the evidence. Preponderance means such evidence as, when weighed with that opposed to it, has more convincing force and the greater probability of truth. After careful deliberation the permanent judicial commission shall vote by counted vote on each alleged irregularity or delinquency accepted for trial and record the vote in its minutes. A majority vote is required to sustain each irregularity or delinquency.

D-5.0902 Decision

Decisions of permanent judicial commissions are reached and communicated as follows:

a. The permanent judicial commission shall then decide the case. If the complaint is sustained either in whole or in part, the commission shall order such action as is appropriate.

b. The questions presented for decision shall be fully debated and voted upon while all participating permanent judicial commission members are present. A written outline of a decision shall be prepared and adopted while in session. A written decision shall be reviewed by all participating members of the panel, which may take place either while the participating permanent judicial commission members are present or by meeting within ten (10) days either in person, or by appropriate electronic means.

c. The decision shall become the final decision of the permanent judicial commission when a copy of the written decision is signed by the moderator and clerk of the permanent judicial commission. A copy of the written decision shall immediately be delivered to the parties in accordance with D-4.0103b, or electronically, if agreed upon in advance by the parties.

d. Within thirty (30) days of the conclusion of the trial, the decision shall be filed with the stated clerk of the council that appointed the permanent judicial commission.

e. The moderator or clerk of the permanent judicial commission shall disseminate the decision as the permanent judicial commission may direct.

D-5.0903 Effect of Decision

Decisions of the permanent judicial commissions of presbyteries and synods are binding on the parties to the particular cases in which the decisions are rendered unless overturned on appeal. No decision of a permanent judicial commission of a presbytery or synod is binding beyond the parties to the particular case.

D-5.0904 New Evidence

New evidence can be considered either prior to an appeal or following the filing of an appeal.

a. Prior to filing a notice of appeal, but without extending the time for appeal, any party against whom an order or decision has been entered may apply for a new trial on the basis of newly discovered evidence. The permanent judicial commission—when it is satisfied that such evidence could reasonably have resulted in a different decision and that in the exercise of reasonable diligence it could not have been produced at the time of trial—may grant such application. An appeal filed while such an application is pending shall be held in abeyance until such time as the permanent judicial commission that conducted the trial has made its determination. The higher council shall be notified of the determination by the stated clerk of the lower council.

b. If, subsequent to the filing by any party of a notice of appeal, new evidence is discovered which in the exercise of reasonable diligence could not have been discovered prior to the filing of the notice of appeal, the permanent judicial commission receiving the appeal may remand the case for a new trial, in which case the appeal shall be stayed until the permanent judicial commission that conducted the trial reports its decision in the new trial. The application for admission of newly discovered evidence shall be made to the permanent judicial commission at least thirty (30) days prior to the hearing with copies to the other party. That application shall be accompanied by a summary of the evidence.

D-5.0905 Appeal

Rules of appeal are found in D-6. The following applies to time limits and standing to file an appeal:

- a. For each party, the time for filing an appeal shall run from the date the decision is delivered to, or refused by, that party.
- b. An appeal may be initiated only by one or more of the original parties.

D-5.10 Record of Proceedings

D-5.1001 Duties of the Clerk of the Permanent Judicial Commission

The clerk of the permanent judicial commission shall do the following:

- a. arrange in advance for the accurate verbatim recording of all testimony and oral proceedings (which may be accomplished through a digital voice recording);
- b. identify and maintain all exhibits offered in evidence (noting whether or not they were accepted as evidence) and keep a list of all exhibits;
- c. record minutes of the proceedings, which shall include any actions or orders of the permanent judicial commission relating to the case with the vote on each;
- d. prepare the record of the case, which shall consist of:
 - (1) the complaint and the answer;
 - (2) all minutes and papers filed in the case;
 - (3) a certified transcript, if requested;
 - (4) all properly marked exhibits, records, documents, and other papers;
 - (5) the written decision; and
 - (6) any actions or orders of the permanent judicial commission relating to the case with the vote on each.
- e. within thirty (30) days after the decision becomes final, certify and transmit the record of the case to the stated clerk of the electing council, who shall preserve it for at least five years, and in accordance with the policy of the council for the preservation of records;
- f. upon the request, and at the expense of any requesting party, the clerk shall cause to be prepared, as promptly as circumstances permit, a true and complete transcript of all the testimony and oral proceedings during the course of the trial. When the person making the transcript has certified it to be true and complete, a copy shall be delivered to each party requesting one upon satisfactory arrangement for payment, and one additional copy shall be made for inclusion in the record to be sent forward upon any appeal pursuant to D-6.0802.

D-5.1002 Additions to the Record

No person may supplement or add to the record in a case except for good cause as determined by the moderator and clerk of the permanent judicial commission responsible for conducting the trial. No request to supplement the record shall be considered until received in writing by the stated clerk of the council conducting the trial, who shall transmit it to the moderator

and clerk of the permanent judicial commission. A copy of the request shall be delivered to all parties and every party shall have ten (10) days to respond in writing.

D-5.1003 Duty of the Stated Clerk

If the council is meeting when the decision is received from the clerk of the permanent judicial commission, the stated clerk shall report the decision immediately and enter the full decision upon the minutes of the council. If the council is not meeting, the stated clerk shall report the decision to the council at its first stated or adjourned meeting or at a meeting called to hear the decision, whichever comes first, and enter the full decision upon the minutes of the council.

**CHAPTER VI
REMEDIAL APPEALS**

D-6.01 Filing an Appeal

D-6.0101 Definition

An appeal of a remedial case is the transfer to the next higher council of a case in which a decision has been rendered in a lower council, for the purpose of obtaining a review of the proceedings and a decision to correct, modify, set aside, or reverse the decision.

D-6.0102 Initiation of Appeal

Only the parties to an original complaint (one or more of the complainants or the respondent) may appeal a ruling of a permanent judicial commission.

a. The ruling must be the permanent judicial commission's final order disposing of the complaint, whether that order is a dismissal in accordance with D-4.0702b, or a written decision in accordance with D-5.09.

b. The parties in a remedial appeal are the appellant or appellants, and the appellee or appellees.

D-6.02 Notice of Appeal

D-6.0201 Notice Filed

A written notice of appeal shall be filed with the stated clerk of the next higher council within forty-five (45) days after a copy of the final order was received by the appealing party. The written notice may be delivered by means of electronic communication, provided that the stated clerk certifies receipt of the notice, which may also be communicated electronically. If filing the notice electronically, care should be taken to deliver the notice in a manner that can clearly demonstrate timely filing. By written agreement of the parties, all additional filings may be electronic. The appealing party shall provide a copy of the written notice of appeal to the stated clerk of the council whose permanent judicial commission issued the ruling, as well as to the stated clerk of the council that would hear the appeal, who shall distribute the notice to the other party or parties.

D-6.0202 Items to be Included

The items to be included in an appeal are as follows:

- a. the name of the party filing the appeal (the appellant or appellants) and their counsel, if any;
- b. the name of the other party (the appellee or appellees) and their counsel, if any;
- c. the council from whose decision the appeal is taken;
- d. a copy of the ruling;
- e. a statement and description of the errors alleged to have been made in the ruling that are the grounds for the appeal. The grounds for which an appeal may be filed are:
 - (1) irregularity in the proceedings;
 - (2) refusing a party reasonable opportunity to be heard or to obtain or present evidence;
 - (3) receiving improper, or declining to receive proper, evidence or testimony;

- (4) hastening to a decision before the evidence or testimony is fully received;
- (5) manifestation of prejudice in the conduct of the case;
- (6) injustice in the process or decision; and
- (7) error in constitutional interpretation.

f. a certification that a copy of the notice of appeal is being sent as required by D-6.0201 to the stated clerk of the council from whose decision the appeal is taken, which may be in the form of an electronic communication if agreed upon in advance by the parties.

D-6.03 Duty of Stated Clerk

Upon receipt of the written notice of appeal, the stated clerk of the council that will hear the appeal shall transmit it to the officers of that council's permanent judicial commission and the other party.

D-6.04 Effect of Appeal

D-6.0401 If No Stay of Enforcement

The filing of a notice of appeal shall not suspend any action of a council taken to implement the ruling being appealed unless a stay of enforcement was obtained with the original complaint, or one is obtained as described in the next paragraph, in which case the implementation of the ruling being appealed is stayed until the appeal is finally disposed of.

D-6.0402 Seeking Stay of Enforcement

If no stay of enforcement was in place when the ruling being appealed was rendered, one may be requested by means of a request filed along with the notice of appeal in any of the methods described in D-4.04, and processed as described in D-4.05 or D-4.06.

D-6.05 Withdrawal of Appeal

The parties in a remedial appeal are encouraged to seek resolution of their differences in a manner acceptable to all parties and consistent with the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). If at any time in the appeal process the parties to a remedial appeal jointly file with the stated clerk of the council hearing the appeal a petition for the withdrawal of the appeal, the stated clerk shall inform the members of the permanent judicial commission that the appeal has been withdrawn, which shall end the judicial process unless within seven (7) days any member of the permanent judicial commission challenges the withdrawal. If the withdrawal is so challenged, a majority of the commission at a duly constituted meeting may conclude that the withdrawal would defeat the ends of justice or conflict with the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and deny the request.

D-6.06 Preliminary Process

D-6.0601 Examination of Notice of Appeal

Upon receiving the notice of appeal, the moderator and clerk of the permanent judicial commission of the council that will hear the appeal shall promptly examine the notice of appeal to determine whether:

- a. the council has jurisdiction;
- b. the appellant has standing to file the appeal;
- c. the appeal was timely and properly filed; and
- d. the appeal states and describes one or more of the grounds for appeal listed in D-6.0201d.

D-6.0602 Preliminary Ruling

The officers of the permanent judicial commission shall report their determinations to the parties and to the members of the commission in a preliminary ruling.

D-6.0603 Challenge to Preliminary Ruling

Within thirty (30) days after their receipt of the preliminary ruling, the parties and members of the permanent judicial commission may challenge the determination, in which case opportunity shall be provided for the parties to present evidence and argument on the determination(s) in question. A hearing may be requested by either party for the purpose of hearing the challenge, or if the parties agree, the matter may be decided by the permanent judicial commission on the basis of documents submitted by the parties. If a hearing is requested, it should be held at least thirty (30) days prior to the hearing on the appeal, unless the officers of the permanent judicial commission determine that the circumstances, including expenditures of time and resources, warrant disposition of the challenge immediately prior to the hearing on the appeal. If the permanent judicial commission determines the answer to any of the four preliminary questions has been answered in the negative, the commission shall dismiss the appeal.

D-6.0604 When No Challenge is Received

When there are no challenges to the determination in the preliminary ruling, the following shall apply:

a. If no challenge is made to the determinations of the officers that one or more of the requirements in D-6.0701 are answered in the negative, the case shall be dismissed without further action or order of the permanent judicial commission.

b. If no challenge is made to the determinations of the officers that all of the points in D-6.0601 are answered in the affirmative, the stated clerk of the council shall schedule a hearing at a time acceptable to the parties and at which a quorum of the permanent judicial commission can be present.

D-6.07 Record of the Case*D-6.0701 List of Papers*

Within forty-five (45) days after receipt of a notice of appeal, the stated clerk of the lower council shall list in writing to the parties all of the papers and other materials that would constitute the record of the case (see D-5.1001d & e). Within fifteen (15) days thereafter, either party may challenge the completeness or accuracy of the record as listed by the stated clerk. The stated clerk may, but is not required, to amend the list at the request of a party; however, any such challenge shall be added to the record when it is filed.

D-6.0702 Filing of Record on Appeal

Upon notice by the stated clerk of the council whose permanent judicial commission will hear the appeal that the case has been accepted, the stated clerk of the council from which the appeal is taken shall compile and file the record of the case with the stated clerk of the higher council, who shall distribute it to the members of the permanent judicial commission.

D-6.0703 Correction of the Record

If anything material to either party is omitted from the record by error or accident, or is misstated therein, the omission or misstatement may be corrected. The parties may stipulate to the correction, or the stated clerk of the lower council may certify and transmit a supplemental record, or the permanent judicial commission of the higher council may direct that the omission or misstatement be corrected. All other questions as to the form and content of the record shall be presented to the permanent judicial commission of the higher council, which shall be decided by majority vote at a duly constituted meeting at least forty-five (45) days prior to the hearing on the appeal, which may be held by appropriate electronic means.

D-6.08 Briefs*D-6.0801 Filing of Appellant Brief*

Within thirty (30) days after the date of receiving the record on appeal, the appellant shall file with the stated clerk of the higher council a written brief containing specifications of the errors alleged in the notice of appeal and arguments, reasons, and citations of authorities in support of the appellant's contentions. Copies of the brief shall be distributed by the stated clerk to the members of the permanent judicial commission and to the other party.

D-6.0802 Failure of Appellant to File Brief

Failure of the appellant to file a brief within the timeline allowed, without good cause, shall be deemed by the permanent judicial commission as an abandonment of the appeal.

D-6.0803 Filing of Appellee Brief

When an appellant files a brief, the appellee can respond as follows:

a. Within thirty (30) days of the receipt of the appellant's brief, the appellee shall file with the stated clerk of the council whose permanent judicial commission will hear the appeal a brief in response to the appellant's brief.

b. In its brief, an appellee may raise additional issues related to the decision being appealed. Copies of the brief shall be distributed by the stated clerk to the members of the permanent judicial commission and to the other party.

D-6.0804 Failure of Appellee to File Brief

Failure of the appellee to file a brief within the time allowed, without good cause, shall constitute waiver of the rights to file a brief, to appear, and to be heard.

D-6.0805 Appellant Supplemental Brief

If additional issues are raised by the appellee, then the appellant may file within thirty (30) days a supplemental brief in response to those issues, in the same manner as its original brief was filed. Copies of the supplemental brief shall be distributed by the stated clerk to the members of the permanent judicial commission and to the other party or parties.

D-6.09 Extensions

For good cause shown, the stated clerk of the higher council may extend any of the time limits contained in D-6.07 or D-6.08 for a reasonable period.

D-6.10 Transmittal of Record and Briefs

Upon receipt of the record and the briefs, or upon the expiration of the time for filing them, the stated clerk of the council hearing the appeal shall transmit the record and briefs to the clerk of the permanent judicial commission.

D-6.11 Prehearing Conference

At any time after an appeal has been received by a permanent judicial commission, the commission may determine or may provide by rule for the parties or their counsel, if any, in a prehearing conference, to seek agreement on any of the disputed issues in the appeal, and to take other action which might reasonably and impartially narrow the dispute and expedite its resolution. Such conference may also result in a settlement agreement including a request for withdrawal of the appeal, which is then processed in accordance with D-6.05.

D-6.12 Hearing of Appeal

The moderator or clerk of the permanent judicial commission shall notify the parties of the date when they may appear in person or by counsel before the permanent judicial commission to present the appeal. Failure of a party to appear in person or by counsel shall constitute a waiver of participation in the hearing of the appeal. At the hearing, the permanent judicial commission shall give opportunity to be heard on the grounds of the appeal to those parties who have not waived that right. The appellant has the right of opening and closing the argument.

D-6.13 Decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission

D-6.1301 Standard of Review

Factual determinations by the permanent judicial commission that tried the case shall be accorded a presumption of correctness in appeals. Factual determinations are not to be disturbed unless they are plainly wrong, without supporting evidence, or manifestly unjust. Determinations related to the correct interpretation and application of provisions of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) are not accorded the same presumption of correctness.

D-6.1302 Voting Procedure

After the hearing and after private deliberation, the permanent judicial commission shall vote separately on each specification of error alleged. The vote, which shall be by counted vote, shall be on the question, "Shall the specification of error be

sustained?” The minutes shall record the vote on each specification of error. A majority vote sustains each specification of error.

D-6.1303 Decision

The decision of the permanent judicial commission shall include the determination of errors specified, and state the remedy as provided in D-6.0101. The permanent judicial commission may prepare its decision in a manner that will dispose of all substantive questions without redundancy. It should include an explanation of its determinations.

a. Decisions of permanent judicial commissions other than the General Assembly’s Permanent Judicial Commission are binding only on the parties to the case.

b. If none of the specifications of error is sustained, and no other error is found, the decision of the lower council shall be affirmed.

c. If one or more errors are found, the permanent judicial commission may conclude that despite the errors found, the decision of the lower council is affirmed. Alternatively, it may reverse the decision of the lower council either completely or in part, and if reversed in part, it may determine whether the decision of the lower council shall be modified or set aside, or the case remanded for a new trial.

d. The questions presented for decision shall be fully debated and voted upon while all participating permanent judicial commission members are present. A written outline of a decision shall be prepared while in session. A written decision shall be reviewed by all participating members of the panel, which may take place either while the participating commission members are present or by meeting within ten (10) days either in person, or by appropriate electronic means.

e. The decision shall become the final decision when a copy of the written decision is signed by the moderator and clerk of the permanent judicial commission. A copy of the decision shall immediately be delivered to the parties to the case in accordance with D-4.0103b, or electronic communication if agreed upon in advance by the parties.

**CHAPTER VII
DISCIPLINARY PROCESS**

D-7.01 Disciplinary Process

D-7.0101 Purpose

The disciplinary process provides for the accountability of individuals to the church. When it is alleged that trust is broken by an individual, it is important to restore that trust within the community of faith. Church discipline is not punishment; rather, it is the exercise of authority given by Christ, both to guide, control, and nurture the church’s members and for the constructive criticism of offenders. The purpose of the discipline is to honor God by making clear the significance of membership in the body of Christ, to achieve justice and compassion for all participants involved, to correct or restrain wrongdoing in order to bring members to repentance and restoration where possible, to restore peace and unity in the body of Christ, and to secure the just, speedy, and economical determination of proceedings.

D-7.0102 Initiation

The disciplinary process begins when a written statement alleging that a member of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has committed an offense is submitted to the clerk of session or stated clerk of the presbytery having jurisdiction over the member. If, after investigation by an investigating committee and trial by a session or permanent judicial commission, the offense is proved true, the person found guilty is subject to censure by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

D-7.0103 Definition of an Offense

An offense is any act or omission by a member of a congregation or a minister of the Word and Sacrament that is contrary to the Scriptures or the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The mere act of participating in decisions ultimately made by a committee, a commission, or by a council is not an offense.

D-7.0104 Deadlines and Filings

The method of determining filing deadlines and methods of filing are as follows:

a. Deadlines

In determining whether or not a document is timely filed, the day following the event giving rise to the time limit begins the count as day one (for example, the day following the date on which a council action is taken, or on which a party receives a decision). All seven days of every week are included in the count, including holidays, and the document shall be deemed timely filed if it is received by the person or persons to whom it is required to be sent on or before the final day of the count. When the final date of the count falls on a weekend or holiday, the document shall be deemed timely filed if it is received on the next business day after the final day of the count.

b. Methods of Filing

Any document required to be filed may be sent or delivered by United States Postal Service certified mail, return receipt requested; commercial courier, with delivery receipt requested; personal delivery; or electronically when so permitted in these rules.

D-7.02 Filing an Allegation

D-7.0201 Allegation

For filing an allegation in a disciplinary matter, the following applies:

a. Time Limit

No written allegation shall be filed later than five years from the time the alleged offense was committed except in cases of sexual abuse of another person as defined in D-7.0901, in which case the five-year time limit shall not apply. There is also no time limit to file an allegation that a person who knew or reasonably should have known of the reasonable risk of sexual abuse of another as defined in D-7.0901 failed to take reasonable steps to minimize the risk.

b. Who May File

Any member of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) may file a written allegation against a member of a congregation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) or a minister of the Word and Sacrament. Anyone who is not a member of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) may request that a member file a written allegation on their behalf.

c. Contents of Allegation

The allegation shall include:

- (1) a written statement of the alleged offense or offenses; and
- (2) facts which, if proved true, would likely result in censure.

d. Submitting an Allegation

An allegation shall be submitted in writing to the clerk of session or stated clerk of the council with jurisdiction over the individual who is accused.

(1) If the allegation is against a member of a congregation not serving as a commissioned pastor at the time of the alleged offense, the allegation shall be sent to the clerk of session with jurisdiction over the accused member.

(2) If the allegation is against a minister member of a presbytery or a commissioned pastor in a validated ministry at the time of the alleged offense, the allegation shall be sent to the stated clerk of the presbytery with jurisdiction over the accused member of the presbytery or commissioned pastor.

e. Members Receiving Allegations from Any Source

Members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) who receive an allegation from any source against a member of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) should file a written allegation with the clerk of session or stated clerk of the council with jurisdiction over the individual who is accused. Clerks of session and stated clerks who receive a written statement of offense from a non-member of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) that contains sufficient information to allow an investigation and to suggest that an offense has been committed, should file a written allegation on behalf of the non-member. In this case they shall not be

considered to be disqualified from continuing to serve in their role as the clerk of session or stated clerk. Councils may provide by rule for who shall fulfill the role of the “accuser” in such cases.

f. Self-Accusation

A member of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) may self-accuse by filing an allegation with the clerk of session or stated clerk of the council with jurisdiction over the individual member.

D-7.0202 Initiating a Request for Vindication

A member of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) who feels injured by a rumor or gossip which is from an unidentified source or is from a source not accountable to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) may request an investigation for the purpose of vindication. Requests for vindication should not be used for matters that can be resolved by filing an allegation.

a. A member requesting vindication shall submit a written statement of the rumor or gossip to the clerk or stated clerk of the council with jurisdiction over the member.

b. The council shall appoint an investigating committee in accordance with its rule as defined in D-7.0501a.

c. The investigating committee shall conduct an inquiry to ascertain the facts and circumstances and shall:

(1) report its determinations in writing to the council within one year of its first meeting. The council will include the written report in its minutes and that will conclude the matter,

(2) file charges as described in D-7.15 with the session or permanent judicial commission against the individual who initiated the investigation if the investigating committee finds that a comparison and consideration of all the evidence compels an abiding conviction that the material facts necessary to prove the charge are true that the individual has committed an offense contrary to Scripture or the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), or

(3) determine that one or more other individuals who are members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) may have committed an offense, and file one or more written allegations against those individuals with appropriate clerks of session or stated clerks.

D-7.03 Jurisdiction

D-7.0301 Primary Jurisdiction

Each council is responsible for the discipline of its members and has primary jurisdiction over any allegation against one of its members including any trial (church members to their sessions and ministers of the Word and Sacrament to their presbyteries).

D-7.0302 Exceptions to Primary Jurisdiction

Exceptions to Primary Jurisdiction as described in D-7.0301 are as follows:

a. Ruling elders commissioned to service by presbyteries are accountable as provided in D-7.0201.

b. When ministers of the Word and Sacrament are engaged in work or reside within the geographic bounds of a presbytery other than the presbytery of membership, the presbytery of membership may request the presbytery within whose bounds the member works to investigate any allegation and file a report of the investigation with the stated clerk of the presbytery of membership and cooperate with the presbytery of membership in any disciplinary inquiry, alternative resolution, or trial. If the councils involved appoint a joint investigating committee, the expenses of that committee shall be shared. Jurisdiction for trial remains with the council of membership.

c. If an allegation involves events that originated within a council other than the council with jurisdiction over the individual who is accused, the clerk of session or stated clerk of the council of jurisdiction shall report to the clerk of session or stated clerk of the other council or councils if charges are filed, and of the outcome of any trial.

d. If the council of jurisdiction fails to act in a particular case for a period of sixty (60) days after the filing of charges in a disciplinary case, the next higher council, on the request of any party, may assume jurisdiction in the case. It may either issue specific instructions to the lower council as to its disposition or conclude the matter itself.

e. Jurisdiction in a disciplinary process ends when a church member or a minister of the Word and Sacrament against whom an allegation has been filed renounces the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in accordance with G-2.0407 or G-2.0509. In this case, the clerk of session or stated clerk of the presbytery shall report to the council both the renunciation and the status of the matter at that time, including the name of the accused, the date and fact of renunciation during an investigation or trial, and the charges, if filed. If no charges have been filed, the report shall include the nature of the alleged offense.

(1) A person alleged to have been harmed may make the request for a pastoral inquiry in accordance with G-3.0109b(6) at any time to the clerk of session or stated clerk, and it shall be brought to the council for consideration. In the interest of continuity, the council by its rules may appoint members of a former investigating committee to the membership of any subsequent committee or commission appointed to make inquiry into the matter.

(2) For instances of alleged sexual abuse of another person, if an accused has died or is no longer under the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the investigating or prosecuting committee shall ask the accuser, and if reasonably possible, those alleged to have been harmed, if they request the council to continue a pastoral inquiry under the provision in G-3.0109b(6). If they choose to make that request, the investigating or prosecuting committee shall communicate it to the clerk of session or stated clerk, who shall bring the matter before the council for consideration.

f. A minister of the Word and Sacrament transferred from one presbytery to another presbytery shall be subject to the jurisdiction of the first until received by the second. A minister of the Word and Sacrament transferred by the presbytery to another denomination shall be subject to the jurisdiction of the presbytery until received by the new denomination.

g. When a congregation is dissolved, the presbytery shall determine any case of discipline begun by the session and not concluded.

D-7.04 Reference

D-7.0401 Definition of Reference

A reference in a disciplinary process is a written request, made by a session or a permanent judicial commission of a presbytery or synod to the permanent judicial commission of the next higher council to assume jurisdiction of the case, for:

- a. investigation of an alleged offense and all subsequent proceedings (D-7.05 and following),
- b. proceedings subsequent to the filing of charges (D-7.15 and following), or
- c. a hearing on the appeal of a disciplinary case from a lower council.

D-7.0402 Duty of Lower Council

With its written request for reference to a higher council, the lower council shall specify its reasons for the request and transmit the entire record of proceedings in the case and shall take no further action thereon. If the reference is accepted, all proceedings, including the trial or hearing on appeal, shall thereafter be held in the higher council.

D-7.0403 Duty of Higher Council

Upon receipt of a request for reference, the stated clerk of the higher council shall transmit the request to the permanent judicial commission for a decision whether or not to accept the case.

D-7.0404 Action on Request

In taking action on a request for reference, a permanent judicial commission may take either of the following actions:

a. If the permanent judicial commission decides to accept the reference, it shall instruct the stated clerk to proceed with the appointment of an investigating committee, if needed. The permanent judicial commission shall conduct the trial or hearing on appeal.

b. The higher council's permanent judicial commission may decline to accept the case for reference and return it to the lower council, stating its reasons. The session or permanent judicial commission of the lower council shall conduct the investigation, trial, or hearing on appeal and proceed to a decision.

c. While a request for reference is pending, and until the higher council acts to accept or decline to accept the reference for the case, any pending deadlines or periods of time for action by a council, a party, or an investigating committee shall be suspended.

D-7.05 Investigation

D-7.0501 Referral to Investigating Committee

When a clerk of session or the stated clerk of a presbytery receives an allegation, without undertaking further inquiry, that clerk shall then report to the council only that an offense has been alleged without naming the accused or the nature of the alleged offense and refer the statement of allegation promptly to an investigating committee, which shall conduct an inquiry as defined below. The clerk of session or stated clerk shall also inform the accuser and those alleged to have been harmed, if known, of the disciplinary process and their rights and responsibilities in the process.

a. Sessions may and councils above the session shall provide by rule for the appointment of an investigating committee.

b. If a session is notified of the receipt of an allegation, it shall determine whether to proceed with an investigation or request a reference to the presbytery (D-7.04).

c. When an allegation is received by a clerk of session or a stated clerk other than the one of the council having jurisdiction over the member, it shall be the duty of the clerk of that session or the stated clerk of that presbytery to submit the written statement of allegation to the clerk of session or the stated clerk of the presbytery having jurisdiction over the member. The involved councils shall proceed in accordance with D-7.0301c.

D-7.0502 Transfer of Membership

A session shall not grant a transfer of membership to a member, nor shall a presbytery grant transfer of membership to a minister of the Word and Sacrament, while an inquiry or charges are pending. The reasons for not granting transfer of membership may be communicated by the clerk of session or the stated clerk of the presbytery to the appropriate persons.

D-7.06 Membership of the Investigating Committee

An investigating committee shall have no more than five but no fewer than three members, and may include members from another council. Sessions shall not appoint elders currently on the session to an investigating committee. All members of an investigating committee shall be members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

D-7.07 Expenses of the Investigating Committee

The expenses of an investigating committee shall be paid by the council which designates it. In cases where the investigation is shared in accordance with D-7.0301c, expenses shall be shared.

D-7.08 Assisting Roles

The following persons may assist in the disciplinary process as described in this section.

D-7.0801 Counsel

Where counsel is referred to in this section, counsel need not be a paid representative or an attorney. Counsel shall be a member of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). No member of a permanent judicial commission shall appear as counsel before that commission while a member.

D-7.0802 Advocate

The role of advocate is to provide support, consultation, and pastoral care for the accuser, those alleged to be harmed, or those accused. Advocates need not be members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

D-7.0803 Mediator

Mediators, if utilized, should be persons known for calm, wise counsel, and need not be attorneys or certified mediators. Mediators need not be members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); however, they should be familiar with Church Discipline.

Presbyteries may identify in advance potential mediators. Any fees for mediation shall be negotiated in advance and paid for by the council of jurisdiction.

D-7.09 Allegations of Sexual Abuse

D-7.0901 Definition

Sexual abuse is any offense involving sexual conduct in relation to any person under the age of eighteen years or anyone without the capacity to consent, or any person when the conduct includes force, threat, coercion, intimidation, or misuse of ordered ministry or position. Sexual abuse is contrary to the Scriptures and the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and is therefore always an offense for the purpose of discipline.

D-7.0902 Administrative Leave

In dealing with an allegation against a minister of the Word and Sacrament, the following considerations regarding administrative leave or other restrictions apply:

a. When an allegation of sexual abuse as defined in D-7.0901 has been received against a minister of the Word and Sacrament, the stated clerk receiving the allegation shall immediately communicate the allegation to the three members designated in accordance with D-3.0102.

b. Regardless of the employment status of the minister of the Word and Sacrament, the members designated in accordance with D-3.0102, shall determine as quickly as possible, after reviewing the written allegations and providing the accused the opportunity to be heard, whether the risk to a congregation and/or to other potential victims of abuse requires administrative leave or other restrictions upon the minister's service, when considered in light of the nature and probable truth of the allegations. Such administrative leave or restrictions will continue until either the matter is resolved in one of the ways prescribed in the disciplinary process or until the leave or restrictions are altered or removed by the members of the commission.

D-7.0903 Effect of Administrative Leave

While administrative leave is in effect, the minister of the Word and Sacrament shall not perform any pastoral, administrative, educational, or supervisory duties, and shall not officiate at any functions such as baptisms, funerals, or weddings. The effect of administrative leave for a minister of the Word and Sacrament in a validated ministry beyond the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is the suspension of the validation of the ministry until the matter is resolved, which shall be communicated to the employer by the stated clerk of the presbytery.

D-7.0904 If Leave is Not Required

If the members of the permanent judicial commission designated in accordance with D-3.0102 determine that no administrative leave or restriction is required, the investigating committee appointed to investigate the allegations shall be free at any point in its investigation to present additional evidence to the designated members supporting the imposition of administrative leave or other restrictions.

D-7.0905 Presbytery Policies on Administrative Leave

Nothing in this section shall preclude a presbytery from establishing its own rules for administrative leave or other restrictions on a minister's service.

D-7.10 Rights and Responsibilities of the Persons in a Disciplinary Process

D-7.1001 Rights of the Accuser

The investigating committee shall inform the person submitting the allegation of the following rights:

a. the right to be accompanied by an advocate at each and every conference with the investigating committee, the prosecuting committee, and the session or permanent judicial commission. The role of the advocate is to provide support and pastoral care. The advocate shall not be permitted to address the committees, session or permanent judicial commission on behalf of the accuser.

b. the right to be treated with fairness and respect.

c. if charges are filed, the right to reasonable and timely notice of, and to be present at, all public proceedings related to the charges, unless the prosecuting committee determines that testimony by the accuser would be materially affected if they heard other testimony at trial.

D-7.1002 Rights of Those Alleged to Have Been Harmed

The investigating committee shall notify all persons alleged to have been harmed by the offense of the following rights:

a. the right to be accompanied by an advocate at each and every meeting with the investigating committee, the prosecuting committee, and the session or permanent judicial commission. The role of the advocate is to provide support and pastoral care. The advocate shall not be permitted to address the committees, session or permanent judicial commission on behalf of those alleged to have been harmed.

b. the right to be treated with fairness and respect.

c. if charges are filed, the right to reasonable and timely notice of, and to be present at, all public proceedings related to the charges, unless the prosecuting committee determines that testimony by those alleged to have been harmed would be materially affected if they heard other testimony at trial.

D-7.1003 Rights of the Accused

At the beginning of each and every conference with an investigating committee, the prosecuting committee, and the session or permanent judicial commission, the person against whom an allegation has been made shall be informed by the investigating committee of the following rights:

a. the right to remain silent throughout the entire disciplinary process,

b. the right to be treated with fairness and respect.

c. during the investigation, the right to be represented by counsel at their own expense and to be accompanied by an advocate. The role of the advocate is to provide support and pastoral care. The advocate, if not also counsel, shall not be permitted to address the committee, session, or permanent judicial commission.

d. if charges are later filed, the right to reasonable and timely notice of, and to be present at, all public proceedings related to the charges, to be represented by counsel (D-7.0104), and to have counsel appointed if unable to afford counsel.

D-7.1004 Responsibilities of All Participants

All participants in an investigation have the responsibility to work cooperatively in the investigation. This includes, but is not limited to, the preservation of records which may be pertinent, and maintaining appropriate confidentiality throughout the process (see D-7.1003).

D-7.11 Investigating Process

D-7.1101 Preliminary Review

The investigating committee shall hold its first meeting within sixty days of its appointment to review the allegation and determine whether it alleges any facts that, if true, constitute an offense, as defined in D-7.0103.

a. If no offense is alleged, the investigating committee shall report this fact to the clerk of session or stated clerk of the council and shall end its inquiry.

b. If the investigating committee determines that the allegation repeats allegations previously made against the accused, it shall report to the clerk of the council that it will not file charges unless the allegation contains new information warranting investigation or is the subject of an investigation that has not been concluded, and shall end its inquiry.

c. The clerk shall communicate the decision not to move to an investigation to the person who filed the allegation and to the person against whom the allegation was filed.

d. Within thirty (30) days of receipt of the report, the person who submitted the allegation may petition the session or permanent judicial commission for a review of the decision of the investigating committee not to file charges (D-7.1402).

D-7.1102 Notification to Participants

If the investigating committee determines that an offense as defined in D-7.0103 is alleged, the investigating committee shall, as quickly as it is practical,

a. notify the accused in writing of:

(1) the date of the investigating committee's first meeting, which begins the one-year timeline for filing charges (D-7.1501);

(2) the reason for the investigation, including a copy of the statement of alleged offense, excluding the name of the accuser at the discretion of the investigating committee;

(3) the confidentiality of the investigating process; and

(4) the rights and responsibilities of the accused defined in D-7.1003 and D-7.1004.

b. notify the person making the allegation in writing of:

(1) the date of the investigating committee's first meeting which begins the one-year timeline for filing charges (D-7.1501);

(2) the confidentiality of the investigating process;

(3) the rights and responsibilities of the accuser and of those alleged to have been harmed, if known, as defined in D-7.1001, D-7.1002, and D-7.1004; and

(4) the investigating committee's commitment to keep the person making the allegation informed as the investigation proceeds including, whenever possible, if charges will be filed.

D-7.1103 Conduct of Investigation

The investigating committee shall make a thorough inquiry into the facts and circumstances of the alleged offense. The investigation is presumed to be confidential. Information is shared only on a need to know basis as determined by the investigating committee in consultation with the clerk or stated clerk of the council. In the event that information is shared, it shall be stated that the accused is presumed innocent. The investigating committee shall keep the clerk or stated clerk of the council informed of its progress in the process.

The investigating committee shall:

a. examine all relevant papers, documents, and records available to it;

b. ascertain all available witnesses who have knowledge of the alleged offense and inquire of them;

c. determine, in accordance with G-3.0102 and D-7.0103, whether there are reasonable grounds to believe that an offense was committed by the accused;

d. decide whether the offense alleged can be proved so that the comparison and consideration of all the evidence compels an abiding conviction that the material facts necessary to prove the charge are true.

e. report to the council having jurisdiction over the accused, or in the case of a joint investigation, report to both councils, only whether or not the investigating committee will file charges;

f. if charges are to be filed, prepare them in accordance with the procedures described in D-7.1503 and designate one or more of its members to prosecute the case; and

g. determine if alternate resolution to a trial on the charges should be pursued (see D-7.16).

D-7.1104 Request for Reference

If within sixty (60) days of its first meeting the investigating committee determines that it is unable for any reason to conduct a thorough and fair investigation, it may ask the council to request a reference in accordance with D-7.04.

D-7.12 Review of Investigating Procedures

At any time during the course of the investigation, the person against whom an allegation has been made may petition the permanent judicial commission to review procedures of the investigating committee.

D-7.1201 Subject of Review

The subject of such a petition for review shall be limited to whether the committee has followed the procedures required by D-7.1003, whether the committee has followed a proper trail of evidence, whether the evidence being considered is properly in the hands of the investigating committee, and whether the committee has examined relevant evidence proposed by the accused.

D-7.1202 Conduct of Review

The review shall be conducted by the three members designated in accordance with D-3.0102. The review may include a hearing at the discretion of the three designated members at which the investigating committee and the accused may appear. The review shall be completed within forty-five (45) days of the filing of the petition, and the decisions shall be communicated to the investigating committee, the accused, the moderator and the clerk of the permanent judicial commission, and the clerk of the council.

D-7.13 Investigating Committee Conclusion

The investigating committee may determine:

- not to file charges (D-7.14),
- to file charges and proceed to trial (D-7.15), or
- to file charges together with an alternative resolution (D-7.16).

D-7.14 If Charges Are Not Filed*D-7.1401 Written Report*

If no charges are filed, the investigating committee shall file a written report of that fact alone with the clerk of session or stated clerk of the presbytery. The clerk of session or stated clerk of the presbytery shall notify the person who submitted the allegation and the accused that charges will not be filed.

D-7.1402 Review of Decision

Review of a decision not to file charges shall proceed as follows:

- a. Within thirty (30) days of receipt of the report, the person who submitted the allegation may petition the permanent judicial commission to review the decision of the investigating committee not to file charges.
- b. The petition shall allege those instances in which the investigating committee has not fulfilled the duties specified in D-7.10.
- c. The investigating committee shall submit a written response to the facts alleged in the petition within thirty (30) days.
- d. The members of the permanent judicial commission designated in accordance with D-3.0102 shall consider the petition and the response, giving attention to the duties specified in D-7.10 and to the question of whether the purposes of the disciplinary process will be preserved by the decision of the investigating committee not to file charges. The decision of the designated members of the permanent judicial commission upon the petition and response shall be rendered within ninety (90) days.
- e. If the designated members sustain the petition, a new investigating committee shall be appointed by the session or presbytery. The new investigating committee shall have until the original deadline or until six (6) months from its first meeting, whichever is later, to determine whether to file charges.

f. If the designated members do not sustain the petition, or if a second investigating committee determines not to file charges, the disciplinary process is concluded. The investigating committee's records shall be preserved in accordance with session or presbytery policy for a minimum of ten years.

D-7.15 If Charges Are Filed

D-7.1501 Time Limits for Filing Charges

Once a written allegation has been submitted, no charges shall be filed later than one year from the date of the investigating committee's first meeting, except as noted below.

a. In those instances where civil proceedings have commenced, the investigating committee may request of its session or permanent judicial commission and may receive an extension of its time for filing charges of up to six months from the conclusion of any investigation or resulting trial undertaken by the civil authorities. The clerk of session or stated clerk of the council shall maintain contact with civil authorities to determine when such civil proceedings have concluded.

b. For instances of sexual abuse of another person as defined in D-7.0901 the five-year time limit for filing an allegation shall not apply. There is also no time limit for alleging that a person who knew or reasonably should have known of the reasonable risk of sexual abuse of another as defined in D-7.0901 failed to take reasonable steps to minimize the risk. Charges in these instances may be brought regardless of the date on which an offense is alleged to have occurred.

c. For instances where a former minister of the Word and Sacrament who renounced jurisdiction while being accused in a disciplinary case rejoins the church, no time limit from the time of the commission of the alleged offense to the filing of charges shall apply. Charges based on all accusations that had been made by the time that the former minister of the Word and Sacrament had renounced jurisdiction may be brought regardless of the date on which any such offense is alleged to have occurred.

D-7.1502 Duties of the Investigating Committee

If the investigating committee decides to file charges, it shall:

- a. inform the accused in writing that charges will be filed, and list each charge separately;
- b. include a summary of the facts it expects to prove at trial to support the charges; and
- c. designate one or more of its members to serve as the prosecuting committee. The prosecuting committee shall prosecute the case and represent the church during any appeals. The prosecuting committee may include additional members at the council's discretion.

D-7.1503 Charges

Each charge shall state only one offense.

a. An offense is any act or omission by a member of a congregation or a minister of the Word and Sacrament that is contrary to the Scriptures or the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) as defined in D-7.0103.

b. Each charge shall state the specific provision or provisions of Scripture and/or the Constitution that have been violated.

c. Each charge shall be numbered, and state (as far as possible) the time, place and circumstances of the commission of the offense. Multiple occurrences of the same offense may be consolidated in one charge.

d. Each charge shall be accompanied by a summary of the facts expected to be proved at trial.

e. The investigating committee shall file the charges with the clerk of session or the stated clerk of the presbytery.

(1) If the charges are filed with the clerk of session, upon its receipt, the clerk shall present the charges to the session at its next meeting and determine whether it will try the case or request a reference to the presbytery (D-7.04).

(2) If the charges are filed with the stated clerk of the presbytery, the stated clerk shall immediately forward the charges to the permanent judicial commission.

D-7.16 Alternative Resolution*D-7.1601 Initiation of Alternative Resolution*

If it deems appropriate, the investigating committee may initiate alternative resolution after the investigation has been completed and the charges have been drafted, but before the charges have been filed.

The investigating committee shall report any agreement for alternative resolution to the session or permanent judicial commission for its approval together with the charges to be filed. The outcome of any alternative resolution shall be a signed agreement between the accused and the investigating committee, to be filed together with the charges with the session or the permanent judicial commission. Terms of an alternative resolution shall be agreed upon and submitted within the one-year time limit for filing charges, except as provided below.

Should efforts at alternative resolution fail, or the agreement is not accepted by the session or permanent judicial commission, no statements, written or oral, made at or in connection with this process, shall be admissible in evidence at a subsequent investigation or trial.

Any fees for mediation or for facilitating restorative justice processes shall be negotiated in advance and paid for by the council of jurisdiction.

D-7.1602 Forms of Alternative Resolution

Alternative resolution may take one of three forms: restorative justice, mediation, or other negotiated agreements.

D-7.1603 Restorative Justice

At the discretion of the investigating committee, in those instances where the accused will plead guilty and take responsibility for harm done, and those alleged to have been harmed are willing to find outcomes that repair damage and address the reasons for the offense, the investigating committee may initiate a process of restorative justice to bring closure to the persons involved and restoration to the community of faith.

When a process of restorative justice is initiated, an investigating committee may request of its session or permanent judicial commission one or more extensions of time to file charges to determine if justice for all can be achieved within a reasonable period.

a. The Purpose of Restorative Justice

(1) Restorative justice is a process by which both those alleged to have committed an offense and those alleged to have been harmed seek to restore the wholeness of the Body of Christ. Restorative justice may be employed prior to trial, or as part of a process of healing after an accused has been found guilty, when the guilty party has had time to accept responsibility and those harmed have had time for personal healing. Should restorative justice not be employed as an alternative resolution prior to trial, the council shall be open to the process at any time if those harmed request and are willing to engage the process.

(2) Restorative justice is not primarily about forgiveness or reconciliation. There should be no pressure on those harmed to forgive or be reconciled. The decision to forgive or be reconciled must be made by the participants at their own initiative.

b. The Practice of Restorative Justice

Restorative justice is guided by four basic questions:

- Who has been harmed?
- What needs do they have?
- Who shares the responsibility to address the needs, to repair the harm, and to restore relationships?
- What is needed to restore wholeness to the community?

The process should be facilitated by a person trained in restorative justice, and shall respect the needs and roles of each participant, including:

(1) Those who have been harmed, who have a need for real information through facilitated direct or indirect contact with offenders; the opportunity for truth-telling by sharing their stories; empowerment by having a voice in the process of justice; support for personal healing from trauma; and vindication through acts of symbolic restitution, which may include a public statement of apology by the offender and/or from the community.

(2) Offenders, who have a need for accountability that focuses on the harm done, encourages compassion, and transforms shame; support for personal healing from trauma, addictions, or other issues that may have contributed to the harmful actions; the development of personal capabilities and boundaries; encouragement and support for restoration to the community; and when necessary, temporary or permanent restrictions or removal to prevent future offenses.

(3) Communities, who have a need to attend to the harm and trauma experienced; to employ resources and opportunities to rebuild communal accountability and trust; to honor their obligation to care for their members including those harmed and offenders; to have reasonable assurance that offenders will not offend again; and to take preventative measures to protect others in the future.

D-7.1604 Mediation

In those instances where the accused will plead guilty and takes responsibility for harm done, but a process of restorative justice is not possible or appropriate, the investigating committee may initiate an alternative resolution process of mediation in the hope of achieving justice and compassion for all involved and repentance and restoration to the accused. It shall also take into consideration the broken trust in the larger community of faith, and the time and energy that will be necessary for its trust to be restored. Mediators and facilitators utilized in this process should be persons known for calm, wise counsel, and need not be attorneys or certified mediators. Anyone serving as a mediator or facilitator must be familiar with Church Discipline of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Where harm has been done to another person, presbyteries should utilize persons who have specialized training and skills. Any mediated agreement shall include a specification of charges to which the accused will plead guilty, together with a recommendation for censure.

D-7.1605 Other Negotiated Agreements

When the interests of justice demand it, an investigating committee may submit a negotiated agreement as part of an alternative resolution. All such agreements shall include a specification of charges to which the accused will plead guilty, together with a recommendation for censure. Prior to entering into any negotiation with the accused or counsel for the accused, the investigating committee shall consult with the accuser and those alleged to have been harmed, if known, regarding reasons for a negotiated agreement. Ordinarily, negotiated agreements should not be used to resolve allegations of sexual abuse.

D-7.1606 Session or Permanent Judicial Commission Action

Upon receipt of a signed alternative resolution, the session or permanent judicial commission shall convene to:

- a. receive the agreement and the charges together with a statement of the investigating committee's rationale for adoption of the agreement;
- b. vote to approve it by at least two-thirds of the members eligible to vote (D-3.0602);
- c. make a record of its proceedings according to the provisions of D-8.1201d, including the name of the accused, the substance of the charge(s), and censure if any; and
- d. transmit its decision to the clerk of session or the stated clerk, who shall report it according to the provisions of D-9.0102.
- e. If the session or permanent judicial commission does not approve the alternative resolution agreement by a two-thirds vote, the investigating committee may seek another alternative resolution to present to the session or the permanent judicial commission within the one-year deadline, or
- f. if an alternative resolution agreement is not reached, the investigating committee shall designate a prosecuting committee and the matter shall proceed on the charges filed.

CHAPTER VIII
TRIAL IN A DISCIPLINARY CASE

D-8.01 Pretrial Procedures*D-8.0101 Parties*

All disciplinary cases shall be filed and prosecuted by a council through a prosecuting committee in the name of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The prosecuting committee is the representative of the church and, as such, has all of the rights of the appropriate council in the case. The only parties in a disciplinary case are the prosecuting committee and the accused.

D-8.0102 Circulation of Materials and Communication

With regard to materials pertaining to the case and communication regarding the case, the following rules apply:

a. Any materials pertaining to the case shall be filed with the clerk of session or stated clerk of the presbytery. Parties to a disciplinary case or their counsel or any other person shall not circulate or cause to be circulated directly to the members of the session or permanent judicial commission any written, printed, electronic, or visual materials of any kind upon any matter pertaining to the case before its final disposition. Notwithstanding this prohibition, the permanent judicial commission may request, or grant leave to file, additional materials.

b. Parties or their counsel shall not communicate with members of the session or permanent judicial commission regarding any matter related to the case unless the other party and their counsel, if any, are included.

D-8.0103 Pretrial Conference

A pretrial conference shall be scheduled, which may be held by appropriate electronic means.

a. The session or permanent judicial commission which is to try the case shall hold a pretrial conference no later than forty-five (45) days after confirmation of the receipt of the charge(s).

The moderator and clerk of the session, or their designees, or the moderator and clerk of the permanent judicial commission, or their designees, shall set a date, time and place for the pretrial conference, and conduct it on the session's or commission's behalf.

b. The clerk of session or the stated clerk shall notify the accused, the counsel for the accused, if any, and the prosecuting committee of the date, time and place of the pretrial conference and request their presence.

c. The accused is expected to attend the pretrial conference. If the accused is unable or unwilling to attend, the pretrial conference shall proceed regardless of the accused's absence.

d. At the pretrial conference, the moderator or the moderator's designee shall:

(1) read aloud the Preamble to Church Discipline (D1);

(2) inform the accused of the right to counsel and the right to remain silent throughout the process;

(3) if the accused is unable to afford counsel, the session or permanent judicial commission shall, after reviewing financial records of the accused, appoint counsel for the accused. Fees, if any, for this representation at the expense of the council shall be agreed upon in writing.

(4) Read the charges to the accused, and;

i. determine with the accused and the prosecuting committee those charges that are not in dispute and discuss alternatives to a full trial;

ii. hear any challenges to the appropriateness of charges, make recommendations to dismiss some of the charges, consolidate the charges, or permit amendments to the charges. The moderator and clerk of the session, or their designees, or the moderator and clerk of the permanent judicial commission, or their designees, shall refer all disputes of fact to the trial.

iii. Ask the accused to plead guilty or not guilty to each charge for the record.

(5) Furnish the accused with a description of the records and documents that may be offered to support each charge, and a list of witnesses then known and their relevance to the matter at trial; and

(6) Review any reports of petitions for review conducted in accordance with D-7.10.

All actions taken at the pretrial conference are preliminary and shall be referred to the session or permanent judicial commission for approval at trial.

D-8.0104 Between the Pretrial Conference and the Trial

In regard to actions to be taken between a pretrial conference and a trial, the following applies:

a. The moderator of the session or permanent judicial commission shall schedule a trial, or a censure hearing if the accused pleads guilty to all charges, to be held no sooner than thirty (30) days following the pretrial conference.

b. At least fifteen (15) days in advance of the trial, the prosecuting committee shall provide the clerk of session or clerk of the permanent judicial commission and the other party with their list of witnesses and an outline of the evidence to be presented at trial. The accused shall provide the clerk of session or clerk of the permanent judicial commission and the other party with a preliminary list of witnesses. Parties or their representatives shall not contact the other party's witnesses prior to the trial.

c. At any time, the permanent judicial commission shall be open to alternative resolution between the parties.

D-8.02 Conduct of Trial

D-8.0201 Trial of a Disciplinary Case

The trial of a disciplinary case shall be conducted by a session or permanent judicial commission of a presbytery.

a. The trial shall be conducted formally with full decorum in a neutral place suitable to the occasion.

b. Trials shall be held in person, except for the provision of electronically received testimony contained in D-8.04.

c. The accused in a disciplinary case is presumed to be innocent unless a determination of guilt is rendered by two-thirds of the session or permanent judicial commission eligible to vote (see D-3.0602).

D-8.03 Citations and Testimony

D-8.0301 Citations

Citations to appear at trial for parties or such witnesses as either party may request shall be signed by the moderator or clerk of the session or the permanent judicial commission and served by the clerk of the council. Witnesses may be either fact witnesses or expert witnesses (see D-8.0704b).

D-8.0302 Who May Be Cited

Only members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) may be cited to appear. Persons who are not members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and expert witnesses (regardless of their denominational membership) can only be requested to attend.

D-8.0303 Witnesses from Another Council

When it is necessary to summon witnesses who are under the jurisdiction of another council of the church, the clerk or stated clerk of the other council shall, on the application of the session or permanent judicial commission trying the case, through the clerk of the council, issue a citation to the witnesses to appear at the place of trial and give evidence as may be required.

D-8.0304 Expenses

Any witness shall be entitled to receive from the party calling the witness reimbursement of actual expenses incurred in attendance at the trial.

D-8.0305 Service of Citation

A citation shall be delivered in accordance with D-7.0104b, or by electronic delivery acknowledged by the recipient within seven (7) days. The moderator or clerk of the session or permanent judicial commission trying the case shall keep a record of the fact and date of service or delivery. If a party or a witness who is compelled to attend (D-8.0302) fails to obey a citation to

appear or having appeared, refuses without good cause to testify, and after warning continues to refuse, the party or witness shall be considered guilty of disobedience and contempt, and for such offense may be subject to disciplinary action by their council of jurisdiction.

D-8.04 Electronically Received Testimony

Witnesses may appear electronically if unable to attend the trial in person, provided that the technology employed allows witnesses to be seen and heard clearly by the parties and the trial court, and to respond to their questions.

D-8.05 Procedures in Trial

D-8.0501 Counsel

Each of the parties in a disciplinary case shall be entitled to appear and may be represented by counsel. Counsel need not be a paid representative or an attorney. Counsel shall be a member of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). No member of a permanent judicial commission shall appear as counsel before that commission while a member.

D-8.0502 Control of Conduct of Trial

The moderator of the session or permanent judicial commission shall have full authority and power to control the conduct of the trial and of all parties, witnesses, counsel, and the public, including removal of them, to the end that proper dignity and decorum shall be maintained. Rulings of the moderator related to control of the trial are subject to appeal to the full session or permanent judicial commission by any member of the session or permanent judicial commission, which shall decide the question by majority vote.

D-8.0503 Procedural Questions

Questions as to procedure or the admissibility of evidence arising in the course of a trial shall be decided by the moderator after the parties have had an opportunity to be heard. A party or a member of the session or permanent judicial commission may appeal from the decision of the moderator to the body, which shall decide the question by majority vote.

D-8.0504 Absences

Members of a session or permanent judicial commission must be present in person at trials. The absence of any member of the session or permanent judicial commission after a trial has commenced shall be recorded. That person shall not thereafter participate in deliberation and decision in the trial.

D-8.0506 Loss of Quorum

Loss of a quorum shall result in a mistrial and the case shall be tried again from the beginning at a time and place to be determined by the session or permanent judicial commission.

D-8.06 Trial

D-8.0601 Announcement by the Moderator

The trial of a disciplinary case shall be opened with prayer, after which the moderator shall read aloud the Preamble to Church Discipline (D-1), shall announce that the council is about to proceed to trial, and shall enjoin the members to recollect and regard their high character as judges of a council of the Church of Jesus Christ and the solemn duties they are about to undertake.

D-8.0602 Objections of Parties

The parties or their counsel may object and be heard on the organization and jurisdiction of the session or permanent judicial commission.

a. A member of a session or permanent judicial commission is disqualified if the member is personally interested in the outcome of the case, is related by family relationship to any party, or has served as counsel for or against any party.

b. Any member of a session or permanent judicial commission may be challenged by any party for conflict of interest, and the validity of the challenge shall be determined by majority vote of the remaining members of the session or permanent judicial commission.

D-8.0603 Preliminary Determinations and Objections

The session or permanent judicial commission shall place all preliminary determinations and any objections on the record and shall decide all such matters by majority vote. Any objections to the preliminary determinations and any other objections affecting the order or regularity of the proceedings shall also be made part of the record and shall be decided by majority vote. A final decision is not permissible until the session or permanent judicial commission has heard the evidence and closing arguments.

D-8.0604 Plea

The accused shall be called upon to plead “guilty” or “not guilty” to each charge. The plea shall be entered on the record. If the accused declines to answer or pleads “not guilty,” a plea of “not guilty” shall be entered on the record and the trial shall proceed. If the accused pleads “guilty” to all charges, the council shall proceed in accordance with D-8.0903 unless the parties request an opportunity to seek an alternative resolution in accordance with D-7.16.

D-8.0605 Opening Statements

The parties shall be given an opportunity to make opening statements, beginning with the prosecuting committee.

D-8.07 Evidence

D-8.0701 Definition

The parties shall be accorded the opportunity to present evidence on their behalf. Evidence, in addition to oral testimony of witnesses, may include records, writings, material objects, or other items presented to prove the existence or nonexistence of a fact. Evidence must be relevant to be received. No distinction should be made between direct and circumstantial evidence as to the degree of proof required.

D-8.0702 Records as Evidence

Written records of a council or permanent judicial commission and authenticated records of testimony are admissible as evidence.

a. The authenticated written records of a council or permanent judicial commission shall be admissible in evidence in any proceeding.

b. An authenticated record or transcript of testimony taken by a council or permanent judicial commission shall be admissible in any proceeding in another council.

D-8.0703 Hearsay Evidence

It is the historic practice of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to allow hearsay evidence because of the limitations of a council’s authority to compel witnesses to testify in a disciplinary process, as well as the limitations of resources in investigations.

D-8.0704 Witnesses

With regard to witnesses, the following applies:

a. Any party may challenge whether a witness may testify, and the moderator of the session or permanent judicial commission shall determine the competence of the witness. The ruling of the moderator may be appealed by any party or a member of the session or permanent judicial commission and decided by majority vote of the session or permanent judicial commission.

b. Each witness called to testify must be competent to testify. To be received by the session or permanent judicial commission, any testimony from any witness must be relevant and must have a proper foundation. An expert opinion or other

testimony may be offered by any witness upon adequate proof of the qualifications of the witness as an expert in the field of such testimony and that such opinion or other testimony will assist the resolution of the case.

c. No counsel for a party involved may be compelled to testify about any confidential matter, nor may any such counsel testify concerning any matter without the express permission of the party they represent.

d. Credibility means the degree of belief that may be given to the testimony of a witness. In determining the credibility of a witness, the session or permanent judicial commission may consider any matter that bears upon the accuracy of the testimony or the truthfulness of the witness.

e. A married person, otherwise competent to testify, may be a witness for or against the spouse, but shall not be compelled to testify against the other.

f. The session or permanent judicial commission may recognize other privileges such as therapist-patient or doctor-patient privileges as a basis for not compelling the testimony of a witness.

D-8.0705 Testimony

Receiving the testimony of witnesses shall proceed as follows:

a. At the direction of the moderator or on the request of either party, no fact witness shall be present during the examination of another witness. This shall not limit the right of any party, counsel, or witness previously designated to offer only expert testimony to be present.

b. Witnesses shall be examined first by the party producing them, and then they may be cross-examined by the opposing party. The moderator may permit additional questions from the parties (including both re-examination, followed by re-cross-examination) if so requested. Thereafter, any member of the session or permanent judicial commission may ask additional questions.

c. Prior to giving testimony, a witness shall make an oath by answering the following question in the affirmative: "Do you solemnly swear that the evidence you will give in this matter shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?"

d. If a witness objects to making an oath, the witness shall answer the following question in the affirmative: "Do you solemnly affirm that you will declare the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth in the matter in which you are called to testify?"

e. The testimony of each witness shall be accurately and fully recorded by a qualified reporter or other means that can be accurately transcribed, including digital voice recording.

f. Witnesses may appear electronically if unable to attend the trial in person, in accordance with the provisions of D-8.04.

g. A member of the session or permanent judicial commission before which the case is pending may testify, but thereafter shall not otherwise participate in the case.

D-8.08 Final Statements

The parties shall be given an opportunity to make final statements, the prosecuting committee having the right of opening and closing the argument, after which the trial shall be closed with prayer.

D-8.09 Decision

D-8.0901 Deliberation

The session or permanent judicial commission shall then meet privately to deliberate. All persons not members of the session or permanent judicial commission shall be excluded.

D-8.0902 Decision on Guilt

Decisions in disciplinary cases are reached and communicated as follows:

a. After careful deliberation, the session or permanent judicial commission shall vote on each charge separately and record the vote in its minutes. Members of the session or permanent judicial commission may find that the accused is guilty when a comparison and consideration of all the evidence compels an abiding conviction that the material facts necessary to prove the charge are true. No decision of guilt may be found on a charge unless at least two-thirds of the members of the session or permanent judicial commission eligible to vote agree on the judgment (see D-3.0602).

b. A written decision stating the judgment on each charge shall be prepared while in session. It shall become the final decision when signed by the moderator and clerk of the session or the permanent judicial commission.

c. When a session or permanent judicial commission has arrived at a decision, the moderator shall, in open meeting, announce the verdict for each charge separately.

D-8.0903 Decision on Degree of Censure

If the accused is found guilty or after a guilty plea, the session or permanent judicial commission shall hear evidence within thirty (30) days of the decision as to the extent of the injury suffered, mitigation, rehabilitation, and redemption. This evidence may be offered by either party, or the original accuser or that person's representative. Each person who was directly harmed by the offense may submit a victim impact statement, which shall become part of the record. The statement shall not be subject to cross-examination. The accused may offer a plan to address the harm done and to seek reconciliation with the victim(s) and the church. The session or permanent judicial commission shall then meet privately to determine the degree of censure to be imposed. Following such determination and in an open meeting, the moderator of the session or permanent judicial commission shall then pronounce the censure.

D-8.10 Filing and Notification of Parties

D-8.1001 Filed Promptly

The decision shall be filed promptly with the clerk or stated clerk of the council.

D-8.1002 Notification of Parties

Notification of a decision shall be as follows:

a. The clerk of session or clerk of the permanent judicial commission shall deliver a copy of the decision to the parties in accordance with D-7.0104b, or by electronic communication if agreed upon in advance by the parties.

b. The moderator or clerk of the session or permanent judicial commission shall disseminate the decision as the session or permanent judicial commission may direct.

D-8.11 New Evidence Received

D-8.1101 Prior to the Filing of a Notice of Appeal

Prior to filing a notice of appeal, but without extending the time for appeal, the person found guilty may apply for a new trial on the ground of newly discovered evidence. The permanent judicial commission—when satisfied that such evidence could reasonably have resulted in a different decision and that in the exercise of reasonable diligence it could not have been produced at the time of trial—may grant such application. A notice of appeal filed while such an application is pending shall be held in abeyance until such time as the session or permanent judicial commission that conducted the trial has made its determination. The higher council shall be notified of the determination by the clerk of session or stated clerk of the lower council.

D-8.1102 Subsequent to the Filing of a Notice of Appeal

If, subsequent to the filing by a person found guilty of a notice of appeal, new evidence is discovered by the person found guilty which in the exercise of reasonable diligence could not have been discovered prior to the filing of the notice of appeal, the permanent judicial commission receiving the appeal may, in its discretion, remand the case for a new trial, in which case the appeal shall be stayed until the session or permanent judicial commission that conducted the trial reports its decision in the new trial. The application for admission of newly discovered evidence shall be made to the permanent judicial commission at least thirty (30) days prior to the hearing with copies to the other party. That application shall be accompanied by a summary of the evidence.

D-8.12 Record of Proceedings

D-8.1201 Duty of Clerk

The clerk of session or the clerk of the permanent judicial commission shall do the following:

- a. Arrange in advance for the accurate verbatim recording of all testimony and oral proceedings. This may be accomplished through a digital voice recording.
- b. Identify and maintain all exhibits offered in evidence (noting whether or not they were accepted as evidence) and keep a list of all exhibits.
- c. Record minutes of the proceedings, which shall include any actions or orders of the session or permanent judicial commission relating to the case with the vote thereon.
- d. Prepare the record of the case, which shall consist of:
 - (1) the charges;
 - (2) a record of the plea entered by the accused on each charge;
 - (3) a certified transcript, if requested;
 - (4) all properly marked exhibits, records, documents, and other papers;
 - (5) the written decision, including the verdict for each charge and the degree of censure, if any, to be imposed by the council; and
 - (6) any actions or orders of the session or permanent judicial commission relating to the case, with the vote on each.
- e. The clerk of session shall preserve the record of the case for at least ten (10) years, and in accordance with the policy of the council for the preservation of records. The clerk of the permanent judicial commission shall, within thirty (30) days after the decision becomes final, certify and transmit the record of the case to the stated clerk of the electing presbytery, who shall preserve it for at least ten (10) years, and in accordance with the policy of the council for the preservation of records.
- f. Upon the request, and at the expense of any requesting party, the clerk of the session or the clerk of the permanent judicial commission shall cause a true and complete transcript be prepared of all the testimony and oral proceedings during the course of the trial. A copy of this transcript, when certified by the person making the same to be true and complete, shall be delivered to each party. One additional copy shall be made for inclusion in the record to be sent forward upon any appeal pursuant to D-10.0602.

D-8.1202 Additions to the Record

No person may supplement or add to the record in a case except for good cause as determined by the moderator and clerk of the session or of the permanent judicial commission responsible for conducting the trial. No request to supplement the record shall be considered until received in writing by the clerk of session or the stated clerk of council that conducted the trial, who shall transmit it to the moderator of the session or moderator and clerk of the permanent judicial commission. A copy of the request shall be delivered to all parties and every party shall have ten (10) days to respond in writing.

D-8.13 Enforcement

When a session or presbytery has completed the trial and found the accused guilty and the decision has been pronounced in accordance with the censure imposed in the following chapter, the session or presbytery shall proceed to enforce the decision regardless of an appeal, including supervision of any rehabilitation required in the censure.

CHAPTER IX
CENSURE AND RESTORATION IN A DISCIPLINARY CASE

D-9.01 Censure*D-9.0101 Degrees of Censure*

The degrees of church censure are rebuke, rebuke with supervised rehabilitation, temporary exclusion from exercise of ordered ministry (for deacons, ruling elders, and ministers of the Word and Sacrament) or membership rights (for non-ordained church members), and removal from ordered ministry or membership. Whatever the censure is, it is never given with malice and vindictiveness but in Christian love to offer correction in error and restoration of the community. A censure is about the accountability of an individual to the church and should not include names of persons who have been harmed.

D-9.0102 Reporting of Decision and Censure

Public oral reports of decisions and censure in disciplinary cases shall be as follows:

a. When a censure is imposed on a church member, a congregational meeting shall be called by the session in accordance with G-1.0503g for the purpose of receiving the decision and censure. The verbal report to the congregation may contain only a summary of the decision and censure, but shall contain a statement of the nature of the offense, the name of the person being censured, and the censure. The summary shall be recorded in the minutes of the congregational meeting.

b. When a presbytery imposes a censure, if the council is meeting when the decision and censure are received from the clerk of the permanent judicial commission, the stated clerk shall report the decision and censure immediately and enter the full decision upon the minutes of the council. If the council is not meeting, the stated clerk shall report the decision to the council at its first stated or adjourned meeting or at a meeting called to hear the decision, whichever comes first, and enter the full decision upon the minutes of the council. The verbal report to the council may contain only a summary of the decision and censure, but shall contain a statement of the nature of the offense, the name of the person being censured, and the censure. If the censure is imposed on a church member, the provision of D-9.0102c shall also be followed.

c. If the censure imposed by a presbytery was on a church member, rather than a minister of the Word and Sacrament, either because the member was a commissioned pastor at the time the offense was committed or because a higher council assumed jurisdiction under either D-7.0301d or D-7.0401, once the decision and censure have been reported in accordance with D-9.0102b, the decision and censure shall be distributed to the clerk of session of the church of membership. The clerk of session shall report the decision at the first stated or adjourned meeting of the session or at a meeting called to hear the decision, whichever comes first, and enter the full decision upon the minutes of the session. The verbal report to the session may contain only a summary of the decision and censure, but shall contain a statement of the nature of the offense, the name of the person being censured, and the censure. The session shall call a congregational meeting in accordance with G-1.0503g and report the decision as described in D-9.0102a above.

D-9.0103 Rebuke

Rebuke is the lowest degree of censure for an offense and is completed when pronounced. It consists of setting forth publicly the character of the offense, together with reproof, which shall be pronounced in the following or like form:

“Whereas, you, (Name) _____, have been found guilty of the offense(s) of _____ (here insert a summary of the offense), and by such offense(s) you have acted contrary to the Scriptures and/or the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); now, therefore, the Session or the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Presbytery of _____, in the name and authority of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), expresses its condemnation of this offense, and rebukes you. This rebuke is given not with malice or vindictiveness but in Christian love to offer you correction in error and restoration that you may be more watchful and avoid such offense in the future. We urge you to use diligently the means of grace to the end that you may be more obedient to our Lord Jesus Christ.”

This formal rebuke shall be followed by intercessory prayer to Almighty God.

D-9.0104 Rebuke with Supervised Rehabilitation

Rebuke with supervised rehabilitation is the next to lowest degree of censure. It consists of setting forth the character of the offense, together with reproof and mandating a period of supervised rehabilitation imposed by the session or permanent judicial commission as described at item b. of this section.

- a. **Communicate Goals**—The session or permanent judicial commission shall formally communicate to the supervising entity and the person censured the goals of the rehabilitation and the specific authority conferred on the supervisor(s).
- b. **Supervised Rehabilitation**—An outline of the rehabilitation program shall include a clear statement of how progress will be evaluated and how it will be determined when and if the supervised rehabilitation has been satisfactorily completed.
- c. **Voluntary Acts of Repentance**—The rehabilitation program may include a voluntary act or acts of repentance by the person censured on their own initiative. Such acts may include, for example, public acknowledgement of guilt, community service, or symbolic or monetary restoration of what was lost or expended by the person who was harmed. No session or permanent judicial commission may require or recommend any voluntary act of repentance, but may, in extraordinary circumstances, forbid such act.

This censure shall be pronounced in the following or like form:

“Whereas, you, (Name) _____, have been found guilty of the offense(s) of _____, and by such offense(s) you have acted contrary to the Scriptures and/or the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); now, therefore, the Session or the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Presbytery of _____, in the name and authority of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), expresses its condemnation of this offense, rebukes you, and orders you to complete a program of supervised rehabilitation supervised by _____ as described below: _____. This rebuke is given not with malice or vindictiveness but in Christian love to offer you correction in error and the possibility of full community restoration. You are enjoined to be more watchful and avoid such offense in the future. We urge you to use diligently the means of grace to the end that you may be more obedient to our Lord Jesus Christ.”

This formal rebuke shall be followed by intercessory prayer to Almighty God.

D-9.0105 Temporary Exclusion

Temporary exclusion is a higher degree of censure for a more aggravated offense and shall be for a period defined by completion of supervised rehabilitation imposed by the session or the permanent judicial commission, which may include a minimum defined period of time. Temporary exclusion is from the exercise of ordered ministry for ordained members, and from membership rights for non-ordained members. During temporary exclusion membership may not be transferred.

- a. **Communicate Goals**—The session or permanent judicial commission shall formally communicate to the supervising entity and the person censured the goals of the rehabilitation and the specific authority conferred on the supervisor(s).
- b. **Supervised Rehabilitation**—An outline of the rehabilitation program shall include a clear statement of how progress will be evaluated and how it will be determined when and if the supervised rehabilitation has been satisfactorily completed.
- c. **Voluntary Acts of Repentance**—The rehabilitation program may include a voluntary act or acts of repentance by the person censured on their own initiative. Such acts may include, for example, public acknowledgement of guilt, community service, or symbolic or monetary restoration of what was lost or expended by the person who was harmed. No session or permanent judicial commission may require or recommend any voluntary act of repentance, but may, in extraordinary circumstances, forbid such act.
- d. **Effects of Temporary Exclusion from the Exercise of Ordered Ministry**—During the period of temporary exclusion from ordered ministry, the person under this exclusion shall refrain from the exercise of any function of ordered ministry. While under this exclusion, the person remains a member of their congregation or presbytery, but may not participate or vote in meetings of any council of the church, hold office, or serve on committees or commissions, except that the member may be present and may speak on matters related to that member. The person under this exclusion shall not preach, teach, administer Sacraments, preside at other services of worship, or moderate sessions.
- e. **Effects of Temporary Exclusion from Membership Rights**—During the period of temporary exclusion from membership rights of non-ordained church members, the person under this exclusion may continue to participate in the worship and life of the congregation of membership, but shall refrain from participating and voting in meetings of the congregation and from serving on committees, or holding any office or position of leadership in the congregation or in any council of the church.
- f. **Effect of Temporary Exclusion of a Pastor**—If a minister of the Word and Sacrament serving in a pastoral relationship in a congregation (G-2.0504) is temporarily excluded from the exercise of ordered ministry, the presbytery may, if no appeal from the case is pending, declare the pastoral relationship dissolved.

g. Notice of Temporary Exclusion—When the censure of temporary exclusion has been pronounced with respect to a minister of the Word and Sacrament, the stated clerk of the presbytery shall immediately send the information of the action taken to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, who shall make a quarterly report of all such information to every presbytery of the church.

h. Termination of Censure of Temporary Exclusion—A person under the censure of temporary exclusion shall apply in writing to the council, through the clerk of session or stated clerk, for restoration upon the completion of the supervised rehabilitation pronounced. The council that imposed the censure may approve the restoration when the council is fully satisfied that the supervised rehabilitation pronounced has been successfully completed. The censure may include a time limit for the completion of all terms, after which, if the terms have not been met, the council may, at its discretion, grant an extension for a specified time or make the temporary exclusion permanent.

i. Early Restoration—A person under the censure of temporary exclusion from the exercise of ordered ministry or from membership may apply in writing to the council that imposed the censure (through its clerk) to be restored prior to any minimum period of time included in the censure. The council may approve such a restoration when it is fully satisfied that the action is justified.

This censure shall be pronounced in the following or like form:

“Whereas, you, (Name) _____, have been found guilty of the offense(s) of _____ (here insert the offense), and by such offense(s) you have acted contrary to the Scriptures and/or the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); now, therefore, the Session or the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Presbytery of _____, in the name and by the authority of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), does now declare you temporarily excluded from _____ for a period of at least _____, and until completion of the following rehabilitation program supervised by _____, as described below: _____ . This exclusion is given not with malice or vindictiveness but in Christian love to offer you correction in error and the possibility of full community restoration.”

This formal declaration shall be followed by intercessory prayer to Almighty God.

D-9.0106 Removal from Ordered Ministry and/or Membership

Removal from ordered ministry and/or membership is the highest degree of censure. Removal from ordered ministry is the censure by which the ordination and election of the person found guilty are set aside, and the person is removed from all ordered ministries without removal from membership. Removal from membership is the censure by which the membership of the person found guilty is terminated, the person is removed from all rolls, and the person’s ordination and election to all ordered ministries are set aside.

a. Consequences of Removal from Ordered Ministry—If a minister of the Word and Sacrament is removed from ordered ministry without removal from membership, the presbytery shall transfer the minister’s membership to a Christian congregation of the minister’s choice with the approval of the session or governing body of that congregation. If the minister is serving in a pastoral relationship in a congregation (G-2.0504), the pastoral relationship is automatically dissolved by the censure.

b. Notice of Removal—When the censure of removal has been pronounced with respect to a minister of the Word and Sacrament, the stated clerk of that presbytery shall immediately send the information of the action taken to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, who shall make a quarterly report of all such information to every presbytery of the church.

This censure shall be pronounced in the following or like form:

“Whereas, you, (Name) _____, have been found guilty of the offense(s) of _____ (here insert the offense), and by such offense(s) you have acted contrary to the Scriptures and/or the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); now, therefore, the Session or the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Presbytery of _____, acting in the name and under the authority of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), does hereby set aside and remove you from _____ (here state whether removal is from all ordered ministries and elected offices or from membership). This removal is given not with malice or vindictiveness but in Christian love to offer you correction in error and to restore the unity of the church by removing from it the discord and division the offense(s) have caused.”

This formal declaration shall be followed by intercessory prayer to Almighty God.

D-9.02 Restoration

D-9.0201 Restoration to Membership or Ordered Ministry

A person under the censure of removal from ordered ministry or from membership may be restored by the council imposing the censure when the council is fully satisfied that the action is justified. The person makes a reaffirmation of faith for restoration of membership and/or is again ordained for restoration to ordered ministry.

D-9.0202 Restoration to Membership

The restoration to membership shall be announced by the moderator in a meeting of the council in the following or like form:

“Whereas, you, (Name) _____, have manifested such repentance as satisfies the church, the Presbytery (or Session) of _____ does now restore you to full membership in the church by this act of reaffirmation.”

a. Thereafter, the act of reaffirmation shall take place and the name of the person shall be restored to the appropriate roll or a certificate of membership shall be issued to a Christian church of that person’s choice.

b. If the member is also to be restored to an ordered ministry, the procedure prescribed in Restoration to Ordered Ministry (D-9.0203) shall be followed.

D-9.0203 Restoration to Ordered Ministry

The restoration to ordered ministry shall be announced by the moderator in the following or like form:

“Whereas, you, (Name) _____, have manifested such repentance as satisfies the church, the Presbytery of _____ (or Session of this church) does now restore you to the ordered ministry of _____ and authorize you to perform the functions of that ministry in accordance with the Constitution of this church by this act of ordination.”

Thereafter, a full service of ordination shall take place in accordance with W-4.04 and the individual’s name shall be restored to the appropriate roll.

**CHAPTER X
DISCIPLINARY APPEALS**

D-10.01 Filing an Appeal

D-10.0101 Definition

An appeal of a disciplinary case is the transfer to the next higher council of a case in which a decision has been rendered in a lower council, for the purpose of obtaining a review of the proceedings and decision in order to correct, modify, set aside, or reverse the decision.

D-10.0102 Initiation of Appeal

The time for filing an appeal shall begin from the date the decision is delivered to, or refused by, the person found guilty.

- a. Only the person found guilty of an offense may initiate the first level of appeal.
- b. Once the first appeal has been decided, either party may initiate the next level of appeal.

D-10.0103 Parties

The parties in a disciplinary appeal are the person found guilty and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) through the prosecuting committee of the council that issued the censure.

D-10.02 Notice of Appeal*D-10.0201 Notice Filed*

A written notice of appeal shall be filed with the stated clerk of the next higher council within forty-five (45) days after a copy of the final order was received by the appealing party. The written notice may be delivered by means of electronic communication, provided that the stated clerk certifies receipt of the notice, which may also be communicated electronically. If filing the notice electronically, care should be taken to deliver the notice in a manner that can clearly demonstrate timely filing. By written agreement of the parties, all additional filings may be electronic. The appealing party shall provide a copy of the written notice of appeal to the clerk of session or stated clerk of the council that issued the ruling, as well as to the stated clerk of the council that would hear the appeal, who shall distribute the notice to the other party or parties.

D-10.0202 Items to be Included:

Items to be included in a disciplinary appeal are as follows:

- a. the name of the party filing the appeal (the appellant) and their counsel, if any;
- b. the name of the other party (the appellee) and their counsel, if any;
- c. the council from whose decision the appeal is taken;
- d. a copy of the ruling; and
- e. a statement and description of the errors alleged to have been made in the ruling that are the grounds for appeal. The grounds for which an appeal may be filed are:
 - (1) irregularity in the proceedings,
 - (2) refusing a party reasonable opportunity to be heard or to obtain or present evidence,
 - (3) receiving improper, or declining to receive proper evidence or testimony,
 - (4) hastening to a decision before the evidence or testimony is fully received,
 - (5) manifestation of prejudice in the conduct of the case,
 - (6) injustice in the process or decision,
 - (7) error in constitutional interpretation, and
 - (8) undue severity of censure.
- f. a certification that a copy of the notice of appeal has been sent as required by D-10.0201 to the clerk of session or stated clerk of the council from whose decision the appeal is taken. This certification may be in the form of an electronic communication if agreed upon in advance by the parties.

D-10.03 Duty of Stated Clerk

Upon receipt of the written notice of appeal, the stated clerk of the council that will hear the appeal shall transmit it to the officers of that council's permanent judicial commission and the other party. The notice of appeal, if properly and timely filed, shall suspend further proceedings by lower councils, except any censure shall continue until the appeal is finally decided.

D-10.04 Withdrawal of Appeal

The parties in a disciplinary appeal are encouraged to seek resolution of their differences in a manner acceptable to all parties and consistent with the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). If at any time in the appeal process the parties to a disciplinary appeal jointly file with the stated clerk of the council hearing the appeal a petition for the withdrawal of the appeal, the stated clerk shall inform the members of the permanent judicial commission that the appeal has been withdrawn, which shall end the judicial process unless within seven (7) days any member of the permanent judicial commission challenges the withdrawal. If the withdrawal is so challenged, a majority of the commission at a duly constituted meeting may conclude that the withdrawal would defeat the ends of justice or conflict with the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) and deny the request.

D-10.05 Preliminary Process*D-10.0501 Examination of Notice of Appeal*

Upon receiving the notice of appeal, the moderator and clerk of the permanent judicial commission of the council that will hear the appeal shall promptly examine the notice of appeal to determine whether:

- a. the council has jurisdiction,
- b. the appellant has standing to file the appeal,
- c. the appeal was timely and properly filed, and
- d. the appeal states and describes one or more of the grounds for appeal listed in D-10.0202e.

D-10.0502 Preliminary Ruling

The officers of the permanent judicial commission shall report their determination to the parties and to the members of the commission in a preliminary ruling.

D-10.0503 Challenge to Preliminary Ruling

Within thirty (30) days after their receipt of the preliminary ruling, the parties and members of the permanent judicial commission may challenge the determination, in which case opportunity shall be provided for the parties to present evidence and argument on the determination(s) in question. A hearing may be requested by either party for the purpose of hearing the challenge, or if the parties agree, the matter may be decided by the permanent judicial commission on the basis of documents submitted by the parties. If a hearing is requested, it should be held at least thirty (30) days prior to the hearing on the appeal, unless the officers of the permanent judicial commission determine that the circumstances, including expenditures of time and resources, warrant disposition of the challenge immediately prior to the hearing on the appeal. If the permanent judicial commission determines the answer to any of the four preliminary questions has been answered in the negative, the commission shall dismiss the appeal.

D-10.0504 When No Challenge is Received

When there are no challenges to the determination in the preliminary ruling, the following shall apply:

- a. If no challenge is made to the preliminary ruling of the officers that one or more points in D-10.0501 are answered in the negative, the case shall be dismissed without further action or order of the permanent judicial commission.
- b. If no challenge is made to the preliminary ruling of the officers that all of the points in D-10.0501 are answered in the affirmative, the stated clerk of the council shall schedule a hearing at a time acceptable to the parties and at which a quorum of the permanent judicial commission can be present.

D-10.06 Record of the Case*D-10.0601 List of Papers*

Within forty-five (45) days after receipt of a notice of appeal, the clerk of session or stated clerk of the lower council shall list in writing to the parties all of the papers and other materials that would constitute the record of the case (see D-8.1201d & e). Within fifteen (15) days thereafter, either party may challenge the completeness or accuracy of the record as listed by the clerk of session or stated clerk. The clerk of session or stated clerk may, but is not required, to amend the list at the request of a party; however, any such challenge shall be added to the record when it is filed.

D-10.0602 Filing of Record on Appeal

Upon notice by the stated clerk of the council whose permanent judicial commission will hear the appeal that the case has been accepted, the clerk of session or stated clerk of the council from whose ruling the appeal is taken shall compile and file the record of the case with the stated clerk of the higher council, who shall distribute it to the members of the permanent judicial commission.

D-10.0603 Correction of the Record

If anything material to either party is omitted from the record by error or accident, or is misstated therein, the omission or misstatement may be corrected. The parties may stipulate to the correction, or the clerk of session or stated clerk of the lower council may certify and transmit a supplemental record, or the permanent judicial commission of the higher council may direct that the omission or misstatement be corrected. All other questions as to the form and content of the record shall be presented to the permanent judicial commission of the higher council, which shall be decided by majority vote at a duly constituted meeting at least forty-five (45) days prior to the hearing on the appeal, which may be held electronically.

D-10.07 Briefs

D-10.0701 Filing of Appellant Brief

Within thirty (30) days after the date of receiving the record on appeal, the appellant shall file with the stated clerk of the higher council a written brief containing specifications of the errors alleged in the notice of appeal and arguments, reasons, and citations of authorities in support of the appellant's contentions. Copies of the brief shall be distributed by the stated clerk to the members of the permanent judicial commission and to the opposing party.

D-10.0702 Failure of Appellant to File Brief

Failure of the appellant to file a brief within the timeline allowed, without good cause, shall be deemed by the permanent judicial commission as an abandonment of the appeal.

D-10.0703 Filing of Appellee Brief

Within thirty (30) days of the receipt of the appellant's brief, the appellee shall file with the stated clerk of the council whose permanent judicial commission will hear the appeal a brief in response to the appellant's brief. Copies of the brief shall be distributed by the stated clerk to the members of the commission and to the opposing party.

D-10.0704 Failure of Appellee to File Brief

Failure of the appellee to file a brief within the time allowed, without good cause, shall constitute waiver of the rights to file a brief, to appear, and to be heard.

D-10.0705 Filing of Appellant Reply Brief

Within fifteen (15) days of receipt of the appellee's brief, the appellant may file a reply brief limited to the issues raised in the appellee's brief. Copies of the brief shall be distributed by the stated clerk to the members of the permanent judicial commission and to the other party.

D-10.08 Extensions

For good cause shown, the stated clerk of the higher council may extend any of the time limits contained in D-10.06 or D-10.07 for a reasonable period.

D-10.09 Transmittal of Record and Briefs

Upon receipt of the record and the briefs, or upon the expiration of the time for filing them, the stated clerk of the higher council shall transmit the record and briefs to the clerk of the permanent judicial commission.

D-10.10 Prehearing Conference

At any time after an appeal has been received by a permanent judicial commission, the commission may provide for the parties and their counsel, if any, for the opportunity in a prehearing conference to seek agreement on any of the disputed issues in the appeal and to take other action which might reasonably and impartially narrow the dispute and expedite its resolution.

D-10.11 Hearing of Appeal

The moderator or clerk of the permanent judicial commission shall notify the parties of the date when they may appear in person or by counsel before the permanent judicial commission. Failure of a party to appear in person or by counsel shall constitute a waiver of participation in the hearing of the appeal. At the hearing, the permanent judicial commission shall give

opportunity to be heard on the grounds of the appeal to those parties who have not waived that right. The appellant has the right of opening and closing the argument.

D-10.12 Decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission

D-10.1201 Standard of Review

Factual determinations by the session or permanent judicial commission that tried the case shall be accorded a presumption of correctness in appeals. Factual determinations are not to be disturbed unless they are plainly wrong, without supporting evidence, or manifestly unjust. Determinations related to the correct interpretation and application of provisions of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) are not accorded the same presumption of correctness.

D-10.1202 Voting Procedure

After the hearing and after deliberation, the permanent judicial commission shall vote separately on each specification of error alleged. The vote, which shall be by counted vote, shall be on the question, "Shall the specification of error be sustained?" The minutes shall record the vote on each specification of error. A majority vote sustains each specification of error.

D-10.1203 Decision

The decision of the permanent judicial commission shall include the determination of errors specified, and state the remedy as provided in D-10.0101. The permanent judicial commission may prepare its decision in a manner that will dispose of all substantive questions without redundancy. It should include an explanation of its determinations.

a. Decisions of permanent judicial commissions other than the General Assembly's Permanent Judicial Commission are binding only on the parties to the case.

b. If none of the specifications of error is sustained, and no other error is found, the decision of the lower council shall be affirmed.

c. If one or more errors are found, the permanent judicial commission may conclude that despite the errors found, the decision of the lower council is affirmed. Alternatively, it may reverse the decision of the lower council either completely or in part, and if reversed in part, it may determine whether the decision of the lower council shall be modified or set aside, or the case remanded for a new trial.

d. The questions presented for decision shall be fully debated and voted upon while all participating permanent judicial commission members are present. A written outline of a decision shall be prepared while in session. A written decision shall be reviewed by all participating members of the panel, which may take place either while the participating permanent judicial commission members are present or by meeting within ten (10) days either in person, or by appropriate electronic means.

e. The decision shall become the final decision when a copy of the written decision is signed by the moderator and clerk of the permanent judicial commission. A copy of the decision shall immediately be delivered to the parties to the case in accordance with D-7.0104b, or electronic communication if agreed upon in advance by the parties.

D-10.1204 Effect of Reversal on Appeal in Disciplinary Case

If the permanent judicial commission reverses all determinations of guilt, it becomes an acquittal and the person is automatically restored to ordered ministry or membership in the church. This declaration shall be made in the lower council and recorded in the minutes of the lower council with jurisdiction over the person found guilty.

Rationale

The Presbytery of Chicago sent an overture to the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to revise the Rules of Discipline to make the Rules of Discipline more accessible to the church, to preserve and enhance the accountability of councils and individuals to the church, to expand the role of mediation and alternate dispute resolution, and to provide flexibility in crafting censures and remedies, particularly in the light of recent learnings in ethical and social development and experiments by the secular legal system with alternative sentencing. The Rules of Discipline Task Force was appointed by the General Assembly Moderators in 2017 to bring the revision to the 224th General Assembly (2020) for consideration.

The task force presents a revision that responds to its charge in the following ways:

1. To make this portion of the *Book of Order* more accessible to the church, the revision:

a. Divides it into three major sections. Section I contains the Preamble, a chapter on judicial process and a chapter on the composition and function of permanent judicial committees. The second section describes remedial process start to finish. The third section describes disciplinary process start to finish.

b. Brings into the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) authoritative interpretations that are frequently used in deciding judicial cases and are currently available only in the annotated version of the *Book of Order*.

c. Changes the name of the section to Church Discipline to emphasize that this process is for the internal discipline of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), its members, and its councils.

d. Restructures the Preamble to begin with the theological grounding of church discipline, to clarify that it is for the internal discipline of the church. The purposes of church discipline are set apart with bullet points. They are the same purposes listed in the current rules but set apart to make them easier to find and identify.

e. Defines clearly the steps in each process, responsibilities of those involved, and time limits.

f. Allows for the use of electronic communication not available the last time the Rules of Discipline were revised in 1996, thus creating potential savings of cost and time for the church.

2. To preserve and enhance the accountability of councils and individuals, this revision:

a. Is ordered to make it easier to understand and follow.

b. Preserves rules that have guided the church for generations.

c. Stresses that Church Discipline is based on Scripture and the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), not on secular standards of jurisprudence.

d. Defines rules and process in language accessible to members not well versed in church discipline and, insofar as possible, removes language also used in secular judicial process in order to prevent confusion.

e. Emphasizes repeatedly that those engaged in this process, those who file complaints, those who bring allegations, those who seek vindication, those accused, and those who act as counsel for any of the first groups must be Presbyterian. Mediators and facilitators and those who act as advocates need not be Presbyterian but do need to be familiar with Church Discipline of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Presbyterians can file allegations on behalf of persons who are not Presbyterian.

f. Moves the rules on vindication into the section on discipline. Those seeking vindication seek to be vindicated from rumor and gossip by persons unknown or outside the jurisdiction of the church. If in the process members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) are identified against whom allegations should be filed, the section specifically spells out the provisions for filing those allegations.

g. Calls attention to provisions in The Form of Government for pastoral response when disciplinary cases are ended by death or renunciation of jurisdiction by the accused.

h. Provides for the nomination of permanent judicial commissions broadly representative of the makeup of a council and for the inclusion of former members of permanent judicial commissions with attention to the principles of full participation and inclusion to make up a quorum in trying cases.

3. To expand the role of mediation and alternate dispute resolution, the revision:

a. Adds an alternative resolution based on principles of restorative justice and spells out what is involved in that process.

b. Provides for three forms of alternative resolution: Restorative Justice, Mediation, and Other Negotiated Agreements. The more appropriate of the first two forms is provided for those instances when an accused agrees to plead guilty to charges and seeks to make restitution. The third is only for those instances when it is necessary to negotiate a plea before charges and a guilty plea can be filed. Sessions and presbytery permanent judicial commissions can take the three into account when determining degree of censure.

c. Defines mediators as persons known for calm, wise counsel who need not be certified. This opens the possibility of mediation in areas where certified mediators are not available.

4. To provide flexibility in crafting censures and remedies, the revision:

a. Adds language to remind the guilty and the session or presbytery that censure in church discipline is *given not with malice or vindictiveness but in Christian love to offer correction in error and restoration* or in the case of removal from office or membership *to restore the unity of the church by removing from it the discord and division the offense(s) have caused*.

b. Spells out specific remedies appropriate to each degree of censure

The task force has identified several failings of the current practice. First, the current practice emphasizes sexual behavior rather than the significant underlying harm of violating trust. Sexual abuse, while heinous, is not the only kind of abuse that can be profoundly destructive to vulnerable individuals and congregations. The task force knows that sexual abuse is particularly harmful, and we recognize that harm can be caused to persons and congregations by other forms of abuse.

Finally, removing the five-year limit restores the traditional authority of permanent judicial commissions. The Rules of Discipline have trusted councils and their permanent judicial commissions to assess the severity of inappropriate behavior. For that reason, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has left the definition of “offense” vague, trusting permanent judicial commissions to respond to the facts of a specific offense by determining the seriousness of the censure to be imposed. Removing the five-year time limit restores the ability of permanent judicial commissions to decide for themselves the severity of the particular misconduct and what the appropriate censure should be.

The task force does not anticipate that removing the five-year time limit will lead to a noticeable increase in disciplinary cases nor to injustice. In the secular legal system, one of the main reasons for setting time limits (i.e. statutes of limitations) is the recognition that evidence grows scarcer as time passes. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) faced this dilemma when it removed the time limit for sexual abuse in the early 1990s. This denomination has demonstrated that it has the wisdom to address the passage of time. Sin is sin. The church’s priority should be on providing accountability and restoring wholeness when evidence permits regardless of the passage of time.

The Constitution, however, does provide an avenue where healing and accountability may be possible in such situations when allegations of sexual abuse are involved through the appointment of an administrative commission as described in G-3.0109b(6). This provision states that councils have authority to make “... pastoral inquiry into persons accused of sexual abuse of another person ... when jurisdiction in a judicial proceeding against such persons has ended due to death or renunciation of the accused; such inquiries shall not be understood as judicial proceedings but shall seek to reach a determination of truth related to the accusation and to make appropriate recommendations to the designating council.” Section D-7.0301 in the revision, Church Discipline, calls attention to this provision for pastoral inquiry.

Presbyteries have made such inquiries in order to provide an opportunity for survivors to tell their stories, and for the truth to be heard in the open, when trial testimony could not be accomplished due to death or renunciation.

If a person who has renounced jurisdiction later rejoins the church, there is no time limit for bringing forward allegations of the offense of sexual misconduct.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 02-110

Advisory Committee on the Constitution Advice on Item 02-110. Proposed Changes to the Rules of Discipline

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) to approve Item02-110 with amendment.

Introduction

The process that led to the proposed revision to the Rules of Discipline began with the action of the 222nd General Assembly (2016):

to create a Rules of Discipline Task Force to be charged with revising the entire Rules of Discipline to make the Rules of Discipline more accessible to the church, to preserve and enhance the accountability of councils and individuals to the church, to expand the role of mediation and alternate dispute resolution, and to provide flexibility in crafting censures and remedies, particularly in light of recent learnings in ethical and social development and experiments by the secular legal system with alternative sentencing. [Item 06-14]

The Co-Moderators of the 222nd General Assembly (2016) appointed the members of the Rules of Discipline Task Force which included:

Paige McRight, moderator, retired Presbytery of Central Florida Presbytery Executive, member of the Form of Government Revision Task Force

Barbara Bundick, Presbytery of Chicago, Stated Clerk

Greg Goodwiller, Presbytery of St. Andrew, Stated Clerk

Therese Howell, Presbytery of Middle Tennessee, Stated Clerk

Doska Ross, Synod of Southern California and Hawaii, Stated Clerk

Donna Wells, Presbytery of Greater Atlanta, Stated Clerk

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution appointed Dan Saperstein as liaison to the task force.

The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly J. Herbert Nelson appointed Associate Director for Constitutional Issues Laurie Griffith and Manager for Judicial Process Flor Vélez-Díaz as staff resource.

In October 2017 the task force made a presentation at the Association of Mid Council Leaders Gathering. The first draft of the revision was posted on the Office of the General Assembly website in February 2018. Meetings for feedback were held with leaders of the Synod of the Trinity in April 2018. The task force prepared a presentation and offered two workshops to gather feedback during the 223rd General Assembly (2018). The task force met with the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns and the General Assembly Committee on Representation. A second draft was posted on the website in March 2019. The leaders in the Synods of Trinity, Covenant, and Sun requested a meeting to review the second draft during the spring and summer of 2019. In June of that year, the task force met with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation Executive Board and in July one member attended Big Tent in Baltimore for conversations with the participants. In September 2019, side-by-side comparisons of old-to-new and new-to-old Rules of Discipline were posted on the website along with a revised draft. In October the task force met with the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, and made a presentation at the Association of Mid Council Leaders Gathering. During November the task force received feedback from the Sexual Misconduct Survivor's Task Force and the General Assembly Committee on Representation. In December of 2019 the task force met to finish a final draft and a video was recorded to be used for orientation for commissioners and advisory delegates to the 224th General Assembly (2020).

In February of 2020 the report, three recommendations, and the two side-by-side comparisons were submitted. Presentations were made to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

Two separate recommendations, one regarding timelines, and one regarding an appendix for sexual misconduct cases are recognized as tasks to be completed.

Advisory Committee on the Constitution observations:

1. The revision in the Form of Government approved by the 219th General Assembly (2010) sought to condense the *Book of Order*. The proposed revision in Rules of Discipline expands the *Book of Order* to make it more accessible as a guide for the process of church discipline.

2. As it considers this document, the assembly is reminded that in this *Book of Order*:

a. SHALL and IS TO BE/ARE TO BE signify practice that is mandated,

b. SHOULD signifies practice that is strongly recommended,

c. IS APPROPRIATE signifies practice that is commended as suitable,

d. MAY signifies practice that is permissible but not required.

e. ADVISORY HANDBOOK signifies a handbook produced by agencies of the General Assembly to guide synods and presbyteries in procedures related to the oversight of ministry. Such handbooks suggest procedures that are commended, but not required.

3. The Rules of Discipline Task Force accomplished its charge as directed by the 222nd General Assembly (2016).

4. If the proposed revision is approved, determination needs to be made regarding the continuation and application of any existing authoritative interpretations relating to the current Rules of Discipline.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) as follows concerning Item 02-110. Silence regarding any particular provision may be interpreted, in this instance, as the Advisory Committee on the Constitution's advising the assembly to approve the provision without amendment.

Chapter I

D-1.0201 Church Discipline Defined

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises approving this provision with amendment:

“Church discipline is the church’s exercise of authority given by Christ, both to guide, control, and nurture its members, and for the constructive criticism of offenders. The church’s judicial process does not exist as a substitute for the secular judicial system, but to do what the secular judicial system cannot do. The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is infused with principles and standards to which all active members [and ministers of the Word and sacrament] voluntarily submit.”

The language “[t]he Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is infused with principles and standards to which all active members voluntarily submit” presents issues that the assembly should consider. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that the use of the term “active members” may improperly imply limitation to members of congregations because that term is so defined in G-1.0402 and, therefore, exclude ministers of the Word and Sacrament.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises instead that the language used in this section and in D-2.0301 be the same and, as discussed below, specify the category or categories of congregational membership to which Church Discipline applies.

Chapter 2

D-2.0301 Accountability of Individuals

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises approving this provision with amendment:

“Disciplinary process is the process by which [active] members of congregations and ministers of the Word and sacrament are held accountable to the church and to each other, and may be censured for an offense for the purpose of restoring the wholeness of the body of Christ.”

The use of the language “members of congregations” may be read to include affiliate and baptized members as well as active members under G-1.04. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that the terminology in both D-1.0201 and D-2.0301 should be consistent and suggests the use of “active members of congregations and ministers of the Word and Sacrament.”

Chapter III

D-3.0102 Reviewers and Effect on Quorum

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises approving this provision with amendment:

“The [~~stated clerk~~] [moderator of the permanent judicial commission] shall designate a special committee of three persons to review any petition for review of the procedures of the investigating committee while the investigation in a disciplinary case is in process (D-7.11), to review any petition for review of the decision not to file charges (D-7.1402), and to determine the need for administrative leave (D-7.0902). ... [The rest of this section remains unchanged.]”

The provision that “[t]he stated clerk shall designate a special committee of three persons to review any petition for review” presents issues that the assembly should consider. The current Rules of Discipline is silent as to who appoints the special committee. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution raises the question whether this authority should be vested with the stated clerk, or is it more properly assigned to the moderator of the permanent judicial commission. Because the stated clerk is expected to be a neutral resource and not a decision maker, this obligation is beyond the role of the stated clerk as envisioned by the *Book of Order*. In addition, the proposed Church Discipline allows the stated clerk to be the one who files accusation

and having the same person appoint the review committee threatens the neutrality of the role of the stated clerk in the judicial process.

D-3.0201 Classes and Terms

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds this provision presents issues. “Permanent judicial commissions shall be arranged in three classes of six years each, with each class as equal as possible in size and with one class completing its term every two years” is substantially different than the current Rules of Discipline requirement that “no more than one half of the members to be in one class.” The Advisory Committee on the Constitution questions whether a provision for transition is necessary.

D-3.0203d Eligibility

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises approving this provision with amendment:

“Continuing membership on a synod permanent judicial commission is contingent on ~~[the synod’s rules of representation]~~ [membership in a congregation or presbytery of the synod, and in the case of synods with a shared permanent judicial commission (G-3.0404), in accordance with the rules of representation agreed upon by the cooperating synods] ~~[but may not include any person not a member of a congregation or presbytery of the synod].~~”

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that the provision “[c]ontinuing membership on a synod permanent judicial commission is contingent on the synod’s rules of representation, but may not include any person not a member” might be read to imply that an individual member’s term may be truncated in order to meet representation requirements.

Chapter V

D-5.0502a

To clarify matters of jurisdiction, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises approving this provision with amendment:

“Any materials pertaining to the case shall be filed with the stated clerk of the council [hearing the case]. [Remainder of paragraph unchanged.]”

CHAPTER VII

D-7.0104(a) Deadlines

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises approving this provision with amendment:

“In determining whether or not a document is timely filed, the day following the event giving rise to the time limit begins the count as day one (for example, the day following the date ~~[on which a council action is taken]~~ [of the first meeting of an investigating committee], or the date on which a party receives a decision). ... [Remainder of paragraph unchanged.]”

This section sets forth the time limit for the timely filing of documents in a disciplinary case. Included in the definition is a parenthetical phrase, “(for example, the date upon which a council action is taken or on which a party receives a decision).” This phrase is misleading in a disciplinary case since at no time would a “council action” necessitate a time period for a disciplinary case.

D-7.0301 Primary Jurisdiction

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises approving this provision with amendment:

“Each council is responsible for the discipline of its members and has primary jurisdiction over any allegation against one of its members including any trial, [except as provided elsewhere] ~~[church members to their sessions and ministers of the Word and Sacrament to their presbyteries].~~”

This section states parenthetically where allegations should be filed; however, this section fails to state where allegations against commissioned pastors in a validated ministry should be filed. For clarity and constitutional consistency, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution recommends amendment.

D-7.0501 Referral to Investigating Committee

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises approving this provision with amendment:

“When a clerk of session or the stated clerk of a presbytery receives an allegation, without undertaking further inquiry, that clerk shall then report to the council only that an offense has been alleged without naming the accused or the nature of the alleged offense and refer the statement of allegation promptly to an investigating committee, which shall conduct an inquiry as defined below. The clerk of session or stated clerk shall also inform the accuser [~~and those alleged to have been harmed, if known,~~] of the disciplinary process and their rights and responsibilities in the process.”

This section would require the clerk or stated clerk to inform, among others, “those alleged to have been harmed,” of the disciplinary process being instituted and their rights under Section D-7.1002.

The proposed language of D-7.0501 raises issues of confidentiality. At this stage of the proceedings, charges have not yet been filed, and the investigation is just beginning. Charges may never be filed. Disclosure of the allegations outside of the investigating committee and beyond the person who made the accusation and the person accused at this stage raises issues of confidentiality.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution recognizes that this class of “those alleged to have been harmed” may be too numerous for practical notification. For example, an allegation of embezzlement against a minister officer of a presbytery might require notice to the entire presbytery. In addition, the language of D-7.0501 would require the clerk or stated clerk to decide who is in this class of “those alleged to have been harmed,” which may involve substantive decisions and bring into question the clerk’s neutrality.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that if the assembly wishes to retain notification to those who have allegedly been harmed, it should do so with the limitation that notice be given to “those natural persons who have been individually named in the written allegation.”

D-7.0801 Counsel

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises approving this provision with amendment:

“Where counsel is referred to in this section, counsel need not be a paid representative or an attorney. Counsel shall be a member of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). No member of a permanent judicial commission shall appear as counsel before that commission while a member [of that commission].”

Adding the proposed language clarifies that membership only refers to membership of the respective permanent judicial commission, and not to membership in the church more broadly.

D-7.0903 Effect of Administrative Leave

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises approving this provision with amendment:

“While administrative leave is in effect, the minister of the Word and sacrament shall not perform any pastoral, administrative, educational, or supervisory duties [~~and shall not officiate at any functions such as baptisms, funerals, or weddings~~] [or functions].”

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution notes the list is incomplete because it does not include communion. The list neither adds nor detracts from the stated intent of the section.

D-7.1002 Rights of Those Alleged to Have Been Harmed

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) to answer this section with the Advisory Committee on the Constitution’s advice under section D-7.0501.

D-7.1501(a)

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises approving this provision with amendment:

“a. In those instances where [secular] civil [or criminal] proceedings have commenced, the investigating committee may request of its session or permanent judicial commission and may receive an extension of its time for filing charges of

up to six months from the conclusion of any investigation or resulting trial undertaken by the civil authorities. The clerk of session or stated clerk of the council shall maintain contact with civil authorities to determine when such civil proceedings have concluded.”

This section states that where “civil proceedings” have commenced, the investigating committee may request and receive an extension of time to file charges. “Civil proceedings” is vague as to whether such proceedings include “criminal proceedings.” To avoid confusion and for clarity, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution recommends amendment.

D-7.1501(c)

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises approving this provision with amendment:

“For instances where a former minister of the Word and Sacrament who renounced jurisdiction while being accused in a disciplinary case [~~rejoins the church~~] [*again becomes an active member of a congregation (G-1.0402) or a member of a presbytery (G-2.0502, G-2.0503)*], no time limit from the time of the commission of the alleged offense to the filing of charges shall apply. Charges based on all accusations that had been made by the time that the former minister of the Word and Sacrament had renounced jurisdiction may be brought regardless of the date on which any such offense is alleged to have occurred.”

This section applies to a minister of the Word and Sacrament who has renounced jurisdiction while being accused in a disciplinary case and then “rejoins” the church. Under this set of circumstances, there is no time limit to the filing of charges against such a minister of the Word and Sacrament. The phrase, “rejoins the church,” is ambiguous in this context as there is no description as to how, in what manner, and in what classification this person rejoined the church. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution recommends for clarity and constitutional consistency the section be amended.

CHAPTER VIII

D-8.0102a

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises approving this provision with amendment:

“Any materials pertaining to the case shall be filed with the clerk of session or stated clerk of the presbytery [*hearing the case*]. Parties to a disciplinary case or their counsel or any other person shall not circulate or cause to be circulated directly to the members of the session or permanent judicial commission any written, printed, electronic, or visual materials of any kind upon any matter pertaining to the case before its final disposition. Notwithstanding this prohibition, the permanent judicial commission may request, or grant leave to file, additional materials.”

The amendment clarifies jurisdiction.

D-8.0103d(3)

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution recommends approval with amendment:

“if the accused is unable to afford counsel, the session or permanent judicial commission shall, after reviewing financial records of the accused, [*good cause appearing*], appoint counsel for the accused. Fees, if any, for this representation at the expense of the council shall be agreed upon in writing.”

This section allows an accused to request the appointment of counsel because the accused cannot afford counsel. The section states that after the accused’s financial records are reviewed the session or permanent judicial commission shall appoint counsel for the accused at the council’s expense but does not allow the session or permanent judicial commission to refuse the accused’s request.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution recommends amendment in order to give the session or permanent judicial commission the discretion to allow or disallow appointed counsel in this matter.

D-8.0103(d)

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises approving this provision with amendment in the form of an additional section:

[7) The Permanent Judicial Commission may consult with the parties and their counsel on any other pending or anticipated pretrial motion or matter that will need to be addressed before commencement of the trial. The Permanent Judicial Commission should establish deadlines and a trial date accordingly.]

D-8.0104a

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution would direct the assembly's attention to the committee's proposal at D-8.0104b. Should the assembly choose to follow the committee's advice at D-8.0104b, the committee advises the assembly to approve the proposed D-8.0104a with amendment as follows:

“The moderator of the session or permanent judicial commission shall schedule a trial [to be held no sooner than sixty (60) days following the pretrial conference. If the accused pleads guilty to all charges, no trial shall be held and] ~~[or]~~ a censure hearing ~~[if the accused pleads guilty to all charges, to]~~ [shall] be held no sooner than thirty (30) days following the pretrial conference.”

D-8.0104b

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises approving this provision with amendment:

“At least ~~[fifteen (15)]~~ [forty-five (45)] days in advance of the trial, the prosecuting committee shall provide the clerk of session or clerk of the permanent judicial commission and the other party with their list of witnesses and an outline of the evidence to be presented at trial. The accused shall provide the clerk of session or clerk of the permanent judicial commission and the other party with a preliminary list of witnesses [at least thirty (30) days in advance of the trial]. ~~[Parties or their representatives shall not contact the other party's witnesses prior to the trial.]~~ [A party may petition the session or permanent judicial commission, for good cause shown, to restrict or deny permission to contact a particular witness prior to trial.]”

The proposed deadline for designating witnesses does not allow adequate time to prepare for trial and does not provide for adequate time for calling witnesses for a trial. There is no opportunity for the accused to review the prosecution's witnesses and exhibits before submitting its own lists.

The stricture against contacting the other side's witnesses is a fundamental denial of due process to the accused. There is no limitation on who a party may add to a witness list, and any party could list so many names that the other side cannot prepare for trial in any meaningful way.

D-8.0104(c)

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 224th General Assembly that this provision presents issues the assembly should consider.

This section allows a session or permanent judicial commission to explore alternative resolution short of trial but does not allow a continuance of the trial for this purpose. In some circumstances, a continuance of the trial would benefit all parties concerned so that they may work towards a just resolution of the matter short of trial. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that if alternative resolution of the matter is sought by the parties, the session or permanent judicial commission be allowed, at its discretion, to issue any orders to facilitate the needs of the parties and the session or permanent judicial commission.

D-8.0701 Definition

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises approving this provision with amendment:

“The parties shall be accorded the opportunity to present evidence on their behalf. Evidence, in addition to oral testimony of witnesses, may include records, writings, material objects, or other items presented to prove the existence or nonexistence of a fact. Evidence must be relevant to be received. No distinction should be made between direct and circumstantial evidence as to the degree of proof required. [Laying a foundation means presenting preliminary evidence to show the authenticity and relevance of the evidence proposed. Evidence of authenticity goes to show the item is what the proponent claims it is. Relevant evidence is evidence that tends to prove or disprove a fact necessary to determine the outcome of a case.] No distinction should be made between direct and circumstantial evidence as to the degree of proof required.”

The terms “foundation” and “relevant” are not defined in these rules. Using these terms without definition may subject any finding by the session or permanent judicial commission to question and appeal.

D-8.0703 Hearsay Evidence

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises approving this provision with amendment:

“~~It is the historic practice of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to allow hearsay evidence~~ [~~Hearsay is a statement made outside the presence of the session or permanent judicial commission hearing the case, whether written or oral, and which is offered to prove the truth of whatever it asserts.~~] [~~b~~][~~B~~]because of the limitations of a council’s authority to compel witnesses to testify in a disciplinary process, as well as the limitations of resources in investigations[~~, hearsay evidence is allowed. The session or permanent judicial commission shall determine the credibility or weight of hearsay evidence.~~].”

This section intends to allow hearsay evidence in a disciplinary case. “Hearsay” is a statement made outside the presence of the session or permanent judicial commission hearing the case, whether written or oral, and which is offered to prove the truth of whatever it asserts.

The language of “historic practice” and the lack of a definition of “hearsay” raise the possibility of misunderstanding.

In addition, there are different types and levels of hearsay evidence. Some types of hearsay evidence are more credible than other types. For example, double hearsay, where the witness heard something from someone who heard the information from a third person, has less credibility than simple hearsay, where the witness heard something directly from a second person. Hearsay in written form, such as a letter, a memo, an email, or meeting minutes, is inherently more credible than oral statements. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that the session/permanent judicial commission consider whether such evidence be given the same weight as direct evidence.

D-8.0704f

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution approval with amendment:

“f. The session or permanent judicial commission may recognize other privileges [~~such as therapist-patient or doctor-patient privileges~~] as a basis for not compelling the testimony of a witness.”

This section contains an incomplete list of privileges that may be asserted at time of trial (e.g. the pastor/penitent privilege and attorney/client privilege are missing in the list).

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-110

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-110—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) to approve Item 02-110.

As the makers of the original Resolution (Item 05-09 from the 222nd General Assembly (2016)) to Ensure Adoption and Implementation of Child/Youth Protection Policies and Resources in the PC(USA) and Resolution (Item 11-09 from the 223rd General Assembly (2018)) on Sexual Misconduct in the PC(USA), the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns has long been on the forefront of advocating for policy changes that will prevent sexual abuse within the PC(USA).

ACWC concurs that the current Rules of Discipline section should be deleted and that the recommended Church Discipline section be inserted in its place. ACWC is particularly appreciative that the Rules of Discipline Task Force worked cooperatively with ACWC for input on these important policy changes. It is of utmost importance that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve these policies that protect the vulnerable.

Item 02-111

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 304.]

On Declaring the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to Be a Sanctuary and Accompaniment Church—from the Presbytery of San Jose.

The Presbytery of San Jose overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) to do the following:

1. Recognize and celebrate the many ways that the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has spoken out on behalf of immigrants, refugees, and their children, including the many statements and resolutions included in the document “Presbyterian Policy Around Comprehensive Immigration Reform and the Dream Act, the Spirit of Which Includes DACA”: [http://oga.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/images/summary_of_presbyterian_policy_around_daca_and_dapa_\(002\).pdf](http://oga.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/images/summary_of_presbyterian_policy_around_daca_and_dapa_(002).pdf).
2. Recognize and celebrate the resolution “Stop the Separation of Families” approved by the 223rd General Assembly (2018) (<https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000471>).
3. Recognize and celebrate the resolution “Reaffirming the Ministry of Sanctuary by Congregations” approved by the 222nd General Assembly (2016) (<https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000195>).
4. Recognize and celebrate the resolution “On Affirming Principles of Sanctuary in Response to the Global Escalation in the Number of Displaced Person/Refugees” approved by the 222nd General Assembly (2016) (<https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000194>).
5. Recognize and celebrate the history of many churches of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) who declared themselves “Sanctuary Churches” in the 1980s, risking prosecution and imprisonment for the sake of those who were fleeing for their lives from the wars in Central America.
6. Recognize that sanctuary is one way that Presbyterians continue to live out the Gospel call to love our neighbor and welcome the stranger and, thereby, some again risk prosecution and imprisonment by providing sanctuary to those in need.
7. Recognize that just as offering sanctuary to those in need is one way our churches are living out the Gospel of Christ, so too accompaniment of immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees is yet another way our churches are seeking to live out the Gospel by helping them as they struggle through the maze of immigration laws, detentions, and the fear of deportation.
8. We do hereby declare the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to be a “Sanctuary and Accompaniment Church” that supports and encourages its congregations, mid councils, and members to support immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and their children, and to resist efforts by the government to separate families.
9. And be it further resolved that the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) stands ready to assist its congregations in discerning their own calls to become “Sanctuary and Accompaniment” mid councils and congregations in equipping them to serve as places of welcome, refuge, accompaniment, and healing for those targeted due to their immigration status or other differences, while taking into consideration local contexts, capacity, and the results of congregational discernment.

Rationale

This overture builds on the work of previous General Assemblies mentioned above. While those overtures affirmed and celebrated the efforts of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), this overture seeks to take the next step by declaring our denomination a “Sanctuary and Accompaniment” church.

We are admonished by scripture to welcome the alien and stranger among us: “When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God” (Lev. 19:33); “I was a stranger and you welcomed me” (Mt. 25:35c). There are no less than twenty-two verses enjoining us to welcome the stranger and alien among us.

Romans 12:13 reads, “Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.” The Greek word for “stranger” here is *xenos*, the root word for xenophobia. Similarly, the Greek word for “hospitality” is *philoxenia* or love of the stranger. In other words, there can be no hospitality without love of the stranger, love of the other, love of those who are different from us.

The history of immigration policy in the United States is tainted with the sin of racism and xenophobia. Several administrations have struggled and failed to reform our broken immigration system. Some of their enforcement practices have been harmful to immigrant communities, such as the “Secure Communities” policy that disincentivized immigrants from reporting or cooperating with law enforcement. Yet this administration has exceeded the others with a shocking disregard for the well-being of children and the separation of children from their parents, as well as the separation of families in our own communities. Consequently, our undocumented friends live in fear of deportation, separation from their families, and possible impoverishment when the family breadwinner is detained and/or deported.

Many of our churches have declared themselves Matthew 25 churches. Sanctuary and accompaniment are ways of addressing systemic poverty and racism that are fundamental to being a Matthew 25 church. While sanctuary usually refers to a person living within a church or on the church campus, accompaniment refers to all the ways that people are helping immigrants in order to prevent the need for sanctuary. Sanctuary can be a disaster for the person or family that goes into sanctuary. All of their normal connections with their family change; all of their normal connections with the community cease. For these reasons, accompaniment is preferable to sanctuary when possible. Accompaniment may include, among other things, helping them find housing, medical care, a pro bono attorney to navigate the legal system, education, support services, transportation, etc.

Matthew 25:35 says “I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me.” The situation on the border and throughout our country demands that the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) speak out with urgency. As we witness our borders being closed to asylum seekers, forcing them to return to the dangerous places they have fled, we remember that Jesus and his parents were themselves refugees from Herod’s murderous intentions (Matt 2:13–23).

By declaring the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) a “Sanctuary and Accompaniment Church,” we are publicly declaring that we will not be silent and we will not stand by while families continue to be separated and while refugees are turned away. By declaring our denomination as a “Sanctuary and Accompaniment Church,” we are heeding our charge as followers of Jesus Christ to act in ways that support the stranger in our midst and to treat our neighbors as ourselves. By declaring our denomination as a “Sanctuary and Accompaniment Church,” we create a witness that is public and we become a truly confessing church.

Most importantly, we share the Gospel of Jesus Christ by making his body visible in the world. The situation at our border demands that we no longer hide our light under a bushel. It is time to raise our lamps and make clear our intention to stand with Christ who is the very stranger in our midst.

Concurrences to Item 02-111 from the Presbyteries of de Cristo and Plains and Peaks.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-111

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-111—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP)

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) to approve Item 02-111 with amendment by adding two recommendations as follows:

“[10. Recommends that in this time of coronavirus and hereafter, governments at all levels need to give immigrants of all statuses the same access to public health care as is available to U.S. citizens, both for humanitarian-Christian reasons and because the nation cannot deal adequately with a pandemic if 11 million or more residents are denied treatment.]”

“[11. Advises congregations that become sanctuary churches that they may need extra, external financial assistance, especially if providing sanctuary embroils them unavoidably in legal difficulties. Although the PC(USA) at the national and mid council levels cannot guarantee unlimited funding to cover such costs, and the self-designation above (Recommendation 8) should not be taken to so imply, the assembly encourages appropriate offices to provide information on potential sources of funds, legal assistance, and other forms of aid for their witness.]”

With many in the church, ACSWP deeply admires the courage of those who offer hospitality to asylum-seekers, refugees, and others fleeing desperate circumstances. Three of our eleven current members are in congregations that have taken a range of sanctuary measures. Thus, we want to be quite clear about the potential costs of discipleship in this area.

At the same time, commissioners may wish to encourage or request proactive legal action, preparation, or Friend of Court brief support from appropriate agencies of the church to protect sanctuary churches and other bodies, or to challenge policies or enforcement, consistent with our immigration policies. In the well-known case involving Southside Presbyterian Church in Tucson back in the 1980s, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church both provided support partly on First Amendment grounds to prevent infiltration of worship services by (then) INS agents. The 2014 Assembly resolution on Drones, War, and Surveillance included a provision specifically aimed at new forms of this problem:

02 RECOMMENDED REFERRALS TO THE 225TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2022)

The church's emphasis on spiritual freedom of conscience and the work of the Holy Spirit in community lead us to maintain that congregational life is protected from governmental and commercial intrusion. In order to uphold both privacy rights and the separation of church and state, we regard all spaces of worship as surveillance-free zones. Aware of the potential for abuse by both government agencies and criminal enterprises, surveillance of individuals should only intrude into congregational life under extraordinary circumstances and in each case should require a warrant or court order. Recognizing the role of technology in facilitating overreaching surveillance, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) encourages the church to examine its own technological choices and, where feasible, use hardware and software, such as Free and Open Source software, that allows us to avoid participation in this surveillance except under extraordinary circumstances with a warrant or court order.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-111

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-111—From the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) to approve Item 02-111.

The PC(USA) has, over the years, developed numerous policies around the subject of immigration, as well as guidelines for congregations and communities to discern if they should become a sanctuary congregation. ACWC encourages the 224th General Assembly (2020) to approve this overture based on the "Sanctuary Movement Pledge" printed in the *Sanctuary: A Discernment Guide for Congregations* (<https://www.pcusa.org/resource/sanctuary-discernment-guide-congregations/>) produced by the Office of Public Witness, PC(USA), in June 2017.

As people of faith and people of conscience, we pledge to resist the current administration's policy proposals to target and deport millions of undocumented immigrants and discriminate against marginalized communities. We will open up our congregations and communities as sanctuary spaces for those targeted by hate and work alongside our friends, families, and neighbors to ensure the dignity and human rights of all people (*Sanctuary: A Discernment Guide for Congregations*, 4).

OGA COMMENT ON ITEM 02-111

COGA has advised that this item be referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). However, should the assembly determine that this item of business is core and critical to our governance and sustainability, and needs to be considered by 224th General Assembly (2020), OGA provides this comment.

The Office of the General Assembly, through the Office of Immigration Issues, reminds this assembly of the rich history of Presbyterian immigration advocacy. The General Assembly, through the church's antecedents, has been making policy in support of immigrants since 1893 when we opposed the Chinese Exclusion Act. As to sanctuary, we have been making statements in support of that ministry for thirty-six years. These sanctuary statements and other resources for sanctuary congregations can be found at www.pcusa.org/sanctuary. Just as sanctuary is an important expression of our faith, so are other forms of accompanying those with immigration issues, such as helping a member prepare for possible detention or deportation with a family care plan (www.pcusa.org/familycareplan) or gathering to resist a deportation (www.pcusa.org/supportingimmigrants). This office views this piece of business as a challenge to congregations and mid councils to consider what relationships and ministries can be nurtured and supported in their own communities. Should this piece of business become policy, this office, with the help of the many denominational ministries whose work intersects with immigration like Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the Office of Public Witness, the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations, World Mission, and Racial Equity and Women's Intercultural Ministries, is ready to resource those congregations and mid councils who decide to answer this challenge.

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 02-111

Presbyterian Mission Agency Comment on Item 02-111. On Declaring the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to Be a Sanctuary and Accompaniment Church.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency agrees with the important role that Presbyterian congregations, mid councils, and individuals are playing when they respond to the needs of asylum seekers and vulnerable immigrants through accompaniment and sanctuary. In the past two years, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) has seen a continued expansion of asylum accompaniment in the United States. When we say "accompaniment," we mean the work of walking alongside an asylum seeker or family as they go through the legal process of seeking asylum. The work of accompaniment can include: legal services, housing, clothing, food, language/interpretation, medical and mental health, education, social/spiritual needs, community activity, job placement related activities, and advocacy.

There are a number of resources developed by Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) and ecumenical partners including the *Toolkit for Congregations to Faithfully Accompany People Seeking Asylum*. Three PDA grants to mid councils in 2019 were given to support the recruitment and mentoring of church groups and volunteers to engagement in accompaniment. Accompaniment and sanctuary have become more important than ever in order to ensure access to due process, that United States immigration authorities follow United States and International standards for the rights of refugees and migrants. Another helpful resource is the 211th General Assembly (1999) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) resolution on "Transformation of

Churches and Society Through Encounter with New Neighbors” and related study guide. Although the term “accompaniment” was not used at that time, its call to ministry and justice describe the very essence of accompaniment as it is understood today. PDA is in the process of hiring a staff person to work more closely with mid councils and domestic asylum and refugee ministries, including asylum accompaniment. PDA would welcome the opportunity to organize regional or national networking opportunities to encourage and strengthen accompaniment ministries.

REAC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-111

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-111—From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC).

The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) to approve Item 02-111.

The Organization for Mission states “... the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC) shall be a prophetic voice for involving people of color in the formation of public policy, particularly where race is a factor that negatively impacts the quality of life of people of color” (Organization for Mission, VI.1).

True to its mandate, REAC has consistently advocated for all immigrants, but specifically for undocumented immigrants who come to the U.S. and are mainly people of color from the Global South. They come escaping war, political upheaval, murderous gangs, and poverty, all for the most part byproducts of the United States, which over the years has intruded into those countries with either direct military might or covert actions to depose “unfriendly” democratically elected governments. Moreover, U.S. corporations have also added to the situation by engaging in suspect economic dealings that benefited mostly their coffers to the detriment of these countries’ economies. The renowned church historian, Justo González, puts it in this manner: “Indeed, the notion that the North is successful while the South is a failure lies at the root of the struggle of many Hispanics in this country with their own identity. But an economic analysis of the entire situation shows a relation of cause and effect so that our presence in this country is not a sign of the success of the North but rather of its failure, for its mis-developing of the South” (Mañana: Christian Theology from a Hispanic Perspective).

Therefore, declaring the Presbyterian Church (USA), a “sanctuary church” will fully show our solidarity with the hungry, the thirsty, the sick, and above all, the stranger.

Item 02-112

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 304.]

On the Inclusion of Inclusive Gender Options When Gender Information Is Collected by Any Entity in the PC(USA)—From the Presbytery of National Capital.

The Presbytery of National Capital overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) to approve the addition of inclusive gender options when gender information is collected by any entity in the PC(USA). This includes but is not limited to: session annual statistical reports, registration forms for any PC(USA) body or gathering, pastor information forms (PIFs), ministry information forms (MIFs), and other statistical measures.

Rationale

Our faith teaches us that God created all humanity in the divine image. As Genesis 1:26 proclaims, “Then God said, ‘Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness.’”

From that basic conviction about our universal human condition, the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approved the following statement of inclusion of transgender members of our church:

Transgender inclusion is lived out in our congregations and Presbyterian institutions in the following ways:

- Welcoming statements that specifically name transgender and gender non-binary people as included within the life of the church.
- Policies that are inclusive of transgender and gender non-binary people.
- Available facilities such as bathrooms that are either designated as gender neutral, or allow for transgender and non-binary people to use the facility that matches their gender identity.
- Worship, liturgy, and hymns employ language inclusive of all gender identities.
- Transgender and gender non-binary people’s pronouns are respected and used appropriately. (*Minutes*, 2018, Part I, p. 1051)

Therefore, we follow up on this recommendation and state that it is time to enact policies that are inclusive of transgender and people who identify as non-binary by counting them in all our roles across the PC(USA).

Supporting Document A

A sample template for gender options is found below, modified from a UCLA Law School document.

What is your gender identity? (Check all that apply)

Male

Female

trans male/trans man

trans female/trans woman

genderqueer/gender non-conforming/non-binary

different identity (please state): _____

<https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/geniuss-report-sep-2014.pdf>

Concurrences to Item 02-112 from the Presbyteries of de Cristo, Santa Fe, San Jose, and The James.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-112

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-112—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Item 02-112 calls for the inclusion of inclusive language options when gender information is collected by any entity of the PC(USA).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) to approve Item 02-112.

The 223rd General Assembly (2018) approved in a consent agenda an overture on celebrating the gifts of people of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities in the life of the church. That assembly expressed thanks for LGBTQ+ pioneers who, at great personal cost and sacrifice, persisted in moving the church toward a more generous, loving, and just understanding of God's grace. It also approved in a consent agenda an overture affirming and celebrating the full dignity and humanity of people of all gender identities. This affirmation was rooted in the Reformed understanding of Scripture, that all people are created in the image of God.

Language is a significant agent for recognizing and affirming the full human dignity of persons. Transgender and gender non-binary persons deserve to see themselves reflected in the language that is used in the PC(USA). True welcome and inclusion is manifested in our use of language. When statistical reports, registration forms, information and ministerial forms only provide binary gender categories for identification (male/female), transgender and gender non-binary persons are made invisible by exclusive language. Approval of this overture provides an opportunity to further the full inclusion of LGBTQ+ persons in the life of the PC(USA).

ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-112

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-112—From the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) to approve Item 02-112.

Gender exists on a spectrum, and in order to fully celebrate the abundance of gender variance among God's creation, the PC(USA) needs to proactively allow for inclusive gender options. ACWC, in its commitment to gender justice, recognizes that to fully welcome one into the kin-dom of God, we must honor their self-identity, inclusive of a range of gender options.

GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 02-112

General Assembly Committee on Representation Comment on Item 02-112. On the Inclusion of Inclusive Gender Options When Gender Information Is Collected by Any Entity in the PC(USA).

This item has been recommended to be referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). However, should the assembly determine that this item of business needs to be considered by the 224th General Assembly (2020), GACOR provides this comment.

GACOR supports this committee recommendation for our denomination to approve the addition of inclusive gender options when gender information is collected by any entity in the PC(USA). Some of this work is already in place. As adjustments to instruments are considered, this will be added to the areas of amendment.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation is made up of sixteen persons, elected by the General Assembly, who are drawn from members and elders, ruling and teaching, from across the church in accordance with F-1.0403. Its constitutional mandate and central functions are described in G-3.0103 of the Book of Order (Form of Government).

Item 02-113

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 304.]

On Amending G-3.0104 to Allow Appointment of Ruling Elder Moderator or Moderation of Session Electronically from a Remote Location in Extraordinary Circumstances—From the Presbytery of Southeastern Illinois.

The Presbytery of Southeastern Illinois overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to G-3.0104 to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative vote:

Shall the first paragraph of G-3.0104 be amended as follows: [Text to be added is shown as italic.]

“The pastor of a congregation shall be the moderator of the session of that congregation. In congregations where there are co-pastors, they shall both be considered moderators and have provisions for designating who presides at a particular meeting. If it is impractical for the pastor to moderate, he or she shall invite another minister of the Word and Sacrament who is a member of the presbytery or a person authorized by the presbytery to serve as moderator. If there is no installed pastor, or if the installed pastor is unable to invite another moderator, the presbytery shall make provision for a moderator. *Ordinarily, this appointed moderator is expected to be another minister of the Word and Sacrament who is a member of that presbytery. Extraordinary circumstances, such as extreme weather conditions or a lack of available substitutes within a reasonable geographic distance, may require the presbytery to appoint a ruling elder to moderate the session on a one-time basis or to allow a minister of the Word and Sacrament who is a member of the presbytery to moderate a single session meeting electronically from a remote location.*”

Rationale

In larger metropolitan areas when there is a need for substitute session moderator leadership, there are usually several pools of people from which to draw, such as the pool of retired ministers of the Word and Sacrament or ministers of the Word and Sacrament serving in Presbyterian congregations. The reality is different in presbyteries that have wide geography and very small congregations, many of whom lack full-time pastoral leadership. These congregations are usually able to secure the cooperation of ministers of the Word and Sacrament from other places in the presbytery to moderate their sessions. While it is sometimes personally inconvenient for these individuals to assume such duties, they step up and do so for the good of the church. We thank God for their service. There are times, however, when for unexpected urgencies such as inclement weather or illness, these individuals are not able to moderate a scheduled session meeting and are not able to find a substitute. In such a situation, the session cannot meet and the work of the church grinds to a halt. We propose a modest change in the *Book of Order*, under which presbyteries would be allowed to establish their own procedures for expeditious one-time appointment of a ruling elder to moderate a session meeting or, alternatively, for the appointment of a minister of the Word and Sacrament to moderate the meeting electronically.

Concurrences to Item 02-113 from the Presbyteries of Blackhawk, de Cristo, and Mississippi.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 02-113

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) to disapprove Item 02-113.

The overture seeks to amend G-3.0104 by expanding the provision on the appointment of moderators for particular meetings of sessions.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that G-3.0104 already authorizes the appointment of moderators in various circumstances. It also explicitly authorizes the appointment of “a minister of the Word and Sacrament who is a member of the presbytery *or a person authorized by the presbytery*” (emphasis added). Such persons could clearly be ruling elders from the presbytery’s congregations. The proposed language is therefore redundant and unnecessary.

Regarding electronic meetings, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that the constitution allows councils to meet electronically, provided such meetings are authorized in a council’s bylaws or manual of administrative operations.

The ACC is concerned that the amendment, as written, could be interpreted to mean that presbyteries are authorized to *require* sessions to meet electronically, which the ACC finds to be an overreach of presbytery authority over a session.

Item 02-114

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 304.]

The Presbytery of Susquehanna Valley overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) of the PC(USA) to address the crisis of depleted uranium in Iraq, an ongoing effect of the U.S. invasion that is now poisoning the people and the land. In so doing, it recalls the overtures of the 223rd General Assembly (2018), (Item 08-04) “On Renewing Our Call to Promote Environmental Justice” and (Item 08-05) “On Responding to Environmental Racism” by directing the pertinent offices of the PC(USA) to seek the justice of a lasting remedy by doing the following:

1. *Comprehensive Testing and Remedy*

a. Direct the Stated Clerk of the PC(USA) to send a message to the U.S. president, the U.S. secretary of state, the U.S. secretary of defense, and to each U.S. senator and representative urging, with the consent of the Iraqi government,

(1) an immediate and comprehensive assessment of the distribution of depleted uranium in Iraq, including inventory of remaining military equipment, and testing and mapping of soil and water contamination due to the presence of depleted uranium;

(2) a thorough epidemiological report of the Iraqi population to discern the health effects of depleted uranium, including its infant mortality rates;

(3) removal and containment of depleted uranium in Iraq by committing existing capabilities and resources in the U.S. in conjunction with funding, training, and equipping Iraqi workers to do the job;

(4) funding, training, and equipping Iraqi clinics and hospitals to treat those suffering the physical and mental health effects of depleted uranium;

(5) ongoing testing and epidemiological reporting to discern the results of remedial measures; and

(6) full cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in their work in Iraq.

b. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through its Office of Public Witness and the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations, to support this witness in their work, as well as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), as they have done substantial characterization work already and have financial and oversight resources toward performing these actions.

2. *Work to End the Military Use of Depleted Uranium*

Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through its Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations, to work with representatives of member states to urge a worldwide ban on the military use of depleted uranium.

Rationale

There is sufficient documentation available to confirm that depleted uranium (DU) was used in armor penetrating weapons by the United States and its allies in the 1990s Gulf War and the 2003 and subsequent US-led War on Terror in Iraq (including attacks against ISIS-held territories) (Al-Kinani, 2006; Al-Azzawi, 2017; Fetter & von Hippel, 1999; IAEA, 2010; Oakford, 2017; Research Advisory, 2004; and many more not listed here). There is also reason to believe Iraq was using DU-enhanced armor either self-developed in Iraq or obtained from other countries during the 2000s wars in Iraq. As a result of nearly thirty

years of fighting, there are substantial regions of Iraq that have been contaminated by DU. Examples of the modes of contamination include leftover military materials containing DU lying around as litter, airborne particles of DU, and contamination of the soil, surface water, and underground aquifers. Among the regions in Iraq most affected by DU contamination are the southern region around Basra, Al Zubayr, An Nasiriyah, and As Samawah; central Iraq, especially around Baghdad and An Najaf; and Mosul in northern Iraq.

Depleted uranium is a known radiological and toxic hazard. From Sarkis Agaian, March 12, 2011:

DU's chemical and radiological toxicities may have negative health effects. Health consequences from DU's chemical toxicity [DU is a heavy metal much like lead] result from its inhalation, ingestion, and dermal contact and resulting entry into the bloodstream. Once the DU compounds have entered the bloodstream, they are filtered by kidneys. Depending on the level of exposure, however, DU may impair the kidney function by causing damage to the kidney cells. High DU intake over a prolonged period of time can result in acute kidney failure and death. DU's radiological toxicity has also raised health concerns. Studies on troops and local populations where DU ammunition had been used during the Gulf War and Balkan conflicts show that exposure to DU may have increased the probability of individuals developing lung and bone cancer, non-malignant respiratory disease, skin disorders, neurocognitive disorders, chromosomal damage, and birth defects. Still, these studies were not conclusive enough to determine the precise observable health effects and residual cancer risk estimates that may arise from moderate exposure to DU. (<http://large.stanford.edu/courses/2011/ph241/agaian2/>)

The two most in-depth studies on the areal and compositional extent of DU contamination in Iraq are IAEA (2010) and Al-Azzawi (2017). The IAEA report describes detailed sample data across Iraq with DU content and radioactive dose rates. It also gives detailed descriptions of the surface accumulation of fragments of military equipment still left in Iraq. Al Azzawi provides a historical account of the use of DU in Iraq, and a significant amount of medical and anecdotal data regarding birth defects and health effects that have plagued Iraqis over the past three decades. The conclusions in her report (<https://www.globallresearch.ca/depleted-uranium-radioactive-contamination-in-iraq-an-overview/3116>) include the following:

- The U.S.A. and U.K. continuously used Depleted Uranium weapons against the population and environment in Iraq from 1991 until today [2017].
- The U.S. intentionally denied and covered up the types, locations and amounts of DU projectiles that have been used in Iraq to prevent taking measures that could have reduce health damages on civilians resulting from the exposure to cumulative doses of these contaminants.
- UNEP, WHO, and other international agencies have been unable to conduct any exploration programs to detect DU contamination and assess the health risks and clean up remedies the way it has been conducted in Serbia and Kosovo.
- Exploration programs and site measurements proved without a doubt that the existence of DU related radioactive contamination all over most of Iraq (except the northern area of Kurdistan).
- Published epidemiological studies in Basra introduced a clear correlation between DU related exposure and the multifold increase of malignancies, congenital malformations, and multiple malformations among the population in DU contaminated areas.
- Other pathological and hematological studies indicated the existence of chromosomal and DNA aberrations and abnormalities in the 1991 Iraqi Gulf War veterans. Other studies proved their effects on lowering the activities of the human immune system in exposed individuals.
- Iraqi researchers' site measurements since year 2000 revealed that Muthana governorate and Al-Samawa city were DU contaminated since 1991. This fact was supported later on by the Dutch troops in 2003, and also by the results of medical tests of the American National Guardsmen who served in that area after the conflict. These tests confirmed the accuracy of the researches conducted in Iraq.

What Is Depleted Uranium?

Uranium is a radioactive element that can be found naturally in rocks, water, and even human beings. It is found in various ores around the world. Its primary uses are for the generation of nuclear energy in nuclear fission power plants, various medical uses, and in certain types of military weapons. "Approximately 0.0003 percent of earth crust and 3.0 µg/L in sea water is made up of uranium" (Bleise et al., 2003). The average concentration of uranium in the human body, resulting from the normal intake of food and water, is approximately 90mg, 66% of which is found in the skeleton, 16% in the liver, 8% in the kidneys, and the remaining 10% in other tissues (Agaian, 2011).

Uranium in its natural form is typically composed of three isotopes. The most prevalent isotope is U-238. It is non-fissile, which means it cannot sustain a chain reaction in a thermal-neutron reactor. Its primary mode of ionizing radiation is alpha decay, which is the least dangerous form of radiation and the most easily blocked by shielding. For this reason, and also because

of its high density, U-238 is often used in shielding materials because it will block more deadly gamma and x-ray radiation, while its own alpha radiation is absorbed by other materials. U-238 comprises about 99% of natural uranium. The other predominant component of natural uranium, approximately 0.7% or 1 atom out of 140, is U-235; this is the isotope that is desired for nuclear power generation. U-235 is also used in certain types of fissile nuclear weapons (which is why the current political situation with Iran is so important). U-235 also releases more beta and gamma radiation than does U-238, thus producing a higher dosage rate of radiation exposure.

Speaking very generally, there are two primary ways that natural uranium is processed for specific uses. One is to convert U-238 to fissile plutonium for use in nuclear weapons; this process is not a concern for the current discussion. The other is to isolate U-235 by extracting U-238 from natural uranium. This is done by a variety of processes, most typically in a centrifuge. The resulting enriched uranium has much more than 0.7% U-235. The removed uranium, while still mostly U-238, still has some U-235 in it, but at a much lower percentage. The removed or leftover uranium is called depleted uranium (DU), and it is defined by a U-235 content of 0.3% or less.

DU has been used in civilian and military applications as a result of its high density. DU is used as shields in radiation therapy, containers to transport radioactive materials, and counterweights in aircrafts. DU is used in the military in conventional warheads, because the high density increases the penetration effectiveness of the weapon, and in armor plating because its high density will prevent penetration from less dense warhead materials, and since it will not ignite on impact for temperatures below 600°C. (Agaian, 2011).

In What Ways Is DU Dangerous?

Depleted uranium affects the human body through ionizing radiation and chemical toxicity. The radioactivity of DU is primarily as an alpha particle emitter. As radiation goes, this is the least damaging, because it is the largest particle and can be stopped from penetrating the skin by regular clothing (in fact, in small doses skin is a sufficient barrier to alpha particles). However, soft tissues such as lungs and kidneys can be damaged by alpha particles. For this reason, the primary radiological hazard from DU is through inhalation; airborne particles inhaled into the lungs can damage the lung tissue and lead to lung cancer. Ingestion through contaminated water or food can similarly cause damage to the kidneys.

Depleted uranium is probably more damaging due to its heavy metal toxicity. Much like lead, DU exposure and ingestion can cause diseases of the kidney and liver, and also significant debilitating birth defects. Al-Kinani (2006) and Al-Azzawi (2017) provide significant documentation of widespread diseases and birth defects that are likely due to extensive DU contamination throughout Iraq.

How Is Radioactive Waste Generally Disposed?

There are several levels of radioactive waste, defined primarily by the radioactivity and heat output, half-life lengths, and daughter decay products. Without getting too detailed, waste determined to be high-level radioactive waste is typified by highly radioactive material (lots of beta and gamma radiation) such as bomb-grade uranium and spent nuclear fuel rods from nuclear power plants. There is currently no underground repository for such high-level waste; the Yucca Mountain site in Nevada has been designated to be such a site but has not yet been constructed due to politics. Finland is currently the only country that is close to implementing a permanent repository for high-level waste. Low-level waste is typified by either radioactive materials with low radioactivity levels (such as alpha emitters) or materials that have been contaminated with radioactive material (work clothes, cleaning cloths, etc.) The Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) is a facility in southeastern New Mexico where low-level nuclear waste is being buried 2000 feet deep in salt.

The following information is from a discussion with an American representative at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna. The discussion centered around how DU is classified as a waste product, and what previous IAEA involvement had occurred regarding DU contamination in Iraq. First of all, he said that in the U.S. and Western countries, DU is not technically classified as a waste, but as a resource, because it has many uses, both military and non-military. There are no current programs directed at permanent disposal of DU. It is generally stored in containers at protected sites (also in US DOE, 2008). If it were to be classified as a waste product, it would be considered a low-level radioactive waste because of its primarily alpha-type radiation, which would make it easier to dispose of than spent fuel or bomb-grade uranium. Because DU is a heavy metal, and there may also be other heavy metals comingled with the DU, that adds a toxic waste element to the waste, but some of the waste buried at WIPP has similar characteristics.

What Can Be Done to Remediate DU Contamination?

In discussions with several people involved in permanent disposal of radioactive waste, and in cleanup of contaminated sites around the world, several key points were demonstrated. First, no cleanup or remediation effort will be able to accomplish anything without approval and cooperation of the Iraqi government. This overture authorizes officials to petition the U.S. State Department to offer assistance and cleanup to the Iraqis.

The first step of cleanup would be actually identifying contaminated sites, characterize the isotopes and doses, removing leftover DU-containing armaments, and then digging or dredging the areas to collect as much contaminated soil as possible. If feasible, barriers may be installed to prevent further dispersion of DU into the surrounding water table. Much of the characterization work has already been done by the IAEA and several Iraqi scientists, but the scope of the problem is still not well defined. This material could be safely stored in barrel drums until a permanent solution is constructed. The IAEA representative said that in the 1990s, the IAEA, United States, and Iraq worked together to do some characterization of the contaminated areas to develop a plan for cleanup and remediation. However, after several geopolitical changes, that cleanup effort never happened. More importantly, he said that the IAEA has funding and the capability to provide assistance in cleaning up the areas, but Iraq has to ask. There are intergovernmental and interagency negotiations that have to be done to secure this help, but it sounds like that is not a big hurdle if Iraq were to ask for the help.

The cost to remove the DU from the contaminated areas will be enormous, certainly in the tens of millions of dollars and perhaps more. It will require heavy equipment, facilities in which to store thousands of barrels of contaminated soil, and specific training. It will also require cooperation of the Iraqi government, and perhaps even contracting to Iraqi companies to assist in the work. It will also be dangerous, not only because of handling contaminated soil, but also in that the workers will be targets. Between U.S. Department of Energy national laboratories, other U.S. contractors, the IAEA, and some other international organizations, the technology to remove the soil and safely store it for several years already exists. The U.S. conducted some remediation operations in Kuwait and Kosovo after operations there (IAEA, 2003; Oakford, 2017). Site-specific procedures for removal and remediation will have to be developed.

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Concurrences to Item 02-114 from the Presbyteries of de Cristo, Pittsburgh, and Providence.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-114

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-114—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 02-114.

Depleted uranium is one more dimension of the massively tragic intervention that the United States made in Iraq. We—every U.S. taxpayer—share in a moral obligation to help with Iraq's restoration, even if we personally and as a church opposed the war. This was recognized by the 218th General Assembly (2008) in the resolution quoted below and in the longer study

paper, “Costly Lessons of the Iraq War.” ACSWP commends the proponents of this overture for their thorough care for the scientific and legal aspects of radioactive waste removal.

We draw attention to the phrase, “*with the consent of the Iraqi government.*” Despite the problem that the “Iraqi government” does not have control over many parts of the territory that comprised Iraq before our invasions, the United States government should ask them what they would like us to do about the uranium—what are their priorities among the actions listed in section 1.a. of the overture?

As part of our offer of assistance, the United States should share information from our military records about the quantity and location of depleted uranium ordinance that it has used in Iraq. The overture recognizes the international dimensions of the situation, beyond the United States and Iraq. This might be combined, at least in some areas, with offering assistance in remediation from the effects of smoke and debris from “burn pits,” which included toxic plastics, rubber, and other metals. To prevent this problem in the future, we strongly endorse Recommendation 2.

From the resolution, On Building Peace in Iraq, 2008, <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/6-building-peace-in-iraq-2008.pdf>:

7. Call upon the United States and other responsible nations to voluntarily make restitution in an amount adequate to repair war damage; to fully investigate, and where appropriate, in accordance with the principles of due process recognized in U.S. and international law, to prosecute all charges of war crimes including torture and mis-treatment of prisoners; and to cooperate completely with any international investigations of war crimes committed by any party to the conflict in Iraq.

8. Call upon the United States to remove all weapons, mines, *depleted uranium*, and other military waste products from Iraq; to repair other damage to the environment, including priceless archaeological sites. [Emphasis added.]

9. Call upon the United States to return full direct control of Iraq’s oil resources and oil revenues to Iraq.

Item 02-115

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 304.]

On Changing the Boundary Between the Presbytery of Glacier and the Presbytery of Yellowstone—From the Synod of the Rocky Mountains.

The Synod of the Rocky Mountains overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) to change the boundary between the Presbytery of Glacier and the Presbytery of Yellowstone by redrawing the boundary through Jefferson County, Montana, so that Jefferson County, Montana North of the Boulder River falls within the Presbytery of Glacier.

Rationale

The Presbytery of Glacier and the Presbytery of Yellowstone request this change in boundaries between the two presbyteries. The Presbytery of Glacier has established a ministry in Basin, Montana, which currently is located within the bounds of the Presbytery of Yellowstone. The two presbyteries have agreed that this boundary change should be made so that the Presbytery of Glacier will be able to continue working with this ministry and assume all authority and liability for the ministry in Basin, Montana.

Concurrence to Item 02-115 from the Presbytery of de Cristo.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 02-115

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) to approve Item 02-115.

The overture from the Synod of the Rocky Mountains proposes to resolve a jurisdictional issue raised by the presence of a ministry of the Presbytery of Glacier in Basin, Montana, a town that is currently within the geographic bounds of the Presbytery of Yellowstone. Item 02-115 would resolve the jurisdictional issue.

Item 02-116

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 304.]

A Call for Ending the Siege of Gaza and Collective Punishment of Innocent Palestinian and Israeli Citizens—From the Presbytery of New Castle.

The Presbytery of New Castle overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to do the following:

1. Call for the United States government to:

a. Exhort the government of Israel immediately to cease and desist all hostile actions that are defined as “collective punishment” under international law. This includes stopping military attacks by air, land, and sea on non-military targets in Gaza that have disproportionately killed thousands of Palestinian civilians and caused billions of dollars in property damage since 2008.

b. Exhort the government of Israel to end the siege of Gaza that restricts its access to adequate water and electricity and the entrance of food, medicine, and fuel to Palestinians in Gaza so as to alleviate and end the humanitarian and environmental crises caused by the siege and provide the material resources necessary for economic prosperity, human health and safety, and environmental protection.

c. Exhort the government of Gaza and all Palestinian militias within Gaza to cease and desist all hostile activities against Israel and its citizens that are defined as “collective punishment” under international law. This includes the launching of unguided rockets into civilian areas of Israel.

2. Direct the Stated Clerk to communicate this action to all other PC(USA) councils, the U.S. government, and to the press and media.

Rationale

Purpose

This overture is pursued with the hope that

- the cessation of the Israeli government’s collective punishment of Palestinians (both Muslims and Christians) in Gaza will allow Palestinians to have the necessities for human life and will help lead to a peaceful and just end to the conflict; and
- likewise, the cessation of collective punishment of Israeli citizens by the government and Palestinian militias in Gaza will contribute to a peaceful reconciliation between the two peoples.

The situation in Israel/Palestine cannot and will not improve unless and until these actions perpetrated by each side on the other, and defined by the Geneva Conventions as collective punishment, end for good.

International Definition of Collective Punishment

Collective punishment is a form of retaliation whereby, if a person commits a crime, that person’s family members, friends, acquaintances, sect, neighbors or entire ethnic group are targeted for retaliation. The punished group may often have no direct association with the person who perpetrated the crime or direct control over their actions.

Article 3 of the 1949 Geneva Convention states that communities and nation states are prohibited from taking actions where “persons may be punished for an offense he or she has not personally committed. Collective penalties and likewise all measures of intimidation or of terrorism are prohibited. Reprisals against persons and their property are prohibited.” This includes actions against civilians or property in reprisal for actions taken by their government, over which they have no control.

The International Committee of the Red Cross commentary to the conventions states that parties to a conflict often would resort to “intimidating measures to terrorize the population” in hopes of preventing hostile acts, but such practices actually “strike at guilty and innocent alike.” They are opposed to these inhumane and unjust actions.

Numerous examples since Roman times of communities or nation states using collective punishment in armed struggles or the occupation of conquered territories include

- military operations that disproportionately kill civilians based on their ethnicity or nationality;
- restricting food, or water, or medicine to people based on ethnicity or nationality;
- denying people the right to assembly or travel based on ethnicity or nationality;
- targeting an entire ethnic group or nationality for death or destruction of their homes, property, or economy in retaliation for actions taken by their government over which they have no control; and
- restricting fuel and electricity to people based on ethnicity or nationality.

Actions by the Government of Israel That Meet the Definition of Collective Punishment

For thirteen years, the Israeli government has controlled the borders of Gaza, restricting or denying the movement of people, materials, fuel, food, and medicine by land, sea, or air, thus imprisoning 1.8 million Palestinians and creating a humanitarian disaster that is a direct result of the official Israeli policy. In early September 2015, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development cautioned that without significant changes to Israel's policy, Gaza has no chance of recovery and will become unlivable by 2020. Since then, Israel has tightened restrictions and the situation has deteriorated.

Although the Israeli government declared an end to its military administration in Gaza in 2005, it continues to control all border crossings by land, sea and air, monitors all movement of people and goods in and out of Gaza and regulates that movement according to Israeli interests. This blockade has caused Gaza's economy to collapse. Before the blockade Gaza's unemployment rate was 19 percent. By 2017, it was 44 percent among men, 72 percent among women, and for those under age 29, 62 percent. Some 80 percent of Gaza's residents depend on humanitarian aid. About 60 percent suffer from food insecurity.

This collective punishment has been carried out by:

- Israel's restricting fuel and electricity to Gaza Palestinians

For instance, in response to rocket attacks launched by the Palestinian militants, the Israeli Defense Ministry in August 2019 halved the amount of fuel allowed into Gaza from Israel. While Israel's airstrikes against the sites of rocket launches is not prohibited by international law, cutting needed fuel for the 1.8 million Gaza citizens is a clear example of collective punishment that is prohibited by international law.

Because of a fuel shortage and severe damage caused by the Israeli bombing of the power plant in Gaza in 2006, electricity from Israel is supplied for just a few hours every day. Water and sewage systems, which rely on a constant supply of power can barely function. Furthermore, the Israeli government restricts the entry of spare parts to maintain existing systems. The effects on daily life and the ability to do business are disastrous. Long, daily blackouts rob Gaza residents of their human rights and keep them from leading reasonable lives. All these restrictions are examples of collective punishment.

- Israel's restricting food, or water, or medicine

Infrastructure and public services in Gaza are in dire condition. Ninety-six percent of Gaza's water is contaminated and unpotable. The sea water desalination plant is not in operation due to the lack of a constant supply of electricity. In retaliation for actions taken by the government of Gaza or militants over which the population has no control, Israel limits the amount of food, medicine, and materials that can enter Gaza. The distance from shore that Gaza Palestinians can fish is also limited, or fishing is prohibited altogether.

Restricting adequate food, water, and medicine to the civilian population in retaliation for actions by a government or militant groups over which civilians have no control is a clear example of collective punishment.

- Israeli denial of the right to assembly or travel

The Israeli government controls the entry or exit from the Gaza strip by land, air, and water. Few Gaza people are permitted to leave, forcing them to live in an open-air prison from which they cannot escape. Since the protests along the Gaza perimeter fence began on March 30, 2018, Israeli security forces have fatally shot more than 190 demonstrators—including 31 minors. According to figures by the [United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs \(OCHA\)](#) and the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#), more than 12,700 casualties have been treated in Gaza hospitals. More than 5,800 of them suffered live gunshot wounds. 1,900 suffered teargas inhalation injuries, and some 480 were hit by rubber-coated metal bullets. Approximately 2,300 of the casualties were minors. Doctors have had to perform amputations, usually of a lower limb, on 90 protesters, including 17 minors and one woman. These are clear examples of collective punishment.

- Israeli government actions causing civilian death, injury, and property damage

Since 2008, there have been six major Israeli attacks on the Gaza strip that caused substantial death, injury, and property damage to Palestinians and which constitute collective punishment.

—Operation Cast Lead: Dec. 2008–January 2009

—Operation Pillar of Defense: November 2012

—Operation Protective Edge: July–August 2014

—Border Open Fire Policy: 2008–2018

—Right of Return Protest Killings: 2016–2018

—Two days of air attacks on Gaza: November 2019

Israel's military actions against military targets, as part of armed conflict, are not prohibited under international law, but many of these actions resulted in death, injury, and property damage to Palestinian civilians not directly related to military targets. These actions, summarized in Table 1, show the disproportional harm perpetrated on Palestinians, which is collective punishment. (The source of this information is from the Israeli human rights organization, [B'Tselem](#).)

Actions by the Government of Gaza That Meet the Definition of Collective Punishment

To be sure, the militants and the government of Gaza have been responsible for sending rockets, with no guidance systems, indiscriminately into Israel. Because they can fall in civilian areas and cause death, injury, or property damage, they too, constitute collective punishment, for their impact is on persons who are not responsible for the actions of their government. These actions are also summarized in the B'Tselem data in Table 1.

Why Presbyterians Must Speak Out Against Collective Punishment

As Presbyterians following the example of Jesus, we believe the prophetic mission of the church is to speak out courageously, honestly, and lovingly against the siege of Gaza and all forms of collective punishment carried out in Israel/Palestine as well as the rest of the world. As the Body of Christ on earth, we are called to stand alongside the oppressed to help bring about justice for them, leading to peace and reconciliation with their oppressors.

In accordance with past policy statements and the theological-ethical bases of our confessions, the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) affirmed the following human rights, moral principles, and goals guiding its recommendations regarding the Israel-Palestine conflict:

d. The moral principle of applying humanitarian laws regarding warfare to all nations. These laws[, protecting] civilians and nonmilitary facilities[,] prohibit such internationally recognized violations as the use of anti-personnel weapons and weapons of mass destruction, the assassination of political opponents, collective punishment, detention without due process, and the torture or abuse of prisoners.

e. The moral principle of applying these same humanitarian laws regarding warfare to nongovernmental combatants ... These laws prohibit such practices as suicide bombing, kidnapping, shelling civilian populations, and torturing or abusing prisoners. (*Minutes*, 2010, Part I, p. 1022)

The purpose of this overture is to name the acts of collective punishment that the governments of Israel and Gaza are perpetrating against each other and to call for an immediate end to these acts. By honestly recognizing these acts, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) can add its voice to an international dialog to which we trust American, Israeli, and Palestinian leaders will be compelled to listen and respond. We ask the church to join the witness of others.

Table 1: Impact of Collective Punishment Actions Taken by the Israeli and the Gaza Palestinian Governments 2008–2018	Israel Government Actions Against Palestinian Citizens	Gaza Government Actions Against Israeli Citizens
Civilians killed in Israeli and Gaza government attacks	2,481	13
Minors under 18 years killed in Israeli government attacks	896	1
Homes destroyed/damaged by Israeli and Gaza government attacks	21,500	1
Property damage resulting from Israeli and Gaza government attacks	\$6.7 billion	\$0.02 billion
Civilians with restrictions of food, water and medicine	1,800,000	0
Civilians lives and businesses affected by restriction of fuel and electricity	1,800,000	0
Citizens subject to a siege on land, air and sea	1,800,000	0

Table 1 Statistics on Deaths and Homes Destroyed

B’Tselem, “The Gaza Strip,” March 3, 2019, www.btselem.org/gaza_strip/20190303_13000_gazans_homelssess_since_2014_war

B’Tselem, “The Gaza Strip,” November 11, 2017, www.btselem.org/gaza_strip.

B’Tselem, “Open Fire Policy,” January 11, 2019.

https://www.btselem.org/press_releases/20190117_2018_fatalities.

Table 1 Statistics on Property Damage

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, “Report on UNCTAD assistance to the Palestinian people,”

https://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/tdb62d3_en.pdf

Global news , Nick Logan, “How much will it cost and how long will it take to rebuild Gaza?, July 28, 2014 (statistics from U.N. Conference on Trade and Development statics)

<http://globalnews.ca/news/1478589/how-much-will-it-cost-and-how-long-will-it-take-to-rebuild-gaza/>



Concurrences to Item 02-116 from the Presbyteries of de Cristo, New Brunswick, Plains and Peaks, Santa Fe, and The Redwood.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-116

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-116—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 02-116.

This overture is consistent with the most recent policy of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) with regards to Israel/Palestine.

Israel / Palestine: For Human Values in the Absence of a Just Peace, approved by the 222nd General Assembly (2016), recommends that:

Appropriate agencies of the General Assembly and all Presbyterians urge the Israeli government, as a matter of policy and practice, to stop the collective punishment and isolation of broad sections of the Palestinian population—the blockade of Gaza, the demolition of Palestinian homes and the administrative detention, the torture and forced feeding of Palestinian detainees—and to restore the ID documents and citizenship status that have been stripped from Palestinians in East Jerusalem and elsewhere.

In addition, that 2016 report called for an end to human rights abuses of Palestinian children, often used as collective punishment, including an end to night arrests and abusive interrogation practices.

It should further be noted that as part the continued siege of Gaza, the Israeli government has engaged in numerous incidents of killing unarmed protestors, particularly during the protests taking place under the banner of The Great March of Return. Such actions violate core principles of standing Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) policy. In particular, the 2016 report notes the striking asymmetry in the use of force in the siege of Gaza, and its effects, both physical and psychological, on Israelis and Palestinians alike.

Given that collective punishment is still used with regularity by the Israeli government, in violation of international law, and given that the siege of Gaza has not ended, it is appropriate that the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) renew its commitment to the ending of both.

REAC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-116

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-116—From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee

The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 02-116.

The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC) concurs with the Presbytery of New Castle in our support of the Palestinian people. We cannot be a Matthew 25 church if we do not lift up and stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people who have no country to call their own, but are refugees in their own land; who are unable to lead a full life due to the destruction of their farms, infrastructure, social life, and way of being human. Ending this siege would in turn stop retaliatory attacks on Israel. There are several Israeli communities who support that Palestinians deserve a country of their own; many who have spoken at our General Assembly gatherings.

Item 02-117

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 304.]

On Amending G-3.0401 to Facilitate Full Participation and Representation in Synods—From the Presbytery of Lake Huron.

The Presbytery of Lake Huron overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative vote:

Amend the second paragraph of G-3.0401 as follows: [Text to be inserted is shown as italic.]

“When a synod meets, it shall be composed of commissioners elected by the presbyteries. Each presbytery shall elect at least one ruling elder and one minister of the Word and Sacrament to serve as commissioners to synod. A synod shall determine a plan for the election of commissioners to the synod, as well as the method to fulfill the principles of participation and representation found in F-1.0403 and G-3.0103; both plans shall be subject to approval by a majority of the

presbyteries in the synod. The commissioners from each presbytery shall be divided equally between ruling elders and ministers of the Word and Sacrament. *A synod's plan to fulfill the principles of participation and representation may provide by rule for additional voting members of the synod. Such members shall be ruling elders or ministers of the Word and Sacrament, in numbers as nearly equal as possible, and shall have the endorsement of their presbyteries.* Each person elected moderator or other officer shall be enrolled as a member of the synod until a successor is elected and installed.”

Rationale

The current language of G-3.0401 creates a problem in fulfilling the requirements both for the election of commissioners and the principles of participation and representation. Since synods “shall be composed of commissioners elected by presbyteries,” a synod may be prevented from “[hearing] the voices of peoples long silenced” (*Book of Confessions*, A Brief Statement of Faith, 11.4, Line 70) who might not be elected as a commissioner. Since synods cannot compel the election of particular commissioners, important constituencies of synods such as racial ethnic caucuses, immigrant communities, or mission networks could be excluded from participation in the decisions of the synod.

In 2016, the GAPJC rendered a decision in the case of *MacKellar v. Synod of the Northeast*, which reads in part, “To the extent the Synod’s Bylaws and Standing Rules fail to give proper weight to the requirements of F-3.0202 and G-3.0401 by giving vote to members who are neither ruling elders nor teaching elders, they are unconstitutional.”¹ The decision invoked but did not emphasize the statement in G-3.0401 that synods “shall be composed [only] of commissioners elected by presbyteries”—it was addressing specifically the election of persons who were not ruling or teaching elders. While it did not rule out other mechanisms by which synods might fulfill the mandate for participation and representation in G-3.0401, some have interpreted it just that way, necessitating this amendment.

The proposed language permits synods to adopt rules, subject to the approval of a majority of their presbyteries, to extend voting privileges to additional persons in the synod for the purpose of participation and representation. The synod would determine the rule according to its own mission needs, without the requirement that such members be commissioners of presbyteries, although such persons would be required to have their presbytery’s endorsement to serve.

The amendment would preserve the historic principle of regular gradation of councils (F-3.0203) by requiring each voting member to have been elected or endorsed by their presbyteries. It would preserve the principle of governance by ruling elders and teaching elders (F-3.0202) by requiring that such additional members be balanced as nearly equally as possible. It would also free synods to find ways to fulfill both the plan for election of commissioners and the plan for participation and representation according to their particular mission needs with creativity and integrity.

Endnote

1. ([http://oga.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/222-05_gapjc_remedial_complaint_rev_james_mackellar_v_synod_of_the_northeast_decision_and_order_\(no_certificates\).pdf](http://oga.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/222-05_gapjc_remedial_complaint_rev_james_mackellar_v_synod_of_the_northeast_decision_and_order_(no_certificates).pdf))

Concurrences to Item 02-117 from the Presbyteries of Cincinnati, de Cristo, Santa Fe, and Scioto Valley.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 02-117

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) to approve Item 02-117 with amendment.

The overture provides a path synods may use in order to (a) “fulfill the principles of participation and representation found in F-1.0403 and G-3.0103” while (b) retaining the principle of government by elders (F-3.0202) and (c) protecting the rights of lower councils to choose those who represent them in higher councils.

This approach has two noteworthy strengths:

1. It addresses occasions when a synod’s preliminary process for receiving commissioners results in a population distribution that does not fulfill the synod’s commitment to the principles of participation and representation. The language regarding establishment of a rule is intentionally permissive (“may provide by rule”), thereby leaving to the affected council the responsibility and authority for designing and implementing practices appropriate to its setting.

2. It retains the historical understanding of Presbyterian governance as “ruling by elders” (F-3.0202) by requiring that additional voting members of the synod be chosen from ruling elders and ministers of Word and Sacrament. It maintains this historical understanding without compromising the principle that a ruling elder’s primary purpose is to provide spiritual leadership to a local congregation.

The language of the overture does not address the election of additional *commissioners* to synod from the presbyteries. If the additional members to be elected were commissioners, selection would require election by the sending presbyteries rather than endorsement alone.

Rather, the overture seeks to allow synods to obtain other *voting members*. In this respect, the overture shares important parallels with part of G-3.0301: “A presbytery may enroll, or may provide by its own rule for the enrollment of, ruling elders during terms of elected service to the presbytery or its congregations.”

Such language is not present in the Form of Government at G-3.0401, an absence that warrants the passage of language similar to that in Item 02-117. Adapting G-3.0301 for this purpose would accomplish the stated intent of the overture.

Notably, G-3.0301 makes no requirement for endorsement by sessions of ruling elders enrolled to presbytery service from the congregations they govern. The word “endorsement” only appears in the *Book of Order* at G-2.0602 with regard to prospective inquirers to the ministry of Word and Sacrament. Endorsements with respect to the enrollment of voting members may be appropriate to synod processes, but should not be mandated by the constitution.

A further insight emerges from comparison with G-3.0301. The language of Item 02-117 does not clarify whether the “voting members” as it proposes are enrolled “for the terms of their service” (G-3.0301) or in some other manner. The distinction between members who are enrolled for their terms of office from members who are enrolled according to the roster of a meeting (as is the case for ordinary commissioners) is an important one, since members of the latter category do not have the right to complain against an action of the body if they were not in attendance (*GAPJC Remedial Case 218-02, Fair-Booth v. National Capital*).

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution therefore advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) to respond to Item 02-117 by approving the following language:

“A synod may enroll, or provide by rule for the enrollment of, ministers of Word and Sacrament and ruling elders, in numbers as nearly equal as possible, during terms of elected service to the synod. Such enrollment may be used, among other purposes, for fulfilling the principles of participation and representation.”

Item 02-118

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 304.]

On Amending G-2.1002 Regarding Ordaining a Commissioned Ruling Elder as Minister of the Word and Sacrament—From the Presbytery of Northern New England.

The Presbytery of Northern New England overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall G-2.1002 be amended as follows: [Text to be added is shown as italic.]

“A ruling elder who seeks to serve under the terms of G-2.1001 shall receive such preparation and instruction as determined by the presbytery to be appropriate to the particular commission. The ruling elder shall be examined by the presbytery as to personal faith, motives for seeking the commission, and the areas of instruction determined by presbytery. A ruling elder who has been commissioned and later ceases to serve in the specified ministry may continue to be listed as available to serve, but is not authorized to perform the functions specified in G-2.1001 until commissioned again to a congregation or ministry by the presbytery. *After a commissioned ruling elder has served in a ministry commissioned by the presbytery for six years, that presbytery may choose to ordain a commissioned ruling elder as a minister of Word and Sacrament as defined in G-2.0501.*”

Rationale

One of the challenges for entering ministry is the financial cost of seminary as well as the time away from paid employment required to study. This makes ordained ministry possible only for those can afford the time and expense. This overture allows for the presbytery to provide the education and oversight for those who are called but cannot afford to attend a traditional seminary.

Many presbyteries have expressed difficulty in finding qualified pastors. This process allows for academic study as well as practical experience so that the presbytery and commissioned ruling elder will have a clearer sense of the person's gifts for ministry.

As this overture would divert some candidates from seminary to service in small congregations, it will increase the pool of candidates available to smaller congregations who otherwise could not afford a pastor.

This allows the opportunity for candidates who live far from a seminary to stay and serve in local communities where they have a deep understanding of the context and can remain in close contact with the support of their local network of family and friends. This support can help a person stay grounded while preparing for ordained service as a minister of Word and Sacrament.

Concurrence to Item 02-118 from the Presbytery of Cristo.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 02-118

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) to disapprove Item 02-118.

The overture seeks to allow presbyteries to bypass the requirements for ordination identified in G-2.06 and ordain commissioned ruling elders who have completed six years of service to be ministers of Word and Sacrament.

In the historic ecclesiology of the Presbyterian and Reformed traditions, as expressed in G-2.0102, we recognize “the Church’s ordered ministries described in the New Testament and maintained by this church are deacons and presbyters (ministers of the Word and Sacrament and ruling elders). . . . Ordination to the ministry of deacon, ruling elder, or minister of the Word and Sacrament (also called teaching elder) is unique to that order of ministry.” The authorization under G-2.1001 for a presbytery to train and commission a ruling elder to pastoral service is an extension of the ordered ministry of a presbyter for mission purposes and to fulfill its responsibilities of providing trained pastoral services to congregations (see G-3.0301). In addition, a commissioned ruling elder may be commissioned to one or many pastoral acts, from moderating a session, to presiding at communion in the absence of a minister of the Word and Sacrament, or fully as a commissioned pastor.

The order of ruling elders and order of ministers are nevertheless distinct. The formation and training process for ruling elders commissioned to particular pastoral service (referred to as a commissioned pastor or commissioned ruling elder) and ministers of Word and Sacrament are very different. Training for ruling elders to be commissioned to pastoral service varies among presbyteries. The original perspective of G-2.1001 was that the ruling elders serve temporarily in a particular call and do not hold nationally recognized credentials that will be accepted among all the presbyteries. There is no denomination-wide examination process for commissioned ruling elders as there is for ministers under G-2.0607d. Ministers, on the other hand, undergo a rigorous process of formation and training, as expressed in G-2.06. The Constitution requires such formation and training from all who seek to be enrolled as ministers in this denomination and its presbyteries (see G-2.0505).

It is not uncommon that a commissioned ruling elder may be called to enter into the process to be ordained to the ministry of Word and Sacrament. While still serving as a commissioned pastor, under G-2.0610, a presbytery and a commissioned pastor may enter into a process under the presbytery’s own rules for preparing individuals for ordination to the ministry of Word and Sacrament. A part of that process may include a presbytery determining to waive by a three-fourths vote particular ordination requirements, except those for examinations in “the areas covered by any standard ordination examination approved by the General Assembly. Such examinations shall be prepared and administered by a body created by the presbyteries” (G-2.0607d). G-2.0610 also states that a presbytery may determine that there are good and sufficient reasons why a candidate should not be required to satisfy the examination requirements of G-2.0607d. However, the Constitution still requires a presbytery to approve “by three-fourths vote some alternate means by which to ascertain the readiness of the candidate for ministry in the areas covered by the standard ordination examinations” (G-2.0610).

Item 02-118 proposes that a presbytery “may” ordain a commissioned ruling elder to the ministry of Word and Sacrament after six years. The wording risks creating an expectation that a presbytery will consider the action by virtue of the passage of time and without consideration of the items expressed in G-2.06 in regard to formation and training. The proposed amendment may be read that commissioned ruling elders who then seek ordination to the ministry of the Word and Sacrament are not required to meet the minimum constitutional requirements of that particular order of ministry, especially in the examination of nationally set competencies. Finally, the amendment also places into question the requirements of G-2.07 for a candidate to the ordered ministry of the Word and Sacrament to have received a call to a validated ministry, and the requirement to be examined by the presbytery in order to be ordained and be received as a member of the presbytery of call.

ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-118

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-118—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) disapprove Item 02-118.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns strongly urges the 224th General Assembly (2020) to disapprove this overture. According to the current rendering of G-2.1001, presbyteries already have the authority to “authorize a ruling elder to be commissioned to limited pastoral service as assigned by the presbytery.” Amending G-2.1002 to allow for a commissioned ruling elder to be ordained as a minister of Word and Sacrament does not impact the shortage of teaching elders to serve. Rather, this overture would diminish the value of the education, time, and sacrifice of those teaching elders who have taken the time and answered the call to serve the church.

Additionally, this overture creates more gender injustice as it relates to women clergy who cannot receive a call even though they have completed all of the requirements. According to the Gender and Leadership Report published by Research Service of the PC(USA): “In addition to the general perception that women have a harder time obtaining leadership positions, and—once obtained—being accepted in their leadership positions, there is also a general belief that people in leadership positions within the PC(USA) are treated at least somewhat differently based on gender.”¹

The impact of allowing ruling elders to be ordained as teaching elders potentially negatively affects women who are ready to receive a call but cannot receive a call due to gender bias. Furthermore, “Women with children at home are less likely to have an official leadership role; for men, it is the opposite.”² As a result of these disparities that female clergy in the PC(USA) face, creating another barrier by ordaining ruling elders offers congregations yet another reason to disqualify a woman. Therefore, we are asking that the 224th General Assembly (2020) disapprove this overture.

Endnotes

1. Gender and Leadership in the PCUSA (<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/Final-Report-Gender-Leadership-101916.pdf>)
2. Ibid.

OGA COMMENT ON ITEM 02-118

COGA has recommended that this item be referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). However, should the assembly determine that this item of business is core and critical to our governance and sustainability, and needs to be considered by the 224th General Assembly (2020), OGA provides this comment.

The Office of the General Assembly would advise the commissioners that presbyteries already have extensive flexibility under the provisions of G-2.0610 to “waive any of the requirements for ordination in G-2.06 [the constitutional provisions relating to “Preparation for Ministry”], except for those of G-2.0607d [the standard ordination exams]” when it concludes by a three-fourths vote that there are “good and sufficient reasons for accommodations to the particular circumstances of an individual seeking ordination.” An authoritative interpretation of this provision by the General Assembly clarifies that “good and sufficient reasons” relate to “circumstances in which the candidate is exceptionally well qualified, but through a different route than is usually followed” (*Minutes*, 1994, Part I, p. 195, 21.065, Req. 94-8).

Item 02-119

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 303.]

On Affirming the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (Paris Agreement)—From the Presbytery of Seattle.

The Presbytery of Seattle overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) to continue advocacy for action against global warming¹ with these steps:

1. Direct the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly to sign the “We Are Still In” Declaration² to affirm that the PC(USA) supports the Paris Agreement.³ Forty-seven faith organizations, including the PC(USA)’s Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) and Second Presbyterian Church NYC³ have already signed this declaration.

2. Direct the Stated Clerk to request that Congress and the president of the United States deliver on our existing commitments to the Paris Agreement.

3. Direct the Stated Clerk to request that Congress and the president of the United States revoke the withdrawal from the Paris Agreement.⁴ The earliest possible withdrawal date is November 4, 2020; a revocation can occur at any time before that date.⁵

4. Direct the Stated Clerk of the PC(USA) to

a. inform the larger public of the passage and implementation of this overture and

b. send an email to all presbyteries directing them to email all churches, with a CC to youth groups, of the passage and implementation of this overture, and include a link to an updated guide⁶ for families and churches to go carbon neutral as a bold Christian witness to help combat the effects of global warming.

Rationale

Ecology and justice are implicit in the story of creation itself: “The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it” (Gen 2:15). This Scripture affirms four values that reflect God’s love for the world: sustainability, participation, sufficiency, and solidarity.

Our denomination has long recognized our obligation to take actions as faithful stewards of God’s creation including General Assembly actions in 1981, 1998, 1999, 2003, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016 and 2018.⁷ We have clearly acknowledged the realities of global warming, its effect on the “least of these” and the need to take action by reducing energy consumption and reliance on fossil fuels, e.g.:

- In 1981, our church made clear through the document, “The Power to Speak Truth to Power,” the importance of transitioning away from a fossil-fuel-based economy.⁸

- In 2006, the General Assembly passed a resolution calling all Presbyterians to go carbon neutral as our Christian witness to combat the effects of climate change.⁹

- In 2008, our church made clear through the document, “The Power to Change: U.S. Energy Policy and Global Warming,” that the catastrophic effects of global warming make the transition to renewable and away from dependence on fossil fuels essential to the preservation of human life and God’s good creation. We will stand with “the least of these” (Matt. 25:40) and advocate for the poor and oppressed in present and future generations who are often the victims of environmental injustice and who are least able to mitigate the impact of global warming that will fall disproportionately upon them.¹⁰

The actions of this overture are logical next steps of our actions over these many years. The General Assembly has clearly called us to address these threats responsibly, with meaningful effect, while promoting economic justice. Global warming, regardless of its cause, threatens both the community and the earth over which we are stewards. The Paris Agreement is the means the world has chosen to address these threats responsibly, with meaningful effect, while promoting economic justice. Each nation voluntarily decides on their timeframe for participation and their goals; these are nonbinding and adjustments can be made without renegotiating the agreement.¹¹ Therefore, we request that the United States continue in the Paris Agreement and work with the 197 signatories that represent all members of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, UNFCCC.

Endnotes

1. NASA’s documentation and representation of Global Warming—https://climate.nasa.gov/climate_resources/139/graphic-global-warming-from-1880-to-2018/.

2. “We are Still In” Declaration—<https://www.wearestillin.com/we-are-still-declaration>.

3. Paris Agreement - https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english_paris_agreement.pdf and revocation process <https://unfccc.int/news/on-the-possibility-to-withdraw-from-the-paris-agreement-a-short-overview>.

4. Ibid. Paris Agreement.

5. Ibid. Paris Agreement.

6. The guide prepared for families and churches in response to the General Assembly 2006 Resolution Calling on all Presbyterians to go Carbon Neutral as a Bold Christian Witness to Help Combat the Effects of Climate Change is at <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/guide-going-carbon-neutral/>. Updates to the guide are needed to remove deadlinks.

7. General Assembly actions as recorded on the official website of the business of General Assembly meetings- www.pc-biz.org:

2006, <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/committee/209/business>

2008, <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/committee/243/business>

02 RECOMMENDED REFERRALS TO THE 225TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2022)

2010, <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/committee/383/business>

2012, <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/committee/459/business>

2014, <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/committee/529/business>

2016, <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/committee/569/business>

2018, <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/committee/3000010/business>

8. *Minutes*, PCUS, 1981, Part I, pp. 122, 413–25; and *Minutes*, UPCUSA, 1981, Part I, pp. 42, 86, 293–306.
9. The guide prepared for families and churches in response to the General Assembly 2006 Resolution Calling on all Presbyterians to go Carbon Neutral as a Bold Christian Witness to Help Combat the Effects of Climate Change is at <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/guide-going-carbon-neutral/>. Updates to the guide are needed to remove deadlinks.

Minutes, 2006, Part I, pp. 895ff, *Commissioners' Resolution. On Calling All Presbyterians to Take Positive and Immediate Steps to Live Carbon Neutral Lives*.
10. General Assembly actions as recorded on the official website of the business of General Assembly meetings- www.pc-biz.org;

2006, <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/committee/209/business>
2008, <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/committee/243/business>
2010, <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/committee/383/business>
2012, <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/committee/459/business>
2014, <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/committee/529/business>
2016, <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/committee/569/business>
2018, <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/committee/3000010/business>
11. *Ibid.* Paris Agreement.

Concurrences to Item02-119 from the Presbyteries of Cristo, Florida, Huntingdon, Santa Fe, and Tropical Florida.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-119

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-119—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP)

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 02-119 as amended by adding a new recommendation 5 as follows.

“[5. Affirm those who work at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of the Parties on behalf of the PCUSA. Encourage the continued presence of appropriate PCUSA staff and elected persons, as feasible, and both ecumenical and interfaith cooperation in analysis and witness on the moral and spiritual dimensions of this critical global challenge.]”

This overture continues a long history of General Assembly approval of United Nations climate policy. The 218th General Assembly (2008) stated this about the Kyoto Agreement, which holds true for the Paris Agreement:

In agreement with four prior General Assemblies (202nd, 210th, 211th, and 215th) that have called on the U.S. government to ratify the Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol, we ask the U.S. government to do nothing less than repent of its efforts to block consensus and to work with the international community as it develops a binding agreement to replace the Kyoto Protocol when it expires in 2012.

As advocates for justice, we reject the claim that all nations should shoulder an equal measure of the burden associated with mitigating climate change. Industrialized nations like the United States that have produced most of the emissions over the last three centuries deserve to shoulder the majority of the burden. Rapidly industrializing nations like China and India with very low per capita rates of energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions should not be expected to bear an equal share of the burden. Our church challenges all nations to embrace their common but different responsibilities with regard to dealing with climate change.

Additionally, ACSWP was directed by the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to update the PC(USA)'s energy policy. That policy is 224th General Assembly (2020) business [Item 02-35] *Investing in a Green Future: A Vision for a Renewed Creation*, and it addresses the lack of engagement by the U.S. in the international community:

Denounce the failure of the United States to engage in good faith with the international community as it seeks to craft a global response to climate change. Urge the U.S. to return to the community of nations that is working together to restore a sustainable future. In particular, the U.S. must engage in international negotiations pursuant to the Paris Agreement and the Silesia Declaration, making and meeting commitments to our global partners.

Item 02-120

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 304.]

On Amending W-4.0403 Regarding Laying on of Hands at an Installation—From the Presbytery of West Virginia.

The Presbytery of West Virginia overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall W-4.0403 be amended to read as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be inserted is shown as italic.]

“A service of ordination, installation, or commissioning focuses on Christ and the joy and responsibility of serving him through the mission and ministry of the church. Following the sermon, the moderator (or designee) of the appropriate council briefly states the nature of the ministry to which persons are being ordained, installed, or commissioned. Those who are being ordained, installed, or commissioned gather at the baptismal font. The moderator (or designee) asks them the constitutional questions (see W-4.0404). A ruling elder asks the corresponding questions of the congregation. When all questions have been answered in the affirmative, those to be ordained will kneel, if able, for the laying on of hands and the prayer of ordination. (The presbytery commission lays on hands at the ordination of minister of the Word and Sacrament†; its moderator may invite other ministers of the Word and Sacrament † and ruling elders to participate. Members of the session lay on hands at the ordination of ruling elders and deacons; the session may invite other ruling elders and ministers of the Word and Sacrament † to participate. ~~Because ordination only takes place once for each office, the laying on of hands is not repeated.~~ *The moderator may invite the commission and all members of the congregation to participate in the laying on of hands for commissioning and blessing the newly installed minister of Word and Sacrament, ruling elders, or deacons.*) Those previously ordained will stand, if able, along with the congregation, for the prayer of installation. After this, the moderator makes the declaration of ordination, installation, or commissioning. Members of the session or presbytery welcome the newly ordained, installed, or commissioned person(s). In the case of the installation of a minister of the Word and Sacrament†, persons may be invited to charge the minister of the Word and Sacrament† and congregation to faithfulness in ministry and mutuality in relationship. When a minister of the Word and Sacrament† is ordained or installed, it is appropriate for that person to preside at the Lord’s Supper in the same service; she or he may also give the blessing at the conclusion of the service. When ruling elders or deacons are ordained or installed, it is appropriate for one or more of them to give the charge to the congregation at the conclusion of the service.”

Rationale

The laying on of hands is not a sacrament but an act of diverse meanings as witnessed in Scripture and the Reformed tradition. It is affirmed by the *Book of Order/Directory for Worship* as an act that is appropriate to various situations in the worship of life of Presbyterians, an act that conveys the “gracious action of God and communicate[s] our grateful response” (W-1.0303, see also W-2.0202, W-3.0407, W-4.0401–.0403, W-5.0204).

Ordination is not a sacrament in the Reformed tradition either, but an action by which the institutional church sets apart “those who have been called by God through the voice of the church to serve as deacons, ruling elders, and ministers of the Word and Sacrament” (W-4.0401). The Reformed tradition recognizes the priesthood of all believers, that “in baptism each Christian is called to ministry in Christ’s name” (W-04.0401), and that no special grace or power is conferred through the laying on of hands to an individual at ordination.¹

There is no clear example of ordination in scripture, nor is there any word in either biblical Hebrew or Greek that bears the full connotations of our understanding of ordination. Examples of laying on of hands in Hebrew scripture include blessing others (Genesis 48:14; Leviticus 9:22); the transfer of human guilt to sacrificial animals by the priest (Leviticus 4:4); the consecration of the Levites as the priestly tribe—a once-for-all-generations event (Numbers 8:10); and the commissioning of Joshua by Moses as the next leader of the nation of Israel (Numbers 27:23).

In the New Testament the phrase “laying on of hands” occurs twenty-five times and is most often associated with healing and blessing (for example, Mark 10:13–16; Luke 4:40, and Acts 28:8). Several times the laying on of hands occurs in association with the reception of the Holy Spirit following baptism (Acts 8:17, 19:5–6, Hebrews 6:2). 1 Tim 4:14 may also be included in that list, as it refers to the laying of hands on Timothy by the elders in a context that suggests it was following Timothy’s baptism. The laying on of hands is clearly associated with endorsement of Christian servants in only two accounts, i.e., the setting apart of the seven to wait tables (Acts 6) and the commissioning of Paul and Barnabas in Acts 13 for missionary work. It is impossible to ascertain the occasion that called for the laying of Paul’s hands upon Timothy recounted in 2 Timothy 1:6.² Finally, 1 Timothy 5:22 simply states that the laying on of hands should not be done hastily, and recent scholarship suggests this is to be interpreted as a caution against hastily accusing an elder of wrongdoing.³

The semantics of Christian ordination can be traced back to Tertullian (ca. 160-ca. 220 AD). Tertullian was the first to use the Latin terms *ordo* and *ordinatio* for Christian ministry. In Tertullian's time these terms were used for secular positions that not only separated the ordained from ordinary people but allowed them to exercise governmental, jurisdictional, or cultic authority that demanded submission of others. The shift to the hierarchical view of Christian ministry after these terms were adopted contributed to the eventual limiting of the laying on of hands to ministerial ordination: since the laying on of hands elevated one's status, it could only be appropriately used for a certain class of people. Thus, Tertullian's writings helped create a status and ranking that did not appear to exist among New Testament Christians.⁴

The Reformers chose not to adopt the Catholic Church's theology and practice of ordination as a sacrament because it violated their understanding of the priesthood of all believers: through baptism all are received as equal members of the family of God and given the gift of the Holy Spirit, which includes gifts for ministry. Ordination is mentioned substantively only three times in the *Book of Confessions*. It is mentioned twice in the Second Helvetic Confession, first in the section on the process of ordination (5.151), then as clarification that ordination is not a sacrament, but a "profitable ordinance" (5.171). The Confession of 1967 includes these words in 9.39–9.40:

In recognition of special gifts of the Spirit and for the ordering of its life as a community, the church calls, trains, and authorizes certain members for leadership and oversight. The persons qualified for these duties in accordance with the polity of the church are set apart by ordination or other appropriate act and thus made responsible for their special ministries.

The church thus orders its life as an institution with a constitution, government, officers, finances, and administrative rules. These are instruments of mission, not ends in themselves. ...

Our denomination, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is an institution, albeit one created to bring glory to God, to bring the "gospel into all the world," and to bear "witness to Christ's saving love to the ends of the earth."⁵ Ordination is an act of the institution, one of the ways we order our life for mission. Candidates are ordained to a particular service, a call, emphasizing the pragmatic, functional nature of ordained ministry. As the *Book of Order* says,

In Baptism each Christian is called to ministry in Christ's name. God calls some persons from the midst of congregations to fulfill particular functions, so that the ministry of the whole people of God may flourish. ... (W-4.0401 *emphasis added*)

Because the ordered ministries are not the call of all believers but limited to those with the spiritual, mental, emotional, intellectual, and physical abilities to serve in particular capacities, every effort should be made to avoid the literal or figurative elevation of the ordained above those who are gifted in other ways. The ordained are "*set into* a disciplined and purposeful activity in the life of the church"⁶ not *set above*. To mystify and sacramentalize the act of ordination, and the laying on of hands as practiced on that occasion, undermines the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers.

The Reformed tradition does not allow for the belief that any spiritual power or grace is literally transferred from one person to another through the laying on of hands. Calvin and many other Reformers took the position that avoiding it altogether might be the safest way to curtail the superstitious belief in such magical powers. Limiting its use to an ordination and prohibiting its use at an installation is imbuing it with an authority and mystique that is unjustified.

There are equally valid reasons to include the laying on of hands at an installation as there are reasons against prohibiting it. As stated above, in W-1.0303 the laying on of hands is included in a list of "symbolic actions" with "strong ties to ... biblical practices" that convey the "gracious action of God and communicate our grateful response." Later in the Directory for Worship, the laying on of hands is mentioned in W-2.0202, the section on Prayerful Participation. Prayer is here defined as "the primary way in which we participate in worship." Various methods of prayer are listed: "Prayer may be spoken, silent, sung, or enacted in physical ways." This section is closed with the following paragraph:

The gifts of the Spirit are for building up the Church. Every action in worship is to glorify God and contribute to the good of the people. Worshipers and worship leaders must avoid actions that only call attention to themselves and fail to serve the needs of the whole congregation.

As "enacted prayer," the unrestricted laying on of hands by the whole congregation avoids calling particular attention to those who have been ordained to church office and gives each member of the community an equal role in the prayer of blessing and commissioning of those being installed. This truly "corporate" experience not only offers the gathered community the opportunity to show their support of the one(s) being installed, it is a "corporal" action, an outward physical expression of an internal attitude—something that is rare in our often mind-focused worship.

Furthermore, the act of laying on hands demonstrates the connectional nature of ministry in an unparalleled way. As hands are outstretched and rested on the shoulders of those whose hands are outstretched to other shoulders, everyone gathered around is woven together. While this action neither bestows magical power nor transmits special spiritual gifts, the connection experienced by participants is real. It communicates support, collegiality, and comradery, and breaks down feelings of isolation and insufficiency. In this human touch we experience the love of God and each other beyond words. Such experiences should be recommended, not restricted.

If there is a concern laying on of hands at an installation might be interpreted as part of a “re-ordination” it could be diffused in two simple ways: by creating a new order of worship for the installation service that is *not* identical to an ordination service in every respect except for the laying on of hands; and/or by educating worshipers verbally and/or in print at the service that the laying on of hands is an act of prayer, blessing, and commissioning, not ordination.

The proposed change to the Directory of Worship is from language that is restrictive to language that is permissive: the laying on of hands would not be required at installations as there may be occasions when, because of ecumenical considerations or a candidate’s preferences regarding physical contact, it would not be appropriate or edifying. In such a change we reaffirm Calvin’s own guide for worship practices: “But love will best judge what may hurt or edify; and if we let love be our guide, all will be safe.”⁸

Endnotes

1. Joan S. Gray and Joyce C. Tucker, *Presbyterian Polity for Church Leaders*, 4th ed. (Louisville, Ky.: Geneva Press, 2012) p. 19.
2. Darius Jankiewicz, “The Problem of Ordination: Lessons from Early Christian History,” pp. 3–4. <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/theology-christian-philosophy-pubs/78/>.
3. Brian P. Irwin, “The Laying on of Hands in 1 Timothy 5:22: A New Proposal.” *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 18.1 (2008) 123–129.
4. Jankiewicz, pp. 5–7.
5. <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/who-we-are/>.
6. “Ordination to the Ministry of the Word,” (Atlanta: Office of the Stated Clerk, PCUS, 1976) p. 6.
7. Quoted by John M. Barkley, *Westminster Dictionary of Worship*, p. 296.
8. *Institutes*, IV.x.30.

Concurrences to Item 02-120 from the Presbyteries of Cristo and Redstone.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 02-120

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) to disapprove Item 02-120.

This overture seeks to amend W-4.0403 by deleting the current language that restricts the practice of laying on of hands to ordination and by making it optional to incorporate laying on of hands in installation and commissioning services. In addition, the amendment would permit “all members of the congregation” to participate in the laying on of hands. The rationale rightly points out that the proposed language changes from language that is restrictive to language that is permissive.

Permitting the laying on of hands in services of installation and commissioning would be a departure from both our polity and our practice. The Directory for Worship and the *Book of Common Worship* and their predecessor documents have limited the practice of laying on of hands to ordination for about a century.

The laying on of hands signifies the act of ordination across denominations. Though there are varied theological understandings of the practice of ordination, in all of them the laying on of hands with prayer is the visible act that sets apart those in ordered ministries. The practice is limited to ordination because that setting apart happens only once. Broadening its usage to include installation and commissioning may introduce an obstacle in ecumenical settings and dialogues across denominations.

Ordination, installation, and commissioning are acts of a council and it is presbyters—members of a council—who carry them out. The invitation for “all members of the congregation” to participate in the laying on of hands would change the symbolic action from one performed by a council as part of its constitutional authority, to one performed by the gathered community with no constitutional significance.

Should the 224th General Assembly (2020) desire to authorize some act of the congregation to signify its blessing upon the newly installed or commissioned person, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that W-4.0403 be amended as follow as follows (*italics* indicate words to be inserted):

“... [Because ordination only takes place once for each office, the laying on of hands is not repeated.] [~~*The moderator may invite the commission and all members of the congregation to participate in the laying on of hands for commissioning and blessing the newly installed minister of Word and Sacrament, ruling elders, or deacons.*~~] Those previously ordained will stand, if able, along with the congregation, for the prayer of installation.” [~~*Signs and symbols of blessing may be conferred on the newly installed or commissioned person.*~~] After this, the moderator makes the declaration of ordination, installation, or commissioning. Members of the session or presbytery welcome the newly ordained, installed, or commissioned person(s).” [The remainder of the paragraph remains unchanged.]

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 02-120

The proposed amendment to the Directory for Worship would be a significant departure from a century of Presbyterian practice, as reflected in constitutional documents and service books, as well as ecumenical practice around services of ordination and installation, in two respects: (1) repeating the gesture of laying on of hands for the installation of persons who are already ordained and (2) inviting worshipers other than presbyters (teaching and ruling elders) to participate in the laying on of hands.

With regard to the first point, we believe that ordination is a lifelong vocation; therefore, the act of ordination need not be repeated. In widespread Christian tradition as well as Presbyterian practice, the distinctive sign of ordination has been prayer for the Holy Spirit with the laying on of hands. For this reason, previous editions of the *Book of Order* and *Book of Common Worship* (and equivalent documents) have not called for the laying on of hands at the installation of a person already ordained. An exception is found only in editions of the *Book of Order* released between 2007–15, introduced when the section on ordination and installation was moved from the Form of Government into the Directory for Worship, and there only for the installation of teaching elders.

With regard to the second point, a distinctive affirmation of the Presbyterian tradition has been the parity of ruling and teaching elders and the eschewal of distinctions between “clergy” and “laity.” The role of all presbyters (ruling and teaching elders) in the laying on of hands at ordination is an important witness to the larger church. Ecumenically recognized as a sign of the apostolicity of the church, this action (particularly in the hands of ruling elders) underscores the authority and responsibility we attribute to all presbyters for building up of the body of Christ and sharing in the governance of the church.

The Formula of Agreement established between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Reformed Church in America, and the United Church of Christ is of particular relevance to this overture. Since that agreement calls the four denominations to “recognize each other’s various ministries and make provision for the orderly exchange of ordained ministers of Word and Sacrament,” it is especially important that our services of ordination and installation take a shape these ecumenical partners will recognize as consistent and coherent with their own practices.

The desire for all members of the church (beyond presbyters) to have an opportunity to show their welcome and support to a newly installed deacon, elder, or pastor is understandable and commendable. There are a variety of ways to accomplish this intent during and after the service of installation.

Item 02-121

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 303.]

On Amending D-10.0303 and D-10.0302 Regarding Accused’s Rights to Be Notified—From the Presbytery of Scioto Valley.

The Presbytery of Scioto Valley overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

1. Shall the first paragraph of D-10.0303 of the Book of Order be amended to read as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“If no charges are filed, the investigating committee shall file a written report of that fact alone with the clerk of session or stated clerk of the presbytery, and notify, ~~the person who submitted the written statement~~ *in writing, both the person who has been accused and the person making the accusation.*”

2. Further, that all other sections referring to “the accused” in the Rules of Discipline be modified to read “*the person accused.*”

3. Amend D-10.0302 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“If the investigating committee has decided to file charges, it shall promptly inform the accused in writing of the charges it will make, including a summary of the facts it expects to prove at trial to support those charges. It shall ask the accused ~~if that person wishes~~ *if he or she wishes* to plead guilty to the charges to avoid full trial and indicate the censure it will recommend to the session or permanent judicial commission.”

Rationale

Accusations are extremely easy to make, whether made by an individual or by a person doing so on behalf of another. When the credibility of those accusations has been substantiated, the Constitution clearly and unambiguously states that an investigative committee “shall promptly inform the accused” if charges are to be made. However, it is silent about the accused’s right to be notified when no charges are to be filed, even though written notice of this outcome is provided to the accuser. When individuals in positions of trust have gone through the protracted ordeal of being forced to defend themselves against charges and accusations that can neither be substantiated by objective facts and/or are deemed to be completely untrue, equity requires they be expeditiously notified of this conclusion as well. This omission constitutes a procedural error and undermines the justice process.

The constitution’s current language also conveys an impression of bias and partiality, in that it describes one member (the “accused”) by way of labeling but uses supportive and affirming language to describe the other (“the person who submitted the written statement”). Labeling one and not the other is harmful because, consciously or subliminally, it fosters a presumption of guilt on the accused and freedom from guilt on the person making the accusation. Reframing the constitution’s language removes these false assumptions and more faithfully takes into consideration the purpose of church discipline (D-1.0101¹).

The additional word revisions would, respectively, promote language consistency throughout the document and provide grammatical clarity.

Endnote

1. “... The purpose of church discipline is to honor God by making clear the significance of membership in the body of Christ; to preserve the purity of the church by nourishing the individual within the life of the believing community; [and] to achieve justice and compassion for all participants involved ...” (*Book of Order*, D-1.0101).

Concurrences to Item 02-121 from the Presbyteries of Cristo, Detroit, Lake Michigan, and Santa Fe.**ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 02-121**

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) to answer Item 02-121 with the advice given on Item 02-110.

Item 02-122

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 303.]

On Amending G-2.0804 Regarding PC(USA) Paid Family Leave—From the Presbytery of Hudson River.

The Presbytery of Hudson River overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall G-2.0804 be amended to read as follows: [Text to be inserted is shown as italics.]

“The terms of call shall always meet or exceed any minimum requirement of the presbytery in effect when the call is made. The session shall review annually the minister’s terms of call and shall propose for congregational action (G-1.0501) such changes as the session deems appropriate, provided that they meet the presbytery’s minimum requirements. The call shall include *paid family leave of at least twelve weeks, including, but not limited to, leave for birth of a child, adoption, care of a sick family member, etc., and* participation in the benefits plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), including both pension and medical coverage, or any successor plan approved by the General Assembly.”

Rationale

The 221st General Assembly (2014) encouraged presbyteries and churches to create parental leave policies with the minimum of six weeks and 100 percent pay without using other forms of paid leave.¹

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) also voted to encourage the six agencies of the General Assembly (Board of Pensions, Foundation, Office of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., Presbyterian Mission Agency, and Presbyterian Publishing Corporation) to improve their paid parental leave policies in accordance with the advice of the 221st General Assembly (2014).²

As a denomination, we have affirmed the importance of supporting families. However, in practice, congregations are put in the precarious position of choosing between taking care of a family or taking care of the financial well-being of the congregation. Many churches cannot afford paid family leave for their pastor(s) in addition to the cost of pulpit supply, yet many pastors cannot afford to be unpaid when they welcome a new member into the family. These choices are difficult ones that often lead to solutions which leave either the pastor or the congregation neglected, but usually the pastor, and lack witness to the love God, Parent of us all, has for the world.

Without a paid family leave policy, the PC(USA) forces parents to make a choice between proper health-care for themselves and their children, and adequate income to provide for their families. It forces family members with sick parents or children to choose work over care, which is antithetical to our call to be compassionate to the ill and infirm.

Without a paid parental leave policy, we uphold false narratives that describe men as “bread-winners” and require them to leave the child-raising to their spouses. Without a paid parental leave policy, we continue to uphold antiquated and unequal traditions that not only reinforce gender stereotypes, bringing harm to families and children, but fail to account for the many different kinds of families our denomination lifts up and celebrates.

Family leave is essential to the well-being of the pastor, the family, and the church. It enforces healthy boundaries, contributes to the financial security of caregivers, and ensures the continued care of both family and congregation in the long term.

In A Brief Statement of Faith, we confess as a church, that the Holy Spirit

... calls *women and men* to all ministries of the Church.

In a broken and fearful world
the Spirit gives us courage
to pray without ceasing,
to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior,
to unmask idolatries in Church and culture,
to hear the voices of peoples long silenced,
and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace.

In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit,
we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks
and to live holy and joyful lives,
even as we watch for God’s new heaven and new earth,
praying, “Come, Lord Jesus!” (*Book of Confessions*, 11.4, Lines 64–76, emphasis added)

With a paid parental leave policy, we have the opportunity to live into this calling of courage in our ministries as pastors and congregations and in our daily lives as we grow our families and support one another in love. With a paid parental leave policy, we unmask the idolatry of unequal practices and are free to live holy and joyful lives—lives wherein all parents can bond with their children without fear of destitution, and the whole community can grow in love.

This overture seeks to bring equity to the genders involved in caregiving, bringing life into the world, and caring for life as it grows, ages, and dies. While parental leave and family leave constitute different needs, they are equally necessary in the life of a healthy pastor, and therefore we urge the General Assembly to consider the language of family leave and make this a reality for everyone in our employ.

Supporting Statistics

The lack of any kind of paid parental leave creates problems for both parents because, while women are medically cleared to return to work after about at least six weeks (if birth went perfectly), the majority of daycares refuse children before six weeks of age. This puts parents in a lose-lose situation as they must risk their health, their child’s care, and their families’ overall well-being if proper paid leave is unavailable. Elsewhere in creation, we observe that God’s creatures naturally keep their offspring close early in life.³ This policy simply acknowledges the health and financial needs of a new or growing family.

Numerous studies have shown the benefits of paid parental leave for both parents and their children. An increase of 10 weeks paid maternal leave has been associated with a 10 percent decrease in neonatal and infant mortality rate,⁴ and parental leave has been shown to be a cost-effective method for improving child health more generally.⁵ However, the benefits to child health and the decrease in infant mortality are only seen with an increase in paid parental leave.⁶ Moreover, studies that have analyzed the long-term benefits of paid parental leave have found benefits to women’s mental health in older age and a decrease in high school dropout rates among their children.⁷

At least half of the contemporary seminary graduates are women, and a large portion of graduates (male and female) are in their child-bearing years.⁸ Some of these female colleagues must negotiate lower pay to receive adequate paid maternity leave in their calls, if they can get the maternity leave. Some of our female colleagues are being told they must prove they are worth the maternity leave. Many men have no leave guaranteed at all. This is a matter of gender justice in our denomination.

Because women are the ones giving birth, most studies have focused on the relationship between a mother and her child. However, increases in paid parental leave continue to be met by increases in use of that leave among all parents, allowing parents of all genders to spend more time on their child's care, which has demonstrated health benefits for the child. Indeed, it has been shown that when fathers—or non-birthing parents—are offered comparable paid parental leave, the length of leave they take increases and their involvement in a child's care after the leave period increases.⁹ It is wholly regrettable that non-birthing parents (historically, men) have been denied such crucial bonding and care time with their families for so long. The need for a just paid parental leave policy at this time is urgent as more and more pastors reach retirement age and more and more younger pastors—those in their prime parenting years—seek and negotiate calls.

Across the United States, a mere 14 percent of people have access to paid family leave.¹⁰ As stated above, this justice issue looms large for many workers, and the PC(USA) is not currently acting as a faithful leader. In working toward a solution, it is the profound hope of many young pastors that the denomination will see the opportunity to lead the world to a more faithful, loving approach to family leave.

Endnotes

1. <https://www.pc-biz.org/#!/search/5121>, also see *Minutes*, 2014, Part I, p. 740, electronic version.
2. <https://www.pc-biz.org/#!/search/3000035>, also see *Minutes*, 2016, Part I, p. 292, electronic version.
3. To put this in perspective, it is illegal in twenty-two states to separate a puppy from its mother before eight weeks. We should be treating humans with at least as much respect as we do dogs. Source: <https://www.animallaw.info/topic/table-state-laws-concerning-minimum-age-sale-puppies>.
4. Jody Heyman, Amy Raub, and Alison Earle, "Creating and Using New Data Sources to Analyze the Relationship Between Social Policy and Global Health: The Case of Maternal Leave," *Public Health Reports* 126 (Suppl 3) (2011): 127–134.
5. Christopher J. Ruhm, "Parental Leave and Child Health," *Journal of Health Economics* 19, no. 6 (November 2000): 931–960.
6. Sakiko Tanaka, "Parental Leave and Child Health Across OECD Countries," *The Economic Journal* 115, no. 501 (February 2005): F7–F28.
7. Mauricio Avendano, Lisa F. Berkman, Agar, Brugiavini, and Giacomo Pasini, "The long-run effect of maternity leave benefits on mental health: Evidence from European countries," *Social Science & Medicine* 132 (May 2015): 45–53; Pedro Carneiro, Katrine Løken, and Kjell Salvanes, "A Flying Start? Maternity Leave Benefits and Long Run Outcomes of Children," IZA Discussion Paper No. 5793.
8. <http://pres-outlook.org/2017/09/pastoral-pipeline-will-enough-ministers-serve-presbyterian-church/>.
9. Arnalds, A., Eydal, G., and Gíslason, I. "Equal rights to paid parental leave and caring fathers—the case of Iceland," *Icelandic Review of Politics and Administration* 9, no. 2 (2013): 323–344.
10. <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/03/23/access-to-paid-family-leave-varies-widely-across-employers-industries/>.

Concurrences to Item 02-122 from the Presbyteries of Albany, de Cristo, Florida, Salem, and Santa Fe.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 02-122

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) to disapprove Item 02-122

Item 02-122 proposes to introduce specific minimum terms of call within the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). This step creates constitutional problems.

Less detailed but similar language came before the 223rd General Assembly (2018) from the Presbytery of Boston in Item 06-14. Item 06-14 suggested that G-2.0804 be amended as follows: "The call shall include participation in the benefits plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), including both pension and medical coverage, or any successor plan approved by the General Assembly, *and paid family leave of at least twelve weeks*" (italics indicate proposed insertion).

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advised the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to disapprove the item on the following grounds:

1. Introducing administrative particulars into the Form of Government would reverse its movement away from a manual of administrative operations. That movement began well before introduction in 2011 of the Foundations of Presbyterian Polity the major revision of the Form of Government.¹

2. The constitutional nature of the *Book of Order* articulates general principles and practices of governance but leaves specific details to the contexts where those principles and practices must be carried out.

3. Presbyteries already have, through G-2.0804, the responsibility and authority to establish family leave policies consistent with fair employment practice (see also G-3.0106).

4. Listing in the Constitution such a specific requirement will invite insertion of other requirements that should be enacted in more contextually appropriate settings.

5. The purpose of encouraging, and even defining, fair employment practices such as family leave can be accomplished without writing the provision into the Constitution.

The language of Item 02-122 introduces administrative-operational detail into the *Book of Order*. Councils have a responsibility and should be trusted to adopt policies appropriate to their circumstances that support and nurture their members, families, and staff (see G-3.0301c, for example).

The particulars within the proposed amendment reflect the societal sensibilities of the present day toward fair employment practices. Likely changes in those sensibilities mean that G-2.0804, if amended in this fashion now, may well require further and repeated amendment in the years ahead. Such amendments are more appropriate in an operations manual than a constitutional document.

If the assembly nevertheless believes that highlighting family leave rises to the level of a constitutional amendment, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution believes that such an act can be accomplished with less constitutional harm by amending G-3.0106 as follows (*italics* denote words to be inserted; ~~strikeouts~~ denote words to be deleted): “All councils shall adopt and implement a sexual misconduct policy, ~~and~~ a child and youth protection policy, *and a family leave policy.*”

Endnote

1. Previous assemblies removed forms for terms of call from the then *Book of Order* in the early 2000s. The major revision of the Form of Government that became effective in 2011 established using the Constitution for general principles and leaving administrative details to more local councils.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-122

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-122—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP)

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) answer Item 02-122 with action on Item 02-92.

At the 223rd General Assembly (2018), a task force was created that included representation from ACSWP, ACWC (Advocacy Committee on Women’s Concerns), and Board of Pensions (BOP), as well as teaching and ruling elders from across the denomination. The task force worked with stakeholders like Board of Pensions to find a sustainable solution to the need for adequate family leave. The recommendations the task force makes includes twelve weeks paid leave as well as changing the *Book of Order* to reflect this inclusion in minimum terms of call.

Item 02-123

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 303.]

Regarding the Status of the University of Tulsa as a Presbyterian-Related University—From the Presbytery of Cimarron.

The Presbytery of Cimarron respectfully overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) to delegate a suitable team to clarify the University of Tulsa’s status as a Presbyterian-related university and report back to the 225th General Assembly (2022). The team would consist of persons designated by the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Task Force to Study the Purpose and Place of the Humanities, and the Association of Presbyterian Colleges and Universities (APCU), who would seek conversations with the University of Tulsa leadership, members of the board of trustees, and the Sharp Chaplain (currently the Reverend Jeff Francis, a minister member of the Presbytery of Eastern Oklahoma), if appropriate. The process of clarification would include the review and possible revision (or development) of criteria defining Presbyterian-related colleges and universities.

Rationale

The University of Tulsa (TU) has adopted a radical restructuring proposal that begins to take effect in the 2019–2020 academic year.¹ In “True Commitment: Reimagining The University of Tulsa,” the academic program closures and consolidations reduce the humanities to a minor footnote to the university’s mission.² These cuts are of deep concern to Presbyterians who value liberal arts highly and understand the humanities to provide a vital foundation for ethical and moral reasoning, which is at the heart of liberal arts education. Deep engagement with liberal arts is critical to the career paths chosen by many students, such as business, health care, and law.

TU’s restructuring is taking place at a time when the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is confronting the widespread trend that considers higher education primarily as a vehicle to commercial success. Groups of students, faculty, and alumni have protested this sudden reorientation of the university toward “job training,” objecting to the administration’s lack of transparency and rushed process as well as the resulting program cuts.³ The Association of Presbyterian Colleges and Universities lists the University of Tulsa as a member. We would hope that this organization, though a voluntary collaboration among our denominational schools, would uphold the liberal arts values so important in our denomination.

A pillar of our Reformed tradition is our understanding that all vocations are focused on love of God and neighbor, not as solo pursuits of wealth as the mark of “the good life.” The 223rd General Assembly (2018) approved formation of a task force to study the place and purpose of the humanities at Presbyterian-affiliated colleges and universities.⁴ The overture that requested this task force makes a strong case for the joining of faith and reason as foundational to Presbyterian values, which is more important than ever in our time of “alternative facts,” divisive nationalism, and institutional racism.

The Presbyterian heritage handed down through generations of TU faculty and students is not a narrow, denominational stream of thought separated from the world outside the doors of academe. Instead, the Reformed tradition represents open-minded, generous scholarship that finds kindred spirits in world religions beyond the Judeo-Christian tradition, and in the secular humanities, particularly philosophy and religion. Presbyterian-related colleges and universities are well positioned to provide a college experience that grounds students in ethics, history, and moral reasoning in order to resist consumerism, to develop respect for diverse cultures, and to be good stewards of creation whatever their chosen career. Because the University of Tulsa has been a respected liberal arts institution in the south-central and southwest region of the United States and has been a covenant partner with Synod of the Sun, we are especially distressed at its new direction and may find it difficult to recommend TU to Presbyterian students.

Concerns

1. The University of Tulsa has not consulted with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) about the changes that would diminish Presbyterian values supporting the liberal arts and humanities.
2. Representation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) on the Board of Trustees of the University of Tulsa is completely lacking.
3. What was once a university-wide, historic Presbyterian connection now appears to be developed and recognized only through Sharp Chapel programs and events that are attended by a small proportion of the TU community.
4. The University of Tulsa appears not to be fulfilling its responsibilities as a covenant partner within the Synod of the Sun.

[The stated clerk consulted with the Reverend Christian Iosso, Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, on the overture and its financial implications via email (October 25, 2019).]

Endnotes

1. <https://utulsa.edu/truecommitment/>.
2. <https://utulsa.edu/truecommitment/academicstrategy/#future>.
3. <https://www.tuplan.org>.
4. <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/committee/3000012/business>, “On a Collaborative Study of the Place and Purpose of the Humanities in the Teachings of PC(USA) Liberal Arts Colleges and Universities”—From the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta. Minutes, 2018, Part I, Item 10-02, pp. 811ff.

Concurrences to Item 02-123 from the Presbyteries of de Cristo, Huntingdon, and Mississippi.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-123

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-123—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

This overture calls for the General Assembly to direct the formation of a team to discuss and clarify the University of Tulsa's status as a Presbyterian-related university.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 02-123 with the following amendment, to follow the current wording of the overture:

“[Because a large portion of the fifty-six colleges and universities associated with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) as members of the Association of Presbyterian Colleges and Universities (APCU) are experiencing economic and cultural pressures similar to those facing the University of Tulsa (intensified now with the COVID-19 impacts), and because the humanities (‘including religion and ethics’) are a traditional and honored component of higher education in the Presbyterian tradition, the assembly requests the General Assembly Nominating Committee to reopen the nominating process for the Task Force on the Place and Purpose of the Humanities that was approved by the 223rd General Assembly (2018) with dispatch;

“[Further, in order to strengthen the trust between the colleges and universities and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and to ensure the most capable and diverse nominees to address this national challenge, guidelines for the nominees should be broadened to include suitably qualified presidents, faculty, and staff of member schools, including those of other Christian denominations, and to include suitably qualified Presbyterians teaching in other institutions of higher education and on other General Assembly committees, with consultation directly between the appointing Co-Moderators and the chair of the Association of Presbyterian Colleges and Universities, assisted by staff of the Office of Theology and Worship (for religious study) and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (for ethics study).

“[In accord with the decentralized history of Presbyterian higher education in the U.S., the Synod of the Sun shall be invited to participate in the specific conversation requested with the University of Tulsa, recognizing that the larger question of criteria for relationship with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) should be included in the study approved by the 223rd General Assembly (2018).]”

This overture calls for the General Assembly to direct the formation of a team to discuss and clarify the University of Tulsa's status as a Presbyterian-related university. The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy commends the concern of Cimarron and concurring presbyteries, and also acknowledges the sensitivity that all colleges and universities feel to perceived intrusions in their curricula or other operations. Thus, the overture is wise to include the model of partnership and collegiality embodied in the Association of Presbyterian Colleges and Universities (APCU). This overture, and the overture on the study of humanities teaching approved by the 223rd General Assembly (2018), provide the church with an important opportunity to show solidarity with all of these institutions and to explore ways to renew relationships. If needed, a portion of the funds approved by the assembly in 2018 might be made available to enable the specific conversation with the University of Tulsa, the Synod of the Sun, and national bodies.

The overture involves two separate, albeit related, issues. The first is Presbyterian-relatedness, about which it asks the General Assembly to make some determination. Our denominational colleges and universities do not relate directly to the General Assembly, except through the Association of Presbyterian Colleges and Universities. There is no funding of Presbyterian-related colleges and universities by the denomination, nor specific requirements that the PC(USA) imposes to be considered Presbyterian-related. The relationship, where a formal one exists, is with the synods within which bounds a school exists. A school and its synod commonly develop a covenant that elucidates their mutual obligations. As a result, there is little uniformity in the place of religious life and religious studies among our church-related colleges. Some, like Tulsa, have endowed chaplaincies; some have chapel services; some have a religion requirement in their general education curriculum; but others do not. Thus, the important conversation to be had regarding the University of Tulsa's church-relatedness would have bearing on all of the other schools, but the objective would not be uniformity—perhaps more a kind of “family resemblance.”

The other issue raised is the place of the humanities in Presbyterian higher education. ACSWP laments the devaluation of the humanities in our culture, the impetus to question the value of a college degree and the consequent emphasis on courses of study that relate directly to a particular career (business, engineering, health sciences, etc.), and the widespread failure to understand the humanities' importance for teaching the thinking and communications skills that are key for our graduates. Indeed, this concern came forward to the 223rd General Assembly (2018), and that body approved a study of the very question of the place of the humanities (“including religion and ethics”) in Presbyterian tradition and in Presbyterian higher education. Consequently, we suggest this overture be answered by the study that eventuates from that action.

The impact of the coronavirus has intensified pressures on colleges, universities, and students alike, even as (we hope when this overture is considered) the worst impacts are over. Speaking broadly, the fifty-six schools offer a valuable and diverse

range of choices in our academic culture. They have equipped many thousand church members and ministers over the years and serve approximately 50,000 young adults today. The conversation with the University of Tulsa, then, can represent an important renewal of conversation with the larger group, and offer insights for how younger generations understand and may wish to reform their heritage.

PMA COMMENT OM ITEM 02-123

The Presbyterian Mission Agency has responded to the request for additional criteria needed for placing and removing colleges, universities, and secondary schools from the List of Related Schools, Colleges, and Universities. In response to Referral: Item 10-10, a referral from the 2018 General Assembly:

The Presbyterian Mission Agency has reviewed the existing criteria for inclusion on the list of PC(USA)-related schools, colleges, and universities. Additional criteria have been identified for future use, including that each institution must be accredited, degree-granting, and in agreement with the following statement adopted by the Presbyterian College Chaplains Associations:

Because we are a Presbyterian-related institution, we value learning, faith, service, and connection to each other, the Church, and the world, honoring the dignity and worth of every person.

- **Because:** We don't value learning and all faith traditions represented on our campuses in spite of our church-relatedness. It is because we are church-related that we value and cherish all inquiry and welcome and encourage all faith communities.

- **Learning, faith, and service:** This order is important. We are schools, not churches, and our primary mission is education. Learning comes first. Nevertheless, as church-related institutions we are concerned to educate whole people for the whole world. We strive to graduate students who are not only academically well-prepared but also spiritually and socially mature participants in the religious and civic communities of which they are a part.

- **Service:** Although the term "civic engagement" is widely used on our campuses, we decided that it is not a common term in the life of the Church. We believe "service" communicates this value more clearly to our church partners.

- **Connection:** We value our relationships with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and with other schools who share a similar relationship. We are not, and do not wish to be, identical institutions. Yet we appreciate our common connections and commitments. We benefit from our mutual relationship, we are all grateful for the historic and ongoing support of the Presbyterian Church, and we are committed to maintaining that relationship.

- **World:** Our connection to the world is both social and environmental. We seek to serve the whole world through our service to each student. We understand ourselves to be part of a global community of teaching, learning, and inquiry. We also work to exhibit, embody, and encourage environmental responsibility on our campuses and beyond. As was stated above, we strive to educate whole people for the whole world.

- **Honoring:** Our efforts to live out our commitment to learning, faith, service, and connection take place in the context of our ongoing and pervasive commitment to honor the dignity and worth of all people. Our schools are resources and instruments through which the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) serves the world as we serve each of our students in all their magnificent variety and particularity.

Following the 224th General Assembly (2020), the Presbyterian Mission Agency will initiate conversation with the institutions on the list, asking them to state their acceptance of the revised criteria. The list of institutions responding in the affirmative will be presented to the 225th General Assembly (2022) for approval."

Item 02-124

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 304.]

On Amending G-3.0303 by Adding a New Paragraph g. Regarding Authority to Convene Meetings—From the Presbytery of Detroit.

The Presbytery of Detroit overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall G-3.0303 be amended by adding a new paragraph "g." to read as follows: [Text to be added is shown as italic.]

"g. when it has reasonable cause to believe the church is having or will have problems in the near future that will threaten its ability to exist as a viable church, to convene session and/or congregational meetings to present the concerns of the presbytery."

Rationale

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its churches have seen significant declines in membership and resources in this generation. The causes of the decline are complex, and frequently are beyond the control of councils and congregations. There is little at this point to suggest this decline will be arrested in the reasonable future.

Congregations have developed and succeeded sometimes for hundreds of years. In the course of their existence they have generated programs, formed relations, built facilities, established identities, etc., that characterize that church. Times are changing, however, and in many cases the programs and identities are not attractive to new members, and buildings are frequently much larger than necessary. The regular cost of wear-out failures as buildings age and the cost of heating structures built when energy was cheap generate increasing financial burdens. In some cases, the burden of financing a well-established ministry in an elegant building with fewer and fewer member and dollar resources cripples a church. There are readily available data on attendance, finances, mission, membership, and other indicators that can give warning that a church may be experiencing difficulties because of these factors.

Changing the dynamics of a congregation is complex and very hard to do. We do know, however, of many cases where churches have managed to reform themselves in ways that allow them to prosper. Experience shows, however, that it is very difficult to make such changes if there are insufficient resources to support the transition. It is unfortunately common, however, to find churches that for one reason or another either are unable to see the declining resources available to them or are unwilling to undertake the hard and difficult work to generate necessary adjustments to their way of doing church.

Our polity gives presbyteries few powers to address matters of decline in a way that might assist in generating redevelopment. The unilateral powers of presbyteries are keyed to the kind of difficulties that are considered emergent or indicate an inability or unwillingness of a session to wisely govern. And when a pastor and/or a session are content with the way things are, there is no effective way to raise issues related to viability and survivability. There is no way that a presbytery can bring options to churches early enough that they still have the member and financial resources to find a form of mission and ministry that can generate a new future.

The purpose of this overture is to give a presbytery the authority to convene meetings to raise issues relating to the viability and survivability of a particular congregation when it believes that the near- or long-term prospects are not encouraging.

This overture does not give a presbytery the authority to require a church or session to do or stop doing certain things that the Constitution lays out. It is grounded on the presumption that in order to resolve a difficulty, the first step is to persuade people there is a difficulty.

This adds a mandate that the presbytery may call both such meetings when the presbytery will be considering its mission in the geographic area that might result in a dissolution.

Concurrences to Item 02-124 from the Presbyteries of de Cristo, Mississippi, and Santa Fe.**ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 02-124**

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) to disapprove Item 02-124.

The overture seeks to amend G-3.0303 by adding a paragraph that would allow a presbytery to “convene” meetings of a “session and/or congregation” when it has “cause to believe the church is having or will have problems in the near future that will threaten its ability to exist as a viable church.”

The rationale presented for the overture states that “... when a pastor and/or a session are content with the way things are, there is no effective way to raise issues related to viability and survivability. There is no way that a presbytery can bring options to churches early enough that they still have the member and financial resources to find a form of mission and ministry that can generate a new future.”

In fact, G-1.0501 states that congregational meetings “shall be called by the session, by the presbytery, or by session when requested in writing by one-fourth of the active member on the roll of the congregation.” And while “business to be transacted” at such a meeting is limited to those items listed in G-1.0503, G-1.0501 states more broadly that congregational meetings may be held “for any or all of the purposes appropriate for congregational consideration.” In other words, matters “appropriate for congregational consideration” are more broad than appropriate “business” that may be “transacted” (that is, voted upon). Additionally, at the direction of the session, congregations may gather informally at any time.

G-3.0203 further states that sessions shall meet “when directed by the presbytery,” and the business to be transacted at such meetings is not limited as it is in the case of congregational meetings.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that presbyteries already possess the means to ensure that they may address congregations and sessions when they have the need to do so, without additional constitutional authority.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution further finds the word “convene” in the overture problematic. Meetings of sessions and congregations, when duly called, are then convened by the congregation’s pastor or a moderator invited by the pastor or appointed by the presbytery (G-3.0104). Granting presbyteries authority to “convene session and/or congregational meetings” would be to grant presbyteries the authority to bypass the constitutional authority of sessions, pastors, and appointed moderators without following the constitutional process for assuming original jurisdiction contained in G-3.0303.

Item 02-125

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 303.]

On Responding to the Human Needs of Those Affected by the Crisis in Syria—From the Presbytery of the Cascades.

Recalling the admonitions of Matthew 25:31–40 as well as Item 12-09 from the 223rd General Assembly (2018) “On Responding to the Current Syrian Crisis” (*Minutes*, 2018, Part I, pp. 1148ff), the Presbytery of the Cascades overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) to respond to the suffering of the Syrian people and hardships endured by those in neighboring countries after eight years of conflict in Syria by:

1. Working to End Sanctions—Urge an immediate end to sanctions against Syria and the threat of sanctions against Lebanon, Jordan, and their nationals; and that human rights and humanitarian principles be placed at the center of U.S. policies on Syria by

a. directing the Stated Clerk of the PC(USA) to send a message to the U.S. President, Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, and to each U.S. Senator and Representative to support these principles and goals and

b. directing the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through the Office of Public Witness in Washington, D.C. and the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations, to support this witness in their work.

2. Promoting Reconstruction in Syria—Direct the Stated Clerk of the PC(USA) to send a message to the U.S. President, Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, and to each U.S. Senator and Representative urging the U.S. government to

a. support UN agencies and provide full cooperation with their humanitarian and reconstruction efforts in Syria;

b. contribute generously to international agencies, particularly those of the United Nations, to help fund the post-war reconstruction of Syria, materially, socially, and educationally, with special attention to the education and wellbeing of children and youth.

3. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through the Office of Public Witness in Washington, D.C. and the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations, to support this witness in their work.

4. Promoting an Enabling Environment of Peace—Direct the Stated Clerk of the PC(USA), the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through the Office of Public Witness and the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations, to urge the U.S. government and other member states of the United Nations to build on the broadly supported principles of UN Security Council Resolution 2254, especially by working to fulfill their common commitment to

a. the rights of the Syrian people to self-determination;

b. “Syria’s unity, independence, territorial integrity, and non-sectarian character, to ensuring continuity of governmental institutions, to protecting the rights of all Syrians, regardless of ethnicity or religious denomination, and to ensuring humanitarian access throughout the country and to the territorial integrity of Syria;”(UN Security Council Resolution 2254).

5. Direct the Stated Clerk of the PC(USA) and the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through the Office of Public Witness, to urge the U.S. government to

a. in joint action with other foreign nations involved on the ground, withdraw the U.S. military engagement in Syria and work through diplomatic channels to ensure the safety of the Kurds and other vulnerable populations;

b. urge the government of Israel to return to negotiating with the government of Syria for the full return of the Golan Heights as part of territorial Syria; and

c. work to ensure that only UN peacekeeping forces operate in Syria and that all foreign combatants depart.

6. Working for the Safe Return of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons—Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through the Ministry at the United Nations, to call on member states to build on the broadly supported principles of UN Security Council Resolution 2254, which “underscores the critical need to build conditions for the safe and voluntary return of refugees and internally displaced persons to their home areas and the rehabilitation of affected areas, in accordance with international law” by working with the Syrian government to

a. declare a general amnesty and repatriate all refugees desiring return while facilitating the return home of all displaced persons in ways that assure their safety, including freedom from torture, arbitrary detention, and other gross violations of human rights;

b. facilitate the repossession of property and the rebuilding of neighborhoods by extending the claim process to absentee property to a three-year period, easing the documentation process with alternative substantiation measures, and acknowledging the rights of squatters whose property was connected to utilities and government services;

c. use the opportunity of redevelopment in the service of national reconciliation as a priority by rebuilding communities and neighborhoods without favoring those with particular sectarian, religious, or political affiliations.

Rationale

In Matthew 25, Christ calls us to serve members of the family of God who lack the basics of life. Food, clothing, medical attention, and social connection, all offered with a generous heart, are ways to witness to Christ’s presence and his solidarity with those who suffer. “On Responding to the Current Syrian Crisis” (Item 12-09 of the 223rd General Assembly 2018, *Ibid.*), calls attention to the need to work for an end to the violence, alleviation of the suffering, supporting the UN in its work towards the reconciliation of Syrian society, and the engagement of our congregations in work and prayer on behalf of the Syrian people. The recommendations in this overture go further, as it has become clear that the humanitarian exceptions to sanctions laws are not working and that the crisis in Syria is a regional problem requiring a concerted international solution. This overture is a reflection of biblical values that place the lives and well-being of individuals and human community above the interests of political figures, economic elites, and powerful states. The recommendations also seek to respond to the passionate concerns of PCUSA partners on the ground, especially fellow Christians of the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon, the heir of 200 years of Presbyterian mission endeavor and 2,000 years of Christian presence.

There is no doubt that the Syrian government under President Bashar al-Assad has been brutal. Our recommendations do not validate or valorize this government. Rather, we acknowledge that the U.S. attempt at regime change and the sanctions imposed on Syria have only deepened the suffering of the Syrian people.

While the conflict in Syria is in its final stage, it is far from certain that a durable peace is at hand. Catastrophic levels of destruction have left most Syrians remaining in Syria in dire poverty. According to United Nations, 69 percent of Syrians remaining in Syria are living in extreme poverty, with 90 percent spending half of their meager incomes on food. An estimated 400,000 people died during eight years of conflict, with 5.6 million fleeing the country and 6 million internally displaced. An estimated 43 percent of Syrian youth have had no schooling during the war, severely limiting their prospects and making them vulnerable to the blandishments of criminal gangs and extremist groups. In 2017 the World Bank estimated that one third of Syria’s housing stock and half of its schools and hospitals had been destroyed.

The refugee crisis has strained the resources of bordering countries and has been exploited by nationalist politicians in the West in their bids for power. Many Syrians fear returning to their native land in the face of torture, reprisals, military conscription, and home confiscations. The once cosmopolitan social fabric of Syria is at risk of unraveling into sectarianism. Rebuilding may well occur in ways that reward politically connected individuals and groups at the expense of ordinary citizens.

The U.S. government’s history of intervention driven by a regime change policy in the region has not only produced catastrophic results but are widely seen in the region as affronts to national dignity. Only a concerted international effort will bring about the conditions and resources for a lasting peace in Syria and the region.

1. The United States bears some responsibility for the current suffering of the Syrian people, especially in its draconian sanctions policy that is severely limiting medicines, building supplies, and other necessities from reaching Syrian civilians. The announced goal of sanctions is to drive a wedge between the government and its people. In practice, however, they force civilians to work with the government and the black market it protects to access needed supplies. This results in embittering ordinary people against the sanctioning countries. The report of the Special Rapporteur of the UN Council on Human Rights

found sanctions on Syria contributing to the suffering of the Syrian people, eroding their human rights, and compromising the work of humanitarian aid organizations (Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Negative Impact of Unilateral Coercive Measures on the Enjoyment of Human Rights on His Mission to the Syrian Arab Republic, September 2018). Sanctions are thus both immoral and a policy failure. Nevertheless, the U.S. is now threatening the governments of Lebanon and Jordan with sanctions if their nationals participate in the rebuilding of Syria. By absorbing Syrian refugees, these countries have the highest proportions of refugees in the world, straining their infrastructures and challenging their economies. Especially in view of the accommodations Lebanon and Jordan have had to make during the Syrian conflict, their nationals deserve to participate in the opportunities that Syria's rebuilding presents.

2. Now is the time for generous assistance from the international community, including the United States, to help Syria rebuild and to meet the humanitarian needs of the Syrian people. Unfortunately, humanitarian efforts have been politicized and hampered by all parties to the conflict, with the result that aid is not being delivered to those in need. A focus on humanitarian principles requires our government to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance and to contribute generously in funding it.

3. An enabling environment of peace in the region is essential to the rebuilding of Syria. The United Nations has an essential role to play in the coming years in facilitating peacebuilding in Syria and the region. The Security Council is a place where the U.S. and Russia, often on different sides during the Syrian war, can come together to work to alleviate the suffering of the Syrian people and facilitate peacemaking in the region. Such cooperation in 2015 produced UN Security Council Resolution #2254, which lays out the guiding principles of ensuring Syria's future, including: "commitments to Syria's unity, independence, territorial integrity, and non-sectarian character; ensuring continuity of governmental institutions; protecting the rights of all Syrians, regardless of ethnicity or religious denomination; and ensuring humanitarian access throughout the country" and a Syrian-led political process facilitated by the United Nations. For its part, the US government should withdraw its military force from Syria and expand its diplomatic efforts to protect vulnerable populations like the Kurds. The U.S. government should work to ensure that all foreign combatants leave Syria and that only UN peacekeeping forces operate in Syria. At present UN peacekeeping forces are not in Syria. A small unarmed supervision mission was suspended in 2012 due to the violence. The U.S. government should urge the Israeli government to return to negotiating with the Syrian government over the return of the Golan in fulfillment of Syria's territorial integrity and international law, which would contribute to peace building in the region.

4. UN Security Council Resolution #2254 (see above) provides for the safe and voluntary return of refugees and internally displaced persons to their home areas and the rehabilitation of affected areas. Hopefully U.S.-Russian cooperation will allow the UN Security Council to influence the Syrian government to welcome back its refugees by declaring a general amnesty. Rebuilding homes, livelihoods, and neighborhoods will depend, in part, on how the Syrian government recognizes claims to property abandoned during the war. Only about one in five refugees have title deeds in their possession, according to the Norwegian Refugee Council (Norwegian Refugee Council Briefing Note, Syrian Refugees' Right to Legal Identity: Implications for Return, January 2017). The situation is complicated by the prevalence of irregularities in property ownership and transfer. The sudden influx of rural people into the cities on the heels of the historic drought of 2006–2009 overwhelmed the Syrian bureaucracy, which nonetheless gave authorizations for municipal services to be delivered to homes and businesses in the absence of complete paperwork. The Syrian government has given very limited means and timespan for Syrians to reclaim their property (Syrian Law #10). A great concern is the government obliterating the homes and neighborhoods of its opponents and rewarding its loyalists and allies with real estate deals. This is already happening, according to the Carnegie Middle East Center (Carnegie Middle East Center, *The Paradox of Syria's Reconstruction*, 4 September 2019). Instead, national reconciliation should drive redevelopment work with Syria's neighborhoods and communities restored.

Note: The Syria Lebanon Partnership Network has discussed this overture and its effect on the work of both the Office of Public Witness and the Ministry at the United Nations.

Concurrences to Item 02-125 from the Presbyteries of Chicago, de Cristo, Huntingdon, New York City, and Providence.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-125

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-125—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP)

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 02-125.

This overture is consistent with actions taken by the 223rd General Assembly (2018) (<https://www.pc-biz.org/#/committee/3000014/business>) while appropriately moving the policy of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) forward in light of changes in the situation in Syria since 2018. We commend the proponents for their careful balancing of factors in what has been a terrifyingly brutal proxy war, one that has sent waves of refugees de-stabilizing other governments as well.

The assembly has rightly addressed this matter on two prior occasions, and the broad framework of hopes for human rights, democracy, and etho-religious coexistence in the 2012 resolution, For Human Rights and Civic Freedom: https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/For_human_rights_and_civic_freedom-no-cover-2012.pdf.

Item 02-126

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 303.]

On Fossil Fuel Divestment—From the Presbytery of Monmouth.

The Presbytery of Monmouth overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) to:

1. Recognize that fossil fuels have been used by humans to create a better world for many people and that the time of their usefulness is now over.
2. Recognize that divestment from fossil fuels is a viable approach to the climate emergency, which thousands of other institutions have used to hold the fossil fuel industry accountable for their inadequate responses to this emergency.
3. Commend Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) for their ongoing work with shareholder engagement to hold these industries accountable to the just and equitable values that Presbyterians seek to uphold.
4. Call on the PC(USA), The Presbyterian Foundation, the Board of Pensions, and the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., to divest from the fossil fuel industry, using the Carbon Underground 200 and the S&P Global Industry Classification Standard's list of publicly traded companies engaged in coal, oil, and gas exploration, extraction, and production as the criteria to identify which companies are considered to be fossil fuel companies.
5. Proscribe (stop) any new investments in fossil fuel industry securities.
6. Instruct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through MRTI, to correspond through form letter to all fossil fuel companies and presbyteries in which they are headquartered of the action and the theological and moral rationale for this decision.
7. Encourage the Board of Pensions and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation to actively seek out and invest in securities of companies whose predominant focus is in renewable and/or energy efficiency.
8. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through MRTI, to monitor the Board of Pensions and Presbyterian Foundation on actions to divest/invest and to report to the 225th General Assembly (2022) on their progress in implementing Recommendations 4-7.

Rationale

Presbyterians, and all people of faith, are always called to serve the earth. This is God's call for all humanity from the very beginning (Genesis 2:15). While fossil fuels have allowed us to create a better world for many, we now know its impact on creation and future generations is threatening the life we know and cherish. As we confess that failure, we must listen to and engage with the people in frontline communities who are already experiencing climate change, to better understand the human toll climate change has taken and will continue to take on God's children.

Here are just a couple of their voices:

“Every time there's an investment in fossil fuels, we in Africa have never been the winners of that investment. So yes this fight is about climate change but it's about decolonization and survival too” (Coumba Toure of Trust Africa).

“There's 5.9 hours of sunlight on average every day in Puerto Rico [which is a lot]. But there's no [infrastructure for] solar or wind. Fossil fuel companies want to make money from oil here—and that's colonialism” (Dr. Ediberto Lopez of el Seminario Evangélico de Puerto Rico).

Everything else we do as people of faith to rationalize the need for immediate and categorical divestment takes root in this context and the way our church already acts in the rest of the world. To that end, we offer the below rationale for divestment from fossil fuels from frontline communities, according to the science, and in line with previous Presbyterian policy.

We cannot continue to invest in the past while at the same time investing in the future.

Moral Rationale

“Then the LORD said to Cain, ‘Where is your brother Abel?’ ‘I don’t know,’ he replied. ‘Am I my brother’s keeper?’” (Gen. 4:9).

“... ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me’” (Mt. 25:40).

“The moral rationale that undergirds the divestment movement is driven by this logic: climate change is harming our planet and many who inhabit it; fossil fuels are a large driver of the climate problem; and alternatives to fossil fuels exist that can provide the core energy requirements of modern societies. Therefore, profiting from products that drive this damage is morally wrong, and divesting from these products is a moral obligation.”¹

This quotation is from a 2019 statement in favor of divestment by GreenFaith, an international and interfaith environmental nonprofit that has been the lead on faith-based divestment movements. This is the moral foundation of the movement to divest from fossil fuels that has been present in the PC(USA) since 2013. This morality is guided by the biblical call that we humans are created by God to serve the earth and other people as a way to love God. We are called to love God with our whole hearts. Where our treasure is there our heart will be also (Mt. 6:21).

We have watched as MRTI has faithfully sat at the table of fossil fuel companies, speaking boldly to companies that have lied to the world about climate change and fossil fuels. Still, their faithful witness has garnered slow promises that do not yet address the suffering and injustice implicit in climate change.

And so, it is our unequivocal commissioning to leave the table and divest from the fossil fuel industry, allowing us to reinvest in renewable energy and climate solutions. In doing so, we live out our chief end “to glorify God and enjoy God forever.”²

Scientific Rationale

Human use of fossil fuels has spurred economic and social growth, literally fueling the industrial revolution. However, burning fossil fuels has already raised the average temperature of the earth by 1°C (1.8°F). The latest report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change³ (IPCC) shows the extent of the damage we will cause to creation if we allow the earth’s temperature to rise by 1.5–2°C, the targets agreed to by all nations of the world under the Paris Agreement of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change⁴. Even at 1.5°C of warming, we can expect to see the extinction of more than 300,000 species of animals, have an ice-free Arctic in most summers, expose 14 percent of people to extreme heat waves (especially in the Global South), expose 250 million people to severe drought, and raise sea levels by at least 1.3 feet.

The increase in global temperature is already causing more frequent heat waves, higher sea levels, more severe droughts, and more frequent heavy rainfall events, resulting in billions of dollars in damage through flooding, wildfires, intense hurricanes, and droughts. These climate disasters have also impacted organisms and ecosystems while reducing crop yields and quality, increasing undernourishment, and damaging human health. Climate change migration is presently a fact of life for people of the Carteret Islands of Papua New Guinea; Shismaref, Alaska; and Isle de Jean Charles, Louisiana—all of whom are preparing to relocate due to the above-mentioned climate change impacts. Sea level rise is projected to reach at least 0.8 feet by the end of 2100 and as much as 6 feet if we do not take significant measures to reduce climate warming.⁵

Knowing we must keep climate to 1.5°–2°C of warming sets limits to how much fossil fuel can be burned. We have about ten years after the 224th General Assembly (2020) to stay within these warming limits. However, the fossil fuel industry’s own estimates⁶ show that burning the proved reserves of fossil fuels will release almost three times the carbon budget at 2°C⁷ and an astounding five times the 1.5°C budget—CO₂ that will remain in the atmosphere for hundreds of years. Despite these dire realities, oil and gas production is increasing, and PC(USA)’s money has helped allow oil and gas companies to spend more than \$114 Billion in 2017⁸ to acquire new deposits of oil and gas that we can’t afford to burn.

The fossil fuel industry often places new refineries and petrochemical plants in poor communities of color who lack the resources to stand in the way. This form of environmental racism drives some of the highest rates of cancer and disease in the country. A predominantly African American South Philadelphia community, for example, surrounds the Philadelphia Energy Solutions (PES) refinery. That plant was already Philadelphia’s biggest single air polluter before it recently exploded, sending toxic fumes into the surrounding community of people who cannot afford to move away from them. A 2017 report⁹ said the PES complex was responsible for 72 percent of the toxic air emissions in Philadelphia, a major factor in the city’s childhood asthma rate, which is more than double the national average, as well as causing a range of other health effects including headaches and cancer.¹⁰ Marathon Oil [one of PC(USA)’s GA9 investments¹¹], which recently spent \$1.9 billion to expand their refinery in a Detroit suburb, purchased property from nearby white neighbors in the path of the refinery’s pollution clouds, leaving communities of color to suffer.¹²

While we sit at the table trying to convince these companies to change their ways, they continue to perpetuate sins against humans and all creation. We currently profit from these scientific realities and sins against our neighbor. In the face of this climate emergency, we must stand firm in a bold witness with people who have been hurt by the fossil fuel industry—we must divest.

Criteria Rationale

The criteria this overture calls upon the denomination to use to define which companies are fossil fuel companies, and thereby, which will go on the divestment and proscription list, are of vital importance. The first criterion, the Carbon Underground 200¹³, compiled and maintained by Fossil Free IndexesSM, identifies the top 100 coal and the top 100 oil and gas publicly traded reserve holders globally, ranked by the potential carbon emissions content of their reported reserves. This is the approach that has been most commonly used by institutions seeking to divest. By identifying the publicly traded companies with the largest reserves, divesting from these companies has the most immediate impact.

The second criterion is the S&P Global Industry Classification Standard (GICS®)¹⁴ listing of publicly traded companies engaged in coal, oil and gas exploration, extraction, and production. The GICS was designed in response to the global financial community's need for accurate, complete, and standard industry definitions. The GICS structure consists of 11 Sectors, 24 Industry groups, 69 Industries and 158 sub-industries. Used for financial indices such as the S&P Oil & Gas Exploration & Production Select Industry Index, the GICS Industry categories Oil, Gas & Consumable Fuels (101020) and Energy Equipment & Services (101010) capture the entire industry. Using this criterion prevents proscribing investment in companies selling petroleum products while still profiting from companies engaged in exploration, extraction, and production, such as oil rig producers and independent fracking companies.

The third criterion calls for divestment. The Board of Pensions has consistently argued that they cannot divest without undermining their fiduciary responsibility to pension holders. However, more than 1,000 institutions—who must also uphold fiduciary responsibility—have already divested, representing more than \$11 trillion worldwide.¹⁵ Clearly it is possible (and one might argue necessary) to divest from fossil fuels and still be responsible for the investments of pensioners.

In 2017, the IPCC reported we have about ten years after the 224th General Assembly (2020) to make major changes, including a 45 percent reduction in CO₂ emissions by 2030 and reaching net-zero emissions by 2050 to stay within 1.5°C of warming¹⁶. PC(USA)'s Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) committee currently uses a set of criteria that fail to respond prophetically to the urgency of climate change. MRTI's methodical approach is unnecessarily time consuming when there is little time left to act. MRTI has carefully constructed an evaluation rubric consisting of 20 environmental metrics, 12 social metrics, and 12 governance metrics (with several subcategories in some of these). Such an environmental, social, and governance (ESG) evaluation is the cornerstone of modern socially responsible investing. The 222nd General Assembly (2016) charged MRTI with identifying these metrics in 2016. The 223rd General Assembly (2018) approved the metrics and identified an initial list of nine companies to consider, of which only six are oil and gas companies¹⁷. MRTI may deliver a list of proposed divestments to the 224th General Assembly (2020)—six years since the 221st General Assembly (2014) first considered divestment. There is no certainty that MRTI will consider any additional companies post 2020 because such a move would require a mandate from General Assembly. In fact, current MRTI efforts will not even provide a clear idea which of these companies are moving towards a low-carbon future and which are not until 2023, making further significant action unlikely before the 226th General Assembly (2024) meeting¹⁸. Additionally, the MRTI approach includes no proscription of investment in other fossil fuel companies, so PC(USA) funds divested from one oil company could be reinvested into another. Finally, The MRTI process is too slow to make the changes we need now to protect creation.

PC(USA) Policy Rationale

“He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” (Micah 6:8).

The PC(USA) has a long history of divestment and, in particular, of categorical divestment. The church has divested from five industrial categories—military-related products, tobacco companies, alcohol corporations, gambling businesses, and for-profit prisons. The church has also divested from particular corporations that have contributed to human rights abuses in specific times and places.

In 1984 when the PC(USA) adopted its policy on divestment¹⁹ it provided for “divestment of holdings in a particular firm or class of firms is both part of the normal management of funds and potentially an occasion for Christian witness to God's call for justice and the renewal of society”. However, in its implementation of this policy, the PC(USA)'s Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) has developed a policy for divestment from an entire industrial category (class of firms). The paths to categorical divestment and the forms it has taken have thus diverged in each case. Such flexibility has allowed the church to appropriately respond to different industries and the various social and environmental problems each creates.

The 194th General Assembly (1982) of the United Presbyterian Church in the USA, for example, instructed the church to divest from corporations involved in military activities. Between 1982 and 1998, the General Assembly refined this industrial category to include (1) the five biggest military contractors to the U.S. government, (2) companies that receive at least 50 percent of their sales from military contracts and are among the 100 highest-earning military contractors, (3) the top five earning companies engaged in foreign military sales, and (4) corporations that produce weapons that can lead to mass civilian casualties. MRTI began recommending these measures after ten years of shareholder engagement.

The General Assembly instructed the church to divest from all tobacco companies in 1990. The overture to divest called upon MRTI to “develop annually a list of corporations ‘whose primary business is tobacco and are known as such.’” In 1996, the General Assembly directed MRTI to use the Investor Responsibility Research Center, the American Lung Association, and Corporate Campaign, Inc. to define what qualifies as a tobacco company. From these guidelines, twenty-one corporations were identified. MRTI did not conduct any shareholder engagement prior to the General Assembly’s decision to divest.

Neither the General Assembly nor MRTI has ever called for divestment from alcohol or gambling corporations. However, the Board of Pensions and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation have their own policies, which govern divesting/proscribing investments in all domestic and international alcohol and gambling corporations.

The General Assembly voted in 2003 to call for the abolition of all for-profit prisons, jails, and detention centers. In 2012, the General Assembly instructed MRTI to “report on the feasibility of affecting the corporate practices of Corrections Corporation of America (CCA), the GEO Group, and any other publicly traded corporation that directly manages or operates for-profit prisons and/or detention centers.” MRTI determined, “while efforts could be made through shareholder advocacy (where stock is owned in a publicly traded company), such efforts might improve some prison conditions, but would not address the fundamental contradictions identified by the 215th General Assembly (2003).” The General Assembly therefore voted to divest from all publicly traded for-profit prison companies.

The denomination has chosen to divest from each of these entire industrial categories in the first place because the very nature of these industries has been seen as harmful to the spiritual and biological life of God’s creation.

This overture to categorically divest from the fossil fuel industry would take a prophetic stance to protect God’s creation and ensure a sustainable energy future for the church and God’s world.

Endnotes

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10. Frank Kummer 2019. *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. Philadelphia refinery that caught fire is city’s biggest single polluter. <https://www.inquirer.com/science/climate/philadelphia-refinery-fire-pollution-history-20190624.html>.
11. Ibid.
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13. <https://fossilfreefunds.org/carbon-underground-200>.

14. S&P Global 2018. *Global Industry Classification Standard*. https://www.spglobal.com/marketintelligence/en/documents/112727-gics-mapbook_2018_v3_letter_digitalspreads.pdf.
15. <https://gofossilfree.org/divestment/commitments/>.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. https://www.presbyterianmission.org/story/mrti-shares-first-round-of-general-assembly-environmental-compliance-scores/?utm_source=ActiveCampaign&utm_medium=email&utm_content=Presbyterian+Church+USA+Weekly+News&utm_campaign=Presbyterian+Church+USA+Weekly+News+%7C+Sep+04-10+2019&fbclid=IwAR1GsHB6vEJUlhx_9gGqcWN9Tkma2U8uBhF410dLP71kt6ly-xnBB3XZqc.
19. Office of General Assembly 1984. The Divestment Strategy: Principles and Criteria. *Minutes*, 1984, Part I, 193–207.

Concurrences to Item 02-126 from the Presbyteries of Blackhawk, Boston, Chicago, de Cristo, Des Moines, East Tennessee, Florida, Giddings-Lovejoy, Grand Canyon, Greater Atlanta, Hudson River, Mid-Kentucky, National Capital, New Castle, New Hope, Newton, Northern Waters, Northwest Coast, San Jose, Santa Fe, Shenandoah Valley, Susquehanna Valley, The Redwoods, and Twin Cities Area, and the Synod of the Northeast.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-126

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-126—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP)

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 02-26 as amended:

Add new recommendations: New Recommendation 9, taken from Item 02-97 and new Recommendations 10–12 taken from Item 02-17

“[9. Direct MRTI to add American Airlines, Delta Airlines, and United Airlines to its list of companies previously identified by MRTI for this focused engagement.

“[10. Encourage all congregations and presbyteries to learn about and start the process of divestment from fossil fuels through MRTI, the Presbyterian Foundation, and the Board of Pensions using the Carbon Underground 200 and the S&P Global Industry Classification Standard’s list of publicly traded companies engaged in coal, oil, and gas exploration, extraction, and production as the criteria to identify which companies are considered to be fossil fuel companies.

“[11. Recognize that the fossil fuel industry has long provided employment for many, including members of our denomination, and therefore:

“[a. Affirm that working in the fossil fuel industry is a necessity for many and assure our members that divestment is not a condemnation or judgment of their choice of employment.

“[b. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) to be in conversation with presbyteries whose members are most dependent on the fossil fuel industry, in order to discern ways that we can support them as our society transitions away from our dependence on fossil fuels and jobs are inevitably lost.

“[12. Recognize that the fossil fuel industry inevitably profits from the climate crisis, and that many around the world are already suffering the impact of climate change, including many within our own denomination, and therefore direct the PMA to be in conversation with presbyteries whose members are most affected by climate change to discern ways we can continue to support them and minimize the impact of climate change in their lives and communities as we divest from fossil fuels.]”

ACSWP understands that fossil fuels continue to be used in the world today and will continue to be used even if the PC(USA) divests from all oil, gas, and coal companies. Divesting categorically from fossil fuels is a moral and ethical statement that as a Christian denomination we understand our calling from Genesis to care for creation. Investing in fossil fuels is an equity issue as well—pollution has a more detrimental effect on vulnerable and marginalized communities. ACSWP was directed by the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to update the PC(USA)’s energy policy. That policy is 224th General Assembly (2020) business [Item 02-35] *Investing in a Green Future: A Vision for a Renewed Creation*, which confesses “that we have not sufficiently ‘responded to the cry of creation’ and hereby recommit to a ‘turnaround decade’ for restoring creation. We have failed to place the intrinsic value of God’s creation above the idols of the world, such as wealth, power, acquisition, and status. We have failed to embrace fully the principles of stewardship and sustainability, of God’s concern for the poor and their

participation in processes and policies, of accepting for our own lives that which is sufficient (rather than the constant accumulation of more), and of solidarity with all creation. We recommit our energy, our treasure, and our vision to a future in which God’s creation is restored, the human family lives together in balance and justice with each other, and the social and ecological destruction that our society inflicts on the world is reversed and repaired.”

Fossil fuel usage is the main cause of the climate crisis we face today. We have seen from the COVID19 pandemic just how quickly the air becomes clearer when the usage of transportation slows. We are not advocating for the economic position we find ourselves in from the pandemic. We do recommend that MRTI focus its engagement efforts on the transportation industry and divest from gas, oil and coal.

We commend MRTI for creating the Guideline Metrics to engage with companies on climate change. ACSWP recommends that MRTI continue to engage with companies that are heavy users of fossil fuels, such as those in the airline, automobile and goods movement industries to transition to renewable energies, and recommends the inclusion of REC-007 recommendation #4 to add American, Delta and United Airlines to the list of companies to engage in conversation.

Additionally, *Investing in a Green Future: A Vision for a Renewed Creation*, directs the Mission Responsibility Through Investment Committee to engage with insurance companies and banks to cease insuring or lending to new fossil fuel projects.

To continue to invest in these companies is not prudent for those invested with the Board of Pensions and the Presbyterian Foundation. The energy sector in 2020 is 3.79% of the S&P 500; in 2008 it was 16%.¹ During the pandemic the futures price of oil dropped below \$0.

ACSWP also recommends synods, presbyteries and congregations discern their call to divesting from fossil fuels. This is a time for the whole church to use its voice of moral authority. *Investing in a Green Future: A Vision for a Renewed Creation* also encourages “congregations, mid-councils, and agencies of the Presbyterian Church (USA) to invest in the renewable energy industry.” Divesting in fossil fuels provides funds for investing in renewable energies and supports entities with this goal.

Investing in a Green Future: A Vision for a Renewed Creation recognizes “that transitioning to a more just, restored, and sustainable world will be difficult, but possible. While it is hard for us to imagine a low-carbon / zero-carbon economy without fossil fuels, where environmental care comes before profit, in which racism and poverty are functionally eliminated ... Instead of focusing on the difficulties or expense, we must lift up our vision and actions to create a revived environment, better health outcomes, employment opportunities that provide a living wage, clean air and water, wilderness preserved for its own sake, universal access to healthy food, and the reconciliation of broken relationships.” Believing that an economy is possible without fossil fuels can start with divesting from those companies that provide fossil fuels.

Endnote

1. <https://www.investors.com/etfs-and-funds/sectors/sp500-energy-stocks-hot-mess-own-more-than-should/>

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 02-126

Presbyterian Mission Agency Comment on Item 02-126. On Fossil Fuel Divestment.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency unanimously passed the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment’s (MRTI) response to the directive from the 223rd General Assembly (2018) on Applying Environmental Policy and Recommending Selective Divestment. This response is an appropriate application of General Assembly policy, specifically the Divestment as Strategy Policy: Principles and Criteria [approved by the 196th General Assembly (1984)] and the Guideline Metrics framework [approved by the 222nd and 223rd General Assemblies (2016 and 2018)].

Item 02-127

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 303.]

On Amending G-2.0503 by Striking the Word “Honorably” and Inserting the Word “Retired”—From the Presbytery of Miami Valley.

The Presbytery of the Miami Valley overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendments to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

1. Amend the first paragraph of G-2.0503 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through.]

“A minister of the Word and Sacrament is a member of a presbytery and shall be engaged in a ministry validated by that presbytery, a member-at-large as determined by the presbytery, or ~~honorably~~ retired.”

2. Amend G-2.0503c as follows:

“c. ~~Honorably~~ Retired

“Upon request of a member of presbytery, the presbytery may designate the member ~~honorably~~ retired because of age, or physical or mental disability, *or other factors satisfactory to the presbytery.*”

Rationale

The only designation of retirement for ministers of the Word and Sacrament allowed in the current *Book of Order* is “Honorably Retired.” That designation may be perfectly fitting for many Presbyterian ministers as they retire from active pastoral roles, but presbyteries sometimes face situations in which a minister’s service has been marked by difficulties and challenges that do not rise to the level of formal disciplinary charges and censure, but which are hardly worthy of the label “Honorable.”

An example of such a situation might be when a pastor has acted inappropriately but no disciplinary charges are brought because of the belief that the damage to a particular church or harmed person would be more devastating than just letting a pastor leave. Victims are then revictimized when that pastor is granted the status of “Honorably Retired.” Another factor might be that church members or others mistrust or do not understand the processes to bring charges. A third example is when a pastor commits boundary violations after honorably serving and leaving a congregation to move to other endeavors. There may also be situations that occurred during a pastor’s membership in a previous presbytery that could be unreported during a transfer process and only later come to light following retirement in a different presbytery.

So how do presbyteries today respond when ministers with service marked by difficulties or challenges on their records seek retirement? Some may maintain those ministers as members-at-large or in other in-between statuses rather than offering retirement, to avoid characterizing the minister’s service as “Honorable.” Other presbyteries may go ahead and honorably retire ministers of all types regardless of the quality and faithfulness of their service. In doing so, however, the term “Honorably” loses its meaning for anyone. Such a retirement may confuse or, as noted above, revictimize people who have been harmed by a troubled pastorate and who may feel that the presbytery is praising the pastor’s service despite the gravity of its problems.

The proposed amendment would maintain the “Retired” category but remove the mandatory designation of “Honorably” that now applies to all retirements. The new designation of “Retired” would be effective for retirements approved by presbyteries on or after the effective date of the amendment under G-6.04e of the *Book of Order*.

This proposed amendment would have no impact whatsoever on a minister of the Word and Sacrament’s access to Board of Pension retirement benefits. That Board of Pensions process is completely separate from a presbytery granting “Retired” status to a minister on its rolls.

Concurrences to Item 02-127 from the Presbyteries of de Cristo, Lake Michigan, Pittsburgh, and Santa Fe.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 02-127

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) that Item 02-127 presents issues.

The overture seeks to amend G-2.0503 and G-2.0503c by striking the word “honorably” before the word “retired” in the two places where it occurs, and by adding “or other factors satisfactory to the presbytery” to G-2.0503c.

The ACC finds that deleting the word “honorably” does not alter the substance of those provisions or affect other constitutional provisions.

The ACC advises the assembly, however, that a similar overture was considered by the 210th General Assembly (1998). The overture was referred to the Office of the General Assembly, which presented an amended overture to the 211th General Assembly (1999). That overture would have removed the word “honorably,” but also included a new provision that would have allowed a presbytery to “designate a retired minister as an honorably retired minister if the presbytery is moved by affection and gratitude to do so.” The Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC) did not raise any constitutional issues to this proposed amendment, which was subsequently approved by the 211th General Assembly (1999), but then failed to receive the affirmative vote of a majority of the presbyteries.

The amendment as proposed, in addition to striking the word “honorably,” adds the words “or other factors satisfactory to the presbytery.” The ACC is unaware of any factors other than those already listed in G-2.0503c that would appropriately lead to the retirement of a minister, and the rationale includes no discussion of the additional language. The ACC is concerned that there could be unintended consequences of this language and advises that if the 224th General Assembly (2020) believes that the intent of this overture is appropriate, the additional words “or other factors satisfactory to the presbytery” be stricken.

Item 02-128

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 303.]

Regarding a Korea Peace Treaty—From the Presbytery of Cayuga-Syracuse.

The Presbytery of Cayuga-Syracuse overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) to do the following:

1. Affirm its commitment to work with the people of Korea and with the Presbyterian Church of Korea (PCK), the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK), other church partners, ecumenical organizations, and nongovernmental organizations in the United States and around the world committed to seeking peace, justice, and reconciliation on the Korean Peninsula.

2. Affirm the need for a peace treaty for the Korean Peninsula that will replace the current armistice agreement dating from 1953.

3. Direct the Stated Clerk and the Presbyterian Mission Agency to work with our church partners in Korea, the United States, and around the world to advocate for a safe environment for a Korean-led process that will lead to a peace treaty for the Korean Peninsula that establishes peace with justice where no party to this long-continued conflict feels they have to sacrifice civil liberties in the name of security and where refugees and asylum-seekers are treated with love and compassion.

4. Direct the Stated Clerk and the Presbyterian Mission Agency to advocate for nuclear disarmament on the Korean Peninsula by both the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and the United States.

5. Call Presbyterians to learn about the history of the conflict on the Korean Peninsula and the factors that get in the way of making peace on the peninsula today, including the role of the United States.

6. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to identify print, video, audio, online, and other resources, and to encourage Presbyterians to use them to learn about the history of the conflict on the Korean Peninsula, the factors that get in the way of making peace on the peninsula, including the role of the United States, and opportunities for Presbyterians and other Christians in the United States to support efforts of the Korean people to make peace.

Rationale

Seeking peace and pursuing it is our calling as followers of Jesus, the Prince of Peace. (Ps. 34:14, Rom. 14:19, Heb. 12:14, 1 Pet. 3:11). The Korean Peninsula is one of the many places in the world that are in critical need of peace.

Presbyterians in the United States have shared in ministry with the people of the Korean Peninsula since 1884. Currently we join in mission with Korea’s Christian community, particularly our partners the Presbyterian Church of Korea and the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea, in higher education and youth ministries, theological education, health ministries, and women’s and children’s ministries. We also work with our partners, including the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., the World Council of Churches, and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, in ministries of peace education and reconciliation.

Japan occupied and ruled Korea for nearly thirty-six years, beginning in 1910. At the end of World War II, Allied forces liberated Korea on August 15, 1945. The Korean people rejoiced at regaining freedom. However, their joy was shattered when the U.S.A. and the USSR divided the country into two along the 38th parallel under the pretext of disarming the Japanese forces, without regard for the wishes of the Korean people. Soviet forces occupied the northern portion until 1948, and an American military government controlled the southern portion until 1948, with American forces withdrawn in 1949. This situation of division contributed to war on the Korean peninsula lasting between June 25, 1950 and July 27, 1953.

The Korean War has never officially ended. The Korean Armistice Agreement, signed on July 27, 1953, stopped the active military fighting on the peninsula. It established a Military Demarcation Line (MDL) near the 38th parallel and a Demilitarized Zone on either side of the MDL. The Armistice Agreement promised negotiations to establish a peace treaty formally ending

the war, but Cold War antagonisms prevented agreement, and negotiations were broken off after a few years. The Korean War still officially exists, nearly seventy years after the armistice.

The unended Korean War continues to impact those living on the Korean Peninsula and in diaspora. Millions of Korean families were separated as a result of the war and the armistice agreement that established the MDL. A limited number of Koreans have been able to visit family members across the MDL. Many Koreans have never seen family members who live on the other side of the line; many have died without ever seeing family members. Koreans in both countries live with suspicion, hostility, and recurring incidents of violence as a result of the unresolved state of conflict and extensive militarization of the peninsula.

United States military forces remain in the Republic of Korea and the Korean peninsula remains one of the most militarized places in the world. Military forces from the United States and the Republic of Korea (ROK) engage in annual exercises that rehearse invasion of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). Feeling threatened, the DPRK maintains a strong military, upgrades its weaponry, and makes threatening displays in response. The nuclear capabilities of both the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea have escalated the tensions on the peninsula.

Despite the difficulties and complexity of the issues between them, the people of the Korean Peninsula, including the Christian communities, have worked for peace. Recent efforts by people and leaders of the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea have been made to nurture trust and open the possibility of concrete diplomatic negotiation toward establishing a permanent peace with justice. The U.S. opened a new diplomatic relationship with the DPRK in 2018, changing antagonistic and mutually threatening confrontation into a sudden and a friendly diplomatic relationship that had never happened before. The summit meetings between the leaders of the two countries in Singapore in 2018 and in Hanoi in 2019, along with a personal meeting between the two leaders later in 2019, offered hope that diplomatic negotiations could soon resolve the differences between the U.S. and the DPRK and finally conclude the Korean War with a Treaty of Peace.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has historically advocated for peace and reconciliation in the Korean peninsula. The 222nd General Assembly (2016) acted to "Request the U.S. government and the United Nations to secure a safe environment for the two Koreas to engage in dialogue and to develop a Korea-led process on healing, reconciliation, and peaceful reunification (*Minutes*, 2016, Part I, p. 951)." The 219th General Assembly (2010), approved a resolution strongly supporting "the replacement of the present armistice agreement with a just and lasting peace treaty between North and South Korea, brokered by the United Nations, and endorsed by the United States and other powers with interests in the region" (*Minutes*, 2010, Part I, p. 976). Representatives of the Presbyterian Church of Korea and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) met in Louisville, Kentucky, on April 17–19, 2013, and issued a joint statement reaffirming their commitment to partnership in efforts to build peace in the Korean peninsula: "We affirm our commitment to walk in humility, with open minds, prepared to change our ways fulfilling the ministry of reconciliation as we follow the Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. (Matthew 5:9)." A peace delegation of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) leaders visited the Republic of Korea in response to the action of the 222nd General Assembly (2016) previously cited and an action of that same assembly that addressed the killing of Korean civilians by United States troops on July 26–29, 1950, near the village of No Gun Ri (*Minutes*, 2016, Part I, pp. 853–54).

In response to the "Statement on Peace and Reunification of Korea" adopted by the World Council of Churches at its 10th General Assembly (2013) in Busan, Republic of Korea, the National Council of Churches in Korea launched a global campaign for the signing of a peace treaty. The campaign delivered 13,000 signatures of United States citizens to President Obama on the 63rd anniversary of the armistice agreement. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the National Council of the Christian Churches in the USA, and other U.S. faith communities promoted this campaign.

A peace treaty is needed that does justice to all parties to this historic conflict, which continues to generate hatred, violence, poverty, hunger, and human suffering. Officially ending the war would help ensure the security of the Korean peninsula and the stability of the region.

Presbyterians have long prayed for peace on the Korean Peninsula. Advocating for a peace treaty, guided by our partners in Korea, PC(USA) members will help bring the answer to those prayers for peace there and around the world.

Concurrences to Item 02-128 from the Presbyteries of Chicago, de Cristo, East Tennessee, Grand Canyon, Lake Erie, Lake Michigan, Mid Kentucky, New Hope, New York City, Newton, Santa Fe, Susquehanna Valley, and Utica.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-128

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 02-128.

The PC(USA) has a long history of involvement on the Korean Peninsula and, since the truce bringing a cessation of conflict to the Korean War, a tradition of advocating for peace. This overture renews that concern, and appropriately gives the lead in the work to the religious communities of Korea—in this case, particularly the Presbyterians and ecumenical bodies such as the National Council of Churches in Korea (NCCCK).

This desire and advocacy for peace is, naturally, an ongoing concern in Korea itself, and approval of this overture would lend our denomination's support to such efforts. As an indication of that hope in Korea, we include the following letter from the NCCCK to President Trump.

Item 02-129

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 303.]

On Designating May 15 as the Palestinian Nakba Remembrance Day—From the Synod of the Covenant.

The Synod of the Covenant overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to:

1. direct the Stated Clerk to designate May 15 as the “Palestinian *Nakba* Remembrance Day” for the purpose of lifting prayer for peace, giving solidarity for those suffering under occupation, and promoting advocacy among PC(USA) members; and
2. direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to include “Palestinian *Nakba* Remembrance Day” on May 15 on future years of the *Presbyterian Planning Calendar*.

Rationale

Christians who were exiled from the holy land grieve for their connection to the Mother Church. A hymn frequently sung by Presbyterians is one that brings to mind the profound loss suffered by these Christians. This hymn, “This Is My Song,” is sung to the tune of Finlandia composed by Jean Sibelius to words written by Lloyd Stone. The first four lines of the hymn are:

This is my song, O God of all the nations,
a song of peace for lands afar and mine.
This is my home, the country where my heart is;
here are my hopes, my dreams, my holy shrine. (*Glory to God: The Presbyterian Hymnal*, song 340)

To Palestinians who have been exiled from their country and never allowed to return, this song speaks to their hearts and bring tears in remembrance of their profound loss. Their Palestine was their hopes, their dreams, and their holy shrine. It is lost to them, and a remembrance of those hopes and dreams is all that is left.

The Nakba is an Arabic word that translates to “the Catastrophe” and refers to the expulsion by terrorism and force of 750,000 Palestinians, both Christian and Muslim, in 1947–48. Their properties have been expropriated by the Israeli government. They have lost everything—their lands, their homes, and most importantly their communities. And to this day, these people are not allowed to return to their homes and lands.

The PC(USA) has in the past recognized the rights of Palestinians for repatriation or compensation¹; stated concern for the status of Jerusalem to be an international city free and open for all faiths²; advocated for access to the holy places in Jerusalem and Bethlehem and other churches throughout Palestine³; just to name a few. Alas, for Palestinians and Christian Palestinians, access to their holy places in Jerusalem and Bethlehem is difficult and more often than not denied to them. To obtain access, a permit from the Israeli government is required, which is difficult to obtain, and if they do receive a permit, they are subjected to difficult and humiliating checkpoints.

Palestinian Christians express their gratitude for this support in the Kairos Palestine document:

Our word to the Churches of the world is firstly a word of gratitude for the solidarity you have shown toward us in word, deed and presence among us. It is a word of praise for the many Churches and Christians who support the right of the Palestinian people for self determination. It is a message of solidarity with those Christians and Churches who have suffered because of their advocacy for law and justice. It is a call to stand alongside the oppressed and preserve the word of God as good news for all.⁴

The insertion of a “Palestinian Nakba Remembrance Day” in the *Presbyterian Planning Calendar* gives solidarity to those Palestinian Americans among us and Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and refugee camps outside Palestine, all who

remember and grieve. Our solidarity with them helps to keep hope alive that one day they or their descendants may be able return to their homeland. This is their song, their hope, O God of all the nations.

Endnotes

1. 219th General Assembly (2010), “Breaking Down the Walls”—From the Middle East Study Committee, Overture can be accessed at <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3179>.
2. 223rd General Assembly (2018), A Resolution on the Status of Jerusalem—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns. Overture can be accessed at <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000278>.
3. 219th General Assembly (2010), “Breaking Down the Walls”—From the Middle East Study Committee, Overture can be accessed at <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3179>.
4. Kairos Palestine document’s full title is “A moment of truth: A word of faith, hope, and love from the heart of Palestinian suffering” issued in December 2009 by the Christian community in Palestine.

Concurrences to Item 02-129 from the Presbyteries of de Cristo, Huntingdon, and Santa Fe.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-129

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 02-129.

This overture is consistent with the most recent policy of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

The 219th General Assembly (2010) approved the document, “Breaking Down the Walls,” which explicitly acknowledges the Nakba and its effects on Palestinians:

The term “Nakba” does not refer to the establishment of Israel itself, but rather the effect that the war had on the Palestinian people. This war resulted in the displacement of 750,000 Palestinians in 1948 from their ancestral homeland. This was a violent displacement and is overwhelmingly experienced as a delegitimization of the Palestinian people. This is described well by Naim Ateek, a Palestinian Anglican priest and the president and director of Sabeel82 in Jerusalem.

On Israel’s Independence Day in 1958 the Israeli military governor had allowed the Palestinian Arabs living in Israel to move around without permits. My father took advantage of this temporary freedom to rent a pickup truck and take all of his children back for the first time to see our home in the town of Beisan, the home from which we had been forced out nine years earlier. Even today I clearly remember how we were not allowed even to look inside our home. The three houses built by my father that made up our home had been divided into smaller units, each occupied now by a Jewish immigrant family. It must have been very difficult for my father to see our house occupied by Jewish immigrants who had come from North Africa while he, the rightful owner, was prevented even from entering them. A few days after this traumatic experience, my father suffered a stroke from which he never fully recovered, leaving him unable to walk or speak clearly.” https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/breaking_down_the_walls_ga219.pdf

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has also lifted up the Kairos Palestine document as worthy of both study (see *Israel /Palestine: For Human Values in the Absence of a Just Peace* (2016), p 11 https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/news/pfjp_two_state_final_w_map.pdf) and amplification (see *Breaking Down the Walls*, p. 7 https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/breaking_down_the_walls_ga219.pdf).

The Kairos Document (*A moment of truth: A word of faith, hope and love from the heart of Palestinian suffering*) states:

One of the most important signs of hope is the steadfastness of the generations, the belief in the justice of their cause and the continuity of memory, which does not forget the “Nakba” (catastrophe) and its significance. Likewise significant is the developing awareness among many Churches throughout the world and their desire to know the truth about what is going on here. <https://www.kairos-palestine.ps/index.php/about-kairos/kairos-palestine-document>

This overture would appropriately commit the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to this necessary act of remembrance.

REAC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-129

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-129—From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee.

The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 02-129. The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC) concurs with the Synod of the Covenant in that this is a symbol of our support of racial equity in our church. We cannot be a Matthew 25 church if we do not lift up and stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people who have no country to call their own, and who are considered refugees in their own land (<https://www.unrwausa.org/who-are-palestine-refugees>).

Item 02-130

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 303.]

On Advocating for the Reduction of Firearm Violence—From the Synod of the Covenant.

The Synod of the Covenant overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to do the following:

1. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through the Office of Public Witness, to advocate for federal laws that would establish

- extreme risk and protection orders (so-called red-flag laws) that allow a court to intervene by removing weapons of violence when someone shows warning signs of impending violence either to themselves or others;
- universal background checks before purchasing firearms in any and all venues; and
- a ban on the sale and ownership of assault weapons and restrict the use of large capacity ammunition magazines.

2. Call on our Congress to develop and pass federal laws to establish

- extreme risk and protection orders (so-called red-flag laws) that allows a court to intervene by removing weapons of violence when someone shows warning signs of impending violence either to themselves or others;
- universal background checks for purchase of firearms in any and all venues; and
- a ban on the sale and ownership of assault weapons and restrict the use of large capacity ammunition magazines.

Rationale

At the time of the writing of this overture, we are shocked at the senseless and tragic loss of life in Dayton, Ohio, (9 killed and 27 injured), which is in the bounds of our synod, and in El Paso, Texas (22 killed and 26 injured)—both due to mass shootings occurring within hours of each other and where in both cases the shooter used assault weapons capable of firing multiple bullets in seconds. Such weapons should not be condoned in our communities. And these two mass shootings are the 249th and 250th mass shootings in 2019!

We grieve that such hate and anger is directed at innocent people, in particular immigrants as in El Paso and people of color both in El Paso and Dayton.

As Presbyterians we must speak out.

Red-flag laws have been shown to reduce deaths by suicide. A 2018 study¹ of the effect of risk-based firearm seizure laws in Connecticut and Indiana demonstrated that such laws are associated with a reduction of population-level firearm suicide rates. Moreover, 60 percent of firearm deaths are by suicide,² thus adding to the value of these laws in reducing overall deaths from firearms.

Universal background checks have been shown to reduce firearm violence. According to a review article in the *Annual Review of Public Health*, “some prohibitions for high-risk individuals (e.g., those under domestic violence restraining orders, violent misdemeanants) and procedures for checking for more types of prohibiting conditions are associated with lower rates of violence.”³ Another study of Connecticut’s permit-to-purchase handgun law and homicides found that “Connecticut’s handgun purchaser licensing law is associated with a subsequent reduction in homicide rates ... committed with firearms.”⁴

An argument against universal background checks is that the two instances of mass shooting which recently occurred in El Paso, Texas, and Dayton, Ohio, the shooters purchased the firearms legally. This observation highlights the importance of a ban on the sale of assault weapons, such as those used in most mass shootings, in addition to comprehensive background checks. A ban on large capacity ammunition magazines is also important as they can be used to inflict as much harm as possible to as many people as possible in a very short time. The shooter in Dayton, Ohio, had a 100-bullet magazine at his disposal!

A law on the ban of sale and ownership of assault weapons may be designed with a buyback program for those who owned such weapons before the ban. It has been shown by several studies that such bans decrease the occurrence of mass shootings and the lethality of such shootings.

For example, a study of U.S. gun owners from 1998 to 2015 published in *BMJ (The British Medical Journal)* demonstrated that “States with more permissive gun laws and greater gun ownership had higher rates of mass shootings, and a growing divide appears to be emerging between restrictive and permissive states.”⁵

And in a study of the 1994–2004 federal assault weapons ban and its association with deaths due to mass shootings demonstrated that “mass-shooting related homicides in the United States were reduced during the years of the federal assault weapons ban.”⁶

In conclusion, assault weapons provide mass shooters the ability to kill many people in a very short period of time. In Dayton, Ohio, it took only thirty seconds to kill 9 people and injure 27. There is an alarming increase in occurrence of mass shootings.

Let us heed “The Call to Action”⁷ approved by the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.):

God has provided us with the elements to be agents of change in the world. The change needs to be comprehensive: we need to address the idolatry of guns, the violence that permeates our culture, our obsessions with personal rights over public responsibility, the practices of widespread and indiscriminate sale of military style weapons, as well as the legislation necessary to regulate the accessibility and sale of military weapons disguised as “sporting guns.” We must keep our “eyes on the prize,” of preventing gun violence and the unnecessary deaths and injuries that result. Enough blood has been spilled. We affirm that through good organizational effort animated by the passion of justice that comes to the people of God through the Holy Spirit, violence can be dramatically reduced.

May our Church rededicate itself to this crucial task.

Endnotes

1. Aron J Kivisto, Ph.D., and Peter Lee Phalen, M. A. Effects of Risk-Based Firearm Seizure Laws in Connecticut and Indiana on Suicide Rate, 1981-2015. Published on-line: 1 June18 | <https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.ps.201700250>.
2. Garen J. Wintemute. The Epidemiology of Firearm Violence in the Twenty-First Century United States. *Annual Review of Public Health*, Vol 3:5–19, March 2015. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-publhealth-031914-122535>.
3. Daniel W. Webster and Garen J Wintemute. Effects of Policies Designed to Keep Firearms from High-Risk Individuals. *Annual Review Public Health*, Vol. 36:221–37, March 2015. On-line: <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-publhealth-031914-122516>. *Annual Review of Public Health*.
4. Kara E. Rudolph, Elizabeth A Stuart, Jon S Vernick, and Daniel W. Webster. Association Between Connecticut’s Permit-to-purchase handgun law and homicides. *Am J Public Health*. 2015 Aug;105(8):e49-54. doi: 10.2105/AJPH.2015.302703. Epub 2015 Jun 11.
5. Paul M Reeping, Madalena Cerda, Bind Kalesan, Douglas J Wiebe, Sandro Galea, and Chales C Branas. State gun laws, gun ownership, and mass shootings in the US: cross sectional time series. *BMJ* 2019; 364 dos: <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.I542>.
6. DiMaggio, C, Avraham J, Berry C, Bukur M, Feldman J, Klein M, Shah N, Tandon M, Frangos S. Changes in U.S. mass shooting deaths associated with the 1994–2004 federal assault weapons ban: Analysis of open-source data. *J Trauma Acute Care Surg*. 2019 Jan; 86(1):11–19. doi: 10.1097/TA.0000000000002060.
7. Gun Violence, Gospel Values: Mobilizing in Response to God’s Call. The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP). Minutes, 2010, Part I. pp. 830ff, in particular, p. 842.

Concurrences to Item 02-130 from the Presbyteries of Cristo, Grand Canyon, Hudson River, Huntingdon, and Mississippi.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-130

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-130—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 02-130.

As gun violence is increasing at a disturbing rate, it is critical that Presbyterians are fully aware of the impact gun violence has on women, especially trans and queer women and women of color. In 2015, there were nearly 3,519 women and girls that died by homicide, 53 percent of those cases were intimate partner violence related. Of these statistics, Non-Hispanic Black and American Indian/Alaska Native women had the highest rates.¹ We recognize the deep and urgent need to lift up the voices of the Indigenous women, girls, and two spirits that have been lost in the flawed legal system that fails to protect women and children from firearm violence. The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns is called to stand as advocates for our siblings who have suffered from the unjust ways guns perpetrate violence against women.

The fight for stricter gun control is not meant to strip people of their constitutional rights, but to protect those most vulnerable in our communities from the violence that is heightened by the lack of gun control. As God calls us to “do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly,” we find ourselves being called to advocate for guns laws that would protect women through legislative matters. Until all women are protected under PC(USA) and federal policy, marginalized communities will continue

to suffer from this epidemic. As our Brief Statement of Faith professes, we must “hear the voices of peoples long silenced, and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace.”

As approved by the 223rd General Assembly (2018), in Item 11-14, “In love, may our churches help our country and enact sensible steps to prevent gun violence from murders, suicides, family disputes, and mass shootings.”² The ACWC strongly encourages the approval of Item 02-130 to advocate for stricter gun laws, so our policies may fully reflect the justice and kindness that is required of us.

Endnotes

1. <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/66/wr/mm6628a1.htm>
2. <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000314>

Item 02-131

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 303]

Regarding the Treatment of Refugees—From the Presbytery of Mission.

The Presbytery of Mission, a border presbytery, respectfully overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to

1. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, working through appropriate ministry units, to do the following as soon as possible:
 - a. Provide the whole church with information about conditions that precipitate migration, obstacles to care of refugees, and about detention and deportation practices.
 - b. Challenge violations of the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, Refugee Act, Immigration and Nationality Act, and International Law.
 - c. Act on the beliefs expressed in The Theological Declaration of Barmen (1934). Confession of Belhar (1986), and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that the church and its members may continue to be a prophetic witness against cruelty, hate, and racism.
 - d. Advocate to the United States Congress for legislative compassion in Immigration Reform.
 - e. Advocate to the United States Administration for humane implementation of Immigration Law and Refugee Policy.
 - f. Advocate for the United Nations to develop resources to support refugees in Mexico and in other countries bearing the burden and privilege of refugee support.
 - g. Provide a toolkit for local congregation action for reasonable and compassionate treatment of refugees.
 - h. Provide a report to the 225th General Assembly (2022) on progress toward achieving the goals of this overture.
2. Encourage the Stated Clerk, Office of Public Witness, and Office of Immigration Issues to work with others, including ecumenical, interfaith, and civil society agencies, to develop resources for advocacy and welcoming for refugees.
3. Encourage congregations, presbyteries, and synods to engage with the refugee community by participation in welcoming activities, advocacy for the development of helping public resources, and resistance to unlawful or unhelpful government activity.
4. Establish a \$250,000 grant to be used to implement the provisions of this overture.

Rationale

Our faith requires us to welcome strangers and foreigners, Hebrews 13:2.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) should renew its commitment to compassion and justice for those who have fled their homelands due to fear of political prosecution and for fear of the continuing cycle of violence.

Many times in the past, General Assemblies have given endorsement to welcoming of refugees.

For at least three decades, the United States government has engaged in tactics and strategies in dealing with immigration that violate the United States Constitution, Public Law, and International Law.

Central Americans and others seeking asylum in the United States, are not admitted to the United States and are made to wait in Mexico for periods of weeks, encouraging attempts at illegal entry.

Refugee status is denied to those fleeing domestic abuse in nations unable or unwilling to protect them.

For decades, border enforcement has occasionally resulted in the arrest of adults attempting illegal entry into the United States, but in April 2018, the United States government initiated a “zero tolerance” policy that resulted in massive and unnecessary family separations.

The United States government is incarcerating minors under the supervision of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and in private detention facilities, which are below the standards of human dignity.

The United States government has allowed the following conditions to remain: Asylum applications take many years, sometimes including detention during the wait; longtime residents of the USA are in uncertain status because of the revocation of Delayed Action for Childhood Arrivals; immigration quotas have been lowered to unreasonable levels; and dishonest claims are made about migration activity, encouraging hatred and fear.

White supremacists, white nationalists, and racists are spreading false stories about the dangers posed by asylum seekers and other migrating people.

At the time of this overture, there are more refugees and displaced persons in the world than at any time since World War II.

We strongly believe God is still calling the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) to be a prophetic voice in support of strangers in our land. This overture will demonstrate our denomination’s commitment to serve those who have been forced to leave their own country and cannot return.

Statements from the Stated Clerk on Immigration and Family Separation:

- a. From June 16, 2018: Strong policy statement on immigration policy.
- b. From October 3, 2015: Stated Clerk challenges Donald Trump’s policies and his claim of being a Presbyterian.
- c. From September 6, 2018: Stated Clerk urges steadfastness on the anniversary of DACA repeal.
- d. From August 26, 2018: Stated Clerk condemn family separation policy.

Actions by General Assembly from Website Page (<http://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/immigration/>):

- a. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) joined with other organizations to oppose H.R. 4731, the “Refugee Program Identity Restoration Act of 2016.” Read http://oga.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/hr_4731_sign_on_letter_-_3_15_16.pdf—March 15, 2016 (PDF).

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) joined with 272 organizations in a letter asking the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to designate El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras for Temporary Protected status. This status would acknowledge the danger present for many families in those countries and allow for a temporary immigration status for those families who come here seeking protection but do not meet the narrow legal requirements for asylum.

- b. http://oga.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/mid_council_ministries/2016_01_24_ngo_tps_national_sign-on_letter.pdf

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) joins other organizations to voice opposition to Immigration and Customs Enforcement's plan to begin immigration raids of Central American families in 2016.

- c. http://oga.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/mid_council_ministries/2016_01_24_ngo_tps_national_sign-on_letter.pdf—December 31, 2015 (PDF)

The above initiatives of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) were taking in concert with the other mainline Protestant churches, i.e. The Episcopal Church, The United Methodist Church, Lutheran Refugee Services, and the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) moral leadership was in cooperation with all major churches in this country.

Concurrences to Item 02-131 from the Presbyteries of de Cristo, Grand Canyon, Huntingdon, New Covenant, Plains and Peaks, and Santa Fe, and from the Synod of the Sun.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-131

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-131—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP)

Item 02-131 addresses the need for the whole church to provide a stronger response to how our nation is responding to refugees and asylum seekers at our Southern border. This overture directs the Presbyterian Mission Agency to provide information and education on current refugee conditions while also advocating on their behalf as expressed through our confessions.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 02-131, as amended by adding subsection “a.” to Recommendation 2, as follows below:

“[a. Encourage the Stated Clerk, Office of Public Witness, and Office of Immigration Issues to advocate for Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to release, for the duration of the COVID-19 epidemic and any similar health or environmental dangers in the future, all detainees who are not indicted for violent felonies, to end and/or prevent the separation of children from their parents, to reunite promptly those who have been separated, and to end permanently the use of privately owned (for-profit) detention facilities as well as prisons.]”

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has long affirmed the call to “Welcome the Stranger,” which has been seen through many overtures to the General Assembly. This overture seeks to continue answering this call with particular attention to the current policies of our administration and Congress.

With our added recommendation, we seek to address a particular concern during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. As this is written, the conditions of detention centers already put asylum seekers at risk of further harm, and those conditions are made even more dangerous by potential and actual outbreaks of COVID-19. Even as we hope the coronavirus pandemic will subside, other conditions could conceivably put detainees at similar risks in the future. The General Assembly called for the abolition of private prisons in 2003 and the Board of Pensions and Foundation do not invest in them, but the use of these and other facilities where the private firms are sometimes contractors often signal public disregard for the rights of those held.

ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-131

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-131—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC)

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 02-131.

This overture articulates the need for the 224th General Assembly (2020) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to act on our deepest held beliefs as Christians. The ACWC believes that not approving this overture would overlook the most vulnerable amongst us, particularly women. Humanitarian crises disproportionately affect women¹ and their ability to be resilient during conflicts and natural disasters. As such, it is particularly important for gender justice that all levels of the PC(USA) work to support refugees.

Endnote

1. www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/12/why-do-humanitarian-crises-disproportionately-affect-women/.

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 02-131

Presbyterian Mission Agency Comment on Item 02-131. Regarding the Treatment of Refugees.

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) appreciates the focus and intent of the overture from the Presbytery of Mission. PDA has led or supported several projects over the years directly related to the overture recommendations that could be strengthened with greater resources and visibility. We welcome concrete suggestions from mid councils about how to better

network with them and their congregations to get the information and resources where it is most beneficial. For example, the PDA website for refugee ministry (<https://pda.pcusa.org/situation/refugee-ministry/>) provides basic information and resources and a PDA blog was started to share news and resources. Every year, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) updates the World Refugee Day page with a “World Refugee Day Action Guide” and congregational resources (<https://pcusa.org/refugee>). In 2019, PDA provided approximately \$125,000 in grants to mid councils in the southwest to increase volunteer engagement (accompaniment), direct services at transit shelters, court observations and advocacy, and \$60,000 in donated appliances, equipment, and furnishings to border shelters. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is a member of the Interfaith Immigration Coalition, which has also partnered with We Are All America and Faith4Asylum. Some specific resources available are: *Toolkit for Congregations to Faithfully Accompany People Seeking Asylum*, *A Sponsors Guide to Refugee Resettlement*, a soon to be released new toolkit for *Refugee Resettlement Welcome Teams*, 2 award-winning documentary films *Locked in a* (about immigration detention) and *To Breathe Free* (refugee resettlement).

The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) has already expanded its office in Mexico to increase protection related activities, including working with local shelter networks in several locations, advising the Mexican government on the expansion and professionalization of asylum in Mexico, monitoring and advising the Mexican government. Even as they try to improve rights and conditions in Mexico, UNHCR also issued a statement against the U.S. Migration Protection Protocols (Remain in Mexico) and other U.S. policies to block access to asylum and potential for refoulement (unlawful return of refugees to harm). <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/press/2019/7/5d2cdf114/unhcr-deeply-concerned-new-asylum-restrictions.html>

In 2019, a broad coalition of faith-based and human rights organizations jointly adopted a “Five Investments in Our Immigration System to Actually Address the “Crisis” at the Border” to guide our advocacy for policy change:

1. Establish Regional Refugee Processing Centers, Stop Blocking Asylum in the U.S. and Strengthen the Mexican Asylum System;
2. Modernize the Ports of Entry;
3. Use Existing Funding to Hire Child Welfare, Medical, and Language Professionals at the Border;
4. Fund Community-Based Support Services and Proven, Humane Alternatives to Detention;
5. Address Root Causes.

REAC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-131

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-131—From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC).

The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 02-131.

REAC wholeheartedly agrees with the Presbytery of Mission’s assertions in their rationale that “Our faith requires us to welcome strangers and foreigners, Hebrews 13:2. ... The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) should renew its commitment to compassion and justice for those who have fled their homelands due to fear of political prosecution and for fear of the continuing cycle of violence.”

REAC has already weighed in for this General Assembly to help the refugee communities in our own resolution (Item 02-85) stating:

“The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC) recommends that the 224th General Assembly (2020) direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through its Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) program, to establish a network of pro-bono immigration lawyers to work on asylum cases throughout the United States to ensure the alleviation of the suffering of immigrants and people seeking asylum.”

Item 02-132

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 303.]

On Streamlining the Sale of Property Given to a Congregation as a Gift to Fund Ministry and Mission—From the Presbytery of Savannah.

The Presbytery of Savannah overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

1. Shall G-1.0503d be amended as follows? [Text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“d. buying, mortgaging, or selling real property (*with the exception as provided in G-4.0206a*);

2. Shall G-4.0206a be amended as follows? [Text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“a. A congregation shall not sell, mortgage, or otherwise encumber any of its real property and it shall not acquire real property subject to an encumbrance or condition without the written permission of the presbytery transmitted through the session of the congregation. *Property received by a congregation in the form of a gift, such gift intended for the purpose of funding ministry and mission activities, shall be exempted from this requirement if listed for sale within ninety days of receipt.*”

Rationale

From time to time, congregations receive gifts of real property. The donating of real property, not unlike the donating of appreciated securities, offers congregations the potential for gifts of significant size and at significant tax benefits for donors. Current federal tax law provides benefits to donors without cost or harm to receiving charitable organizations for these types of gifts.

Under current *Book of Order* requirements, the liquidation of such real-property gifts requires the approval of both the congregation and the presbytery, a process that is time-consuming and can delay or prevent a speedy sale of gifted property.

The proposed change in the *Book of Order* will simplify and streamline the receiving of real-property gifts and expedite the disposal of such properties, enhancing the congregation’s ability to pursue expanded ministry.

Concurrences to Item 02-132 from the Presbyteries of Cincinnati, de Cristo, Florida, Grand Canyon, Mississippi, Redstone, and Sierra Blanca.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 02-132

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) to disapprove Item 02-132.

An important foundational principle of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is stated in F-3.0201: “The particular congregations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) wherever they are, taken collectively, constitute one church, called the church.” An equally important corollary principle is found at F-3.0203, which describes the shared responsibilities, rights, and powers of councils of the church organized in regular gradation, such that “the act of one of them is the act of the whole church,” and the governance of the smaller part of the church by the larger part of the church (see also F-3.0206, “a higher council shall have the right of review and control over a lower one ...”).

“The property of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), of its councils and entities, and of its congregations, is a tool for the accomplishment of the mission of Jesus Christ in the world” (G-4.0201). “All property held by or for a congregation ... is held in trust nevertheless for the use and benefit of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)” (G-4.0203). These provisions recognize that while congregations may hold legal title to property under civil law, they do so as stewards for all Presbyterians across time and space.

In recognition of these principles of unity, stewardship, connectivity, and the goals of supporting the mission of the church as a whole, the written permission of the presbytery is required when a session wants to sell, mortgage, encumber, or transfer real property held by or for a particular congregation (G-4.0206). Congregational approval is also required (G-1.0503d).

The proposed amendment would negate or circumvent both these foundational principles and the specific provisions of G-4.02. As the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advised the 221st General Assembly (2014), “The language of G-4.02 has been specifically written to reflect the historical understanding of property ownership within the church. Any amendment should be preceded by careful historical and legal research” (2014, General Assembly Item 06-02).

The proposed amendment would eliminate both congregational (see G-1.0503d) and presbytery (see G-4.0206a) approval of the sale of real property gifted for the purpose of funding “ministry and mission activities” (presumably to convert the gifted real estate to cash proceeds), leaving the session to act without congregational or presbytery input. The proposed amendment contains no language that would limit the use of any proceeds from a sale.

The rationale stated for the proposed amendments suggests that eliminating congregational and presbytery approval when a gift of real property will “streamline” and “simplify” the process for converting a gift of real property into a sale of the gifted

property. The rationale also contends that the current approval process is “time-consuming and can delay or prevent a speedy sale of gifted property.” These rationales subordinate important foundational principles and constitutional protections to expediency. Presbyteries may provide for a streamlined or simplified process without constitutional amendment. The proposed amendment would require the property be listed for sale within ninety days of the gift, but does not require a sale be closed within ninety days.

The substance of this proposal has been rejected by several previous General Assemblies. See, e.g., *Minutes*, 2014, Part I, pp. 72, 356, Item 06-04 (rejecting very similar language to allow sale of property gifted to a local congregation without presbytery approval); *Minutes*, 2012, Part I, pp. 26, 27, 579, Item 06-06, and p. 582, Item 06-07; *Minutes*, 2006, Part I, pp. 38–39, Item 05-07; and several earlier proposed amendments that would have the same effect as Item 02-132, but were rejected by the General Assembly.

The proposed amendments would result in significant constitutional changes by eliminating both congregational and presbytery approval for the sale of gifted real property. The rationale for the proposed amendments (speed and simplification) is not commensurate with the impact that the amendment would have on the important foundational principles discussed above.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-132

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-132—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 02-132.

This overture would allow a congregation to move quickly, particularly if market conditions prompt speed or if the property gift is not substantial in size. Normally, because all congregational property is held in trust, proceeds from any significant sales are rightly subject to presbytery approval so the presbytery can relate such sales to its overall mission strategy. Yet, when some presbyteries meet only semiannually, this overture would allow flexibility and presumably reporting after the fact in budget or other reporting.

At the same time, ACSWP urges the 224th General Assembly (2020) to consider the disposition of the sale of property more broadly. In 1992, the General Assembly urged presbyteries to designate 80 percent of net proceeds from the sale of inner-city Presbyterian church buildings to be used for inner-city church redevelopment and outreach within the presbytery involved, and to designate the remaining 20 percent to establish a national urban ministry endowment fund. Some presbyteries maintain such policies, many apply the proceeds of property sales to their general budgets.

Thus a question to consider in the sale of property generally “for mission and ministry” is whether or not this measure should encourage some proportion of such sales to be designated for presbytery or synod use, recognizing the present pattern of wealth inequity within the PC(USA) as well as our larger society.

Item 02-133

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 303.]

On Amending G-2.0301 to Allow Congregations to Elect Members as Ruling Elders for Service to the Larger Church—From the Synod of the Northeast.

The Synod of the Northeast overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative vote:

Shall G-2.0301 be amended as follows: [Text to be inserted is shown in italic.]

“As there were in Old Testament times elders for the government of the people, so the New Testament church provided persons with particular gifts to share^s in discernment of God’s Spirit and governance of God’s people. Accordingly, congregations should elect persons of wisdom and maturity of faith, having demonstrated skills in leadership and being compassionate in spirit. Ruling elders are so named not because they ‘lord it over’ the congregation (Matt. 20:25), but because they are chosen by the congregation to discern and measure its fidelity to the Word of God, and to strengthen and nurture its faith and life. Ruling elders, together with ministers of the Word and Sacrament, exercise leadership, government, spiritual discernment, and discipline^h and have responsibilities for the life of a congregation as well as the whole church, including ecumenical relationships. When elected by the congregation, they shall *ordinarily* serve faithfully as members of the session. *Congregations may also elect members as ruling elders to exercise spiritual leadership in a broader sense,*

in other specific capacities including service in higher councils, without the requirement that they first serve a term on the session. When elected as commissioners to higher councils, ruling elders participate and vote with the same authority as ministers of the Word and Sacrament, and they are eligible for any office.”

Rationale

This overture grew out of the Synod of the Northeast’s New Way Forward reorganization. Convinced that full participation—comprising both voice and vote—is essential for true inclusion of more people of color existing within the synod as well as younger Presbyterians in synod governance. Recognizing the core values of the New Way Forward to increase participation of diverse people of color as well as to create space for younger leaders, the synod began to make this happen in many ways. It became clear that the length of time necessary for ruling elders to “come up through the ranks” of session and presbytery service delays younger Presbyterians’ participation in synod work, such that they are no longer young. The synod began to include limited numbers of non-elders in synod governance. In the remedial case of *Mackellar v. Synod of the Northeast*, the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission ruled this voting participation by non-elders to be unconstitutional, noting that the only way this could happen would be through constitutional amendment.

Synod leaders began to imagine ways more diverse people of color and younger people could come to the table with both voice and vote, so the synod’s membership could more truly represent the church as it actually is. This overture is the outcome. While retaining the locus of election in the congregation, and of examination, ordination, oversight, and training in the session, this amendment allows a nontraditional path to ordination not only for young people and representatives of color, but also for other categories of members who, for reasons unrelated to their abilities, are not able to begin their ordained service with a term on the session.

Here are some examples of how individual members, as well as the church at large, could benefit from such new flexibility:

- *Spouses and children of pastors* often cannot accept a seat on the session because of local conflict-of-interest policies, but may have much to offer to higher councils or their working groups.
- *Employees of congregations*—such as Christian educators, musicians, or administrative personnel—may likewise be prevented by session policy from accepting a seat on the session, but could serve in higher councils or their working groups. *Young people* whose attendance at a college or university makes it difficult for them to attend frequent meetings of their church’s session may yet be able to participate in less frequent higher-council meetings closer to their college or university.
- *Leaders of new worshiping communities or immigrant fellowships* that do not have sessions could exercise spiritual leadership by being received as a member of a neighboring congregation, then elected and ordained in that congregation to serve the nontraditional community. This would assist higher councils in advancing the foundational principle that “the unity of believers in Christ is reflected in the rich diversity of the Church’s membership” (F-1.0403).
- *Mission workers* could be ordained as ruling elders prior to deployment, even if their deployment plans make immediate service on their church’s session impossible.
- *Members with superior skills to serve as clerk of session*, whose sessions have no vacancies, could be elected and ordained as elders so their session would then be able to elect them as clerk.

Along the way, the synod discovered that this proposal is not new. In commending to the church, *A Proposal for Considering the Theology and Practice of Ordination in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*, the 204th General Assembly (1992) encouraged study of a number of reforms related to ordained service. In the years since the issuance of that report, many of these proposed changes have been drafted and approved. Notably, with the adoption of the new Form of Government in 2011, it became possible for congregations to elect deacons to be individually commissioned and ordained (G-2.0202), without their having to begin service with a term on a board of deacons.

Celebrating the valuable service of ruling elders who are no longer on the session, the *Theology and Practice of Ordination* report points out that “all elders in a congregation, even those not in active service on the session, bear continuing personal responsibility for strengthening and nurturing the faith and witness of members through prayer, conversation, participation and leadership in congregational life. Some elders find themselves called by God specifically to nurture the life and faith of the church at other levels as well” (p. 84).

The 1992 report continues with this recommendation for change:

Persons manifesting the requisite gifts and character for the office might appropriately be elected and ordained to this office at the request of a particular governing body or agency of the church, as an alternative to election to service on the session of a local congregation. Ministers of the Gospel serving in specialized contexts have been so elected and ordained for years. In order to preserve the representative character of office (not merely that of

02 RECOMMENDED REFERRALS TO THE 225TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2022)

elder but other offices as well) and to reflect the right and responsibility of some community of God's people to test the gifts and character of those who represent it, persons should not ordinarily be called to exercise the office unless the congregation in which they hold membership is willing to elect them to it.

The emergence of this or some other similar manifestation of the elder's office would permit the wider church to make use of the gifts and graces of persons who, for reasons unrelated to their gifts (certain church professionals, spouses of ministers, and so on) ordinarily are not elected to service on the sessions of the congregations in which they hold membership. ...

Within the current manifestations of the elder's office, those engaged in long-term, full-time ministries of service within the church are prevented from responding to God's call for them to exercise the core functions of the office. This is because the office of elder — unlike that of Minister of the Gospel — depends (at least initially) on a pattern of limited rotary-term service on a board. **There is no reason, in principle at least, why the flexibility possible within the minister's office should not be possible within other offices as well, including that of the elder.** (pp.87–88).

The Form of Government presently allows for the election and ordination of deacons independently of service on a board of deacons. It also allows ministers of the Word and Sacrament to be elected and ordained to service in specialized ministry, without having to start their ministry as installed pastors of congregations. The synod believes it is time for the church to honor the common foundation of all ordained ministry in *diakonia*, or God service, as well as the parity of presbyterial ministries, by allowing ruling elders to be elected and ordained without their having to immediately serve a term on the session.

This proposal would not in any way bypass the ordinary means by which a congregation elects gifted members for ordained service. Therefore, it is entirely consistent with the sixth Historic Principle that “the election of persons to the exercise of this authority, in any particular society, is in that society” (F-3.0106). Those identified for service would still need to be nominated by the congregation's nominating committee, elected by the congregation, examined and trained by the session, and ordained in a service of worship.

Like all other ruling elders, those who are elected and ordained in this fashion would be ordained for life and would exercise their ministries under the ecclesiastical oversight of the session. In training and examining members who are elected in this way, sessions should bear in mind that persons ordained for service to the larger church may in future years be elected and installed as session members.

As in the case of any other ruling elder serving in higher-council work, sessions should expect these individuals to report periodically to them on their service to the larger church.

The effect of this proposed amendment is permissive rather than restrictive. It does not impose this alternative route to ordained service on any congregation, but rather provides flexibility for uncommon situations so Christian disciples may fully exercise their gifts in service to our Lord.

The synod stated clerk consulted with Laurie Griffith, Associate Stated Clerk, Associate Director for Constitutional Interpretation, and Molly Casteel, Assistant Stated Clerk, Manager for Equity and Representation, concerning this overture.

Concurrences to Item 02-133 from the Presbyteries of de Cristo, Monmouth, Newton, Pittsburgh, Santa Fe, and Utica.

Concurrence to Item 02-133 from the Presbytery of Transylvania (with Additional Rationale)

The task force considered the proposed overture and the attached rationale.

Upon its review, the task force believes the Presbytery of Transylvania should concur with this proposed overture for the following reasons:

- The suggested process for ordaining ruling elders mirrors the process for teaching elders ordained to validated ministries.
- The realization and acknowledgment that some ministry settings may discourage or disallow members to be ordained as ruling elders, because of their relationship (spouse, child) to a teaching elder.
- Members may have other gifts to be shared with the larger church and session membership may not be the best place for those gifts to be shared.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 02-133

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) to answer Item 02-133 with its response to Item 02-117.

Item 02-133 seeks to provide for greater participation and representation in councils above the session. It proposes doing so by creating a class of ruling elders who would not serve on session prior to other formal service. The item proposes different language from Overture 00-36 submitted to the 212th General Assembly (2000), Item 06-09 submitted to the 222nd General Assembly (2016), and Item 06-08 submitted to the 223rd General Assembly (2018). Nevertheless, the effect is the same. All three previous General Assemblies disapproved their respective overtures, and the proposed language does not address important points within the advice of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution to those General Assemblies.

The need for broader participation and representation in the church is an apparent problem. The solution proposed by Item 02-133, however, would harm central aspects of presbyterian governance. By contrast, Item 02-117 outlines a clean, simple path for participation and representation that upholds the church's foundations.

The problem does not require a constitutional solution. The barriers to ordination presented in the rationale have no constitutional basis. Categorically prohibiting employees or pastors' family members from serving on a session may be a long-held practice in many churches, for instance, but the Constitution does not forbid it. Occasions may occur when such individuals face a conflict between their session obligations and their personal interests, but *Robert's Rules of Order* provides for these occasions (RONR p. 407, ll. 21–31).

The same argument—that the *Form of Government* is not an impediment—is true for the development of younger leaders and the enfranchisement of marginalized people. The Constitution does not require significant time to pass while young leaders “rise up through the ranks” to synod service. Congregations can draw people into spiritual leadership at a younger age. Presbyteries can look to predominantly non-white congregations for synod commissioners. Presbytery nominating committees can seek out younger ruling elders from within a presbytery's congregations rather than nominating only people who are familiar to the presbytery's committee structure.

In short, the problems that Item 02-133 seeks to resolve do not require a constitutional solution. They only require Presbyterians to act in a manner consistent with what we say we believe.

Not only is the language of Item 02-133 unnecessary, it is deleterious. The foundational connection between election to the office of ruling elder and service on session cannot be severed with a single change to one provision.

The Principles of Presbyterian Government speak of “One Church ... Governed by Presbyters ... Gathered in Councils ... [to] Seek and Represent the Will of Christ ...” (F-3.02). The session is the fundamental council in which ruling elders gather to seek and represent the will of Christ.

Candidates for ordination as ruling elders affirm their intent to “[watch] over the people, providing for their worship, nurture, and service” and [sharing] in government and discipline...” (W-4.0404i(1)). The “people” over whom ruling elders “watch” are those of the local congregation, whose “worship, nurture and service” fall under the governance of the session.

The proposal does nothing to address the plain words of G-2.0404: “Ruling elders and deacons shall be elected to serve terms ... on the session or board of deacons. ...”

The rationale cites G-2.0202 as precedent for individual commissioning of ruling elders. However, the individual commissioning of deacons is not comparable to that of ruling elders. The essential function of deacons is compassionate service, not governance. Individual commission may be necessary and helpful in congregations that do not have a board of deacons, but every particular church must have a session (G-3.0101).

Finally, electing and examining an elder for service within a higher council presents issues related to the roles and powers of sessions and higher councils. A request from a higher council may be seen as a directive to which the congregation and session must accede, pressuring a congregation to elect and a session to approve and ordain a person as an elder they believe is not properly qualified for the office. Conversely, the refusal of a congregation to elect or a session to approve and ordain a member at the higher council's request may be interpreted as obstructing the authority of the higher council.

For these reasons, and for the reasons cited in the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advice regarding Item 02-117, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution recommends that the Assembly answer Item 02-133 with its response to Item 02-117.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-133

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-133—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

This overture calls for expanding the scope of ordination for elders to those (such as students in other states) who cannot regularly attend session meetings and to those, such as church staff and pastor family members who are often not elected to

serve on their own congregations' sessions. Such elders would remain grounded in the congregation but could then serve on mid-council or General Assembly committees.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 02-133.

While a departure from current polity, such a move is not outside the bounds of our own theology of ordination. As Joseph Small writes in his 2010 essay, "Ordained? To What?,"* the ministry and mission of the whole church are participation in the one ministry and mission of Jesus Christ. Our current practice of ordaining ruling elders exclusively to service on the local session reduces this office to little more than a managerial role within congregations. Our congregations, validated ministries, presbyteries, synods, and national councils need discerning and faithful partners, regardless of the eligibility or ability to serve first on session. This overture is in part an answer to the challenge leveled by Dr. Small to "recover an understanding of the ministry of the whole people of God," in support of the spiritual welfare of the church.

*"Ordained? To What?" Dr. Joseph Small, 2009. "<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/ordinationandauthority1.pdf>" (Accessed May 2, 2020)

REAC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-133

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-133—From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC).

The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) disapprove Item 02-133 with the following comment: "REAC advocates for the full participation of people of color in the governance of the church."

"REAC shall be a prophetic voice for involving people of color in the formation of public policy and monitor the implementation of policies adopted by the church that impact the quality of life of people of color in the church and in the world" (*Organization for Mission*, VI.1).

The overture does not eliminate the root cause of the problem of lack of participation of people of color and young people in the governance of the church, especially at the session governing body where voice and vote are critical. REAC advocates for our immigrant fellowships to be recognized as churches and approved to have sessions. Eliminate the root cause of the issues before we strategize around the problem.

Further, the 223rd General Assembly (2018) disapproved an overture that could have had similar negative effects on people of color. REAC concurred with the advice of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution in this case, and the assembly agreed. See Item 06-08 from the 223rd General Assembly (2018) Amending G-2.0301 to Allow Congregations to Elect Individuals as Ruling Elders Without Requiring Them to Assume a Seat on the Session (<https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000238>).

Item 02-134

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 304.]

On Forming a Commission to Write a New PC(USA) Confession to Be Considered for Inclusion in the Book of Confessions—From the Presbytery of Arkansas.

The Presbytery of Arkansas overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) to form a commission to write a new confession for the PC(USA) to be considered for inclusion in the *Book of Confessions*. This commission shall be formed by no later than December 31st, 2022.

Rationale

According to the Confessional Nature of the Church report, "In every time and place the church is called to make the implications of its fundamental confession of the Lordship of Jesus Christ unmistakably clear and relevant" (*Minutes*, 1986, Part I, pp. 51–52, 516–27).

The *Book of Confessions* has not kept up with theological developments within the church. This is particularly clear regarding theological anthropology. An underlying question in our time is: what does it mean to be human in the 21st century? Oppressive theological anthropologies have elevated particular groups and reduced the humanity of those deemed "other" because of their race, gender, nationality, sexuality, or socioeconomic status. Secular anthropologies reduce the meaning and purpose of human life to immediate happiness and the accumulation of material possessions while also teaching that humanity is competitive by nature, viewing other individuals and groups as threats against the self. These anthropologies, which are

widespread in our society, are part of a worldview that is destructive not only of our relationships with other people, but also of the world in which we live. These damaging worldviews promote the oppression and exploitation of the earth and its peoples. These worldviews are not consistent with God's vision of humanity revealed in Jesus Christ, witnessed to in Scripture, and attested to in the life and ministry of the church. We have the opportunity as the church to provide a descriptive and prescriptive theological anthropology that is rooted in our theology and Scripture and addresses the challenges facing humanity in the 21st century.

The Confession of Belhar comes the closest to addressing these issues within our current *Book of Confessions*. While the Confession of Belhar offers a powerful call for justice rooted in our relationship to Jesus Christ, it does not provide a clear answer to the more basic question of what it means to be human in the 21st century. This new confession would include the exploration of traditional theological topics such as the *imago dei* and sin, along with the very real contemporary theological topics such as race, gender, community, and technology. It should incorporate a theological anthropology that leads to the development of an interconnected ethics in topics such as love, justice, sexual identity, equality, immigrant status, ecology, and reconciliation.

The documents in the *Book of Confessions* provide a deep and rich foundation for our faith, but they have not kept up with the theological developments of the church. It is time for the PC(USA) to write a new confession. This new confession would not only include a comprehensive theological understanding of what it means to be human, but also articulate the doctrines and beliefs of the church for the 21st century as it joins Jesus Christ's work and vision for grace, mercy, welcome, hope, justice, peace, compassion, and love.

Evidence that affected entity(ies) have been consulted: (read emails in reverse order)

From: Barry Ensign-George <Barry.Ensign-George@pcusa.org>

Sent: Wednesday, July 17, 2019 2:37 pm.

To: Leslie Belden <lesliebeld@aol.com>

Cc: Kate T. Duffert <Kate.Duffert@pcusa.org>; Kerry Rice <Kerry.Rice@pcusa.org>

Subject: Re: Overture Requesting Commission to Write a New Confession

Leslie,

Thank you. I am glad to be of help in any way I can.

Blessings as you move forward with this amidst all that your ministry brings you today, and in the days to come!

Barry

Barry Ensign-George
Coordinator for Theology and Worship
 Presbyterian Mission Agency
 100 Witherspoon Street, Room M008 | Louisville, KY 40202
 502.569.5122 (w); 502.297.4873 (m)
barry.ensign-george@pcusa.org
www.presbyterianmission.org

From: Leslie Belden <lesliebeld@aol.com>

Sent: Wednesday, July 17, 2019 3:35 PM

To: Barry Ensign-George <Barry.Ensign-George@pcusa.org>

Cc: Kate T. Duffert <Kate.Duffert@pcusa.org>; Kerry Rice <Kerry.Rice@pcusa.org>

Subject: Re: Overture Requesting Commission to Write a New Confession

Barry,

That is very helpful. When the Polity Committee reviewed the proposed Overture, and heard from its originator, the Belhar Confession and the Letter from the Birmingham jail were also discussed. The writer of the Overture feels very strongly that the PC(USA) needs a confession from the USA that speaks to our cultural context, so while the Belhar Confession lifts up the need to confess in another context, which we can also affirm, he would like the PC(USA) to have a confession more in line with the Confession of 1967, but which addresses the Christian context of today: a culture in which main-line denominations are declining and the what Christianity is today is questioned.

I'll share your note in case he wishes to add more to his rationale to assist with differentiating from what could be additional remarks to the Belhar Confession.

Blessings,

Rev. Dr. Leslie Smith Belden
 Stated Clerk
 Presbytery of Arkansas
 9221 N. Rodney Parham Road
 Little Rock, Arkansas 72227

lesliebeld@aol.com

On Jul 17, 2019, at 10:58 AM, Barry Ensign-George <Barry.Ensign-George@pcusa.org> wrote:

Hi Leslie, Kerry, and Kate,

02 RECOMMENDED REFERRALS TO THE 225TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2022)

I offer the following in hopes that it will speak to your question(s), Leslie. If it does not, please let me know, and I'll work to get closer to the mark. I apologize for ways in which what follows may simply repeat what you already know.

First, what I know matches what Kate has affirmed: the GA has not established a group (task force, special committee, etc.) to work on writing a new confession of faith.

Second, I would note a few additional details. At the last GA (223rd) the commissioners voted in favor two actions affecting the *Book of Confessions*.

A) The Assembly voted to start the process for considering adding Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "Letter from a Birmingham City Jail" to the Book of Confessions. Work on this has not begun because it raises copyright issues, and to my knowledge those issues have not yet been resolved (specifically, the PC(USA) has not, to my knowledge, been granted permission to use the document in the ways that would be necessary should it be either studied for adding it to the BoC, or if it were added). I believe that Kerry will be able to speak to the matter of copyright permission.

B) The Assembly also voted in favor of forming a group to write a new Accompanying Letter to the Belhar Confession, written from and to the specifics of the U.S. context. I believe that this letter would be likely to address at least some of the issues raised in the overture that is before your presbytery. There has not yet been an announcement of the formation of the team to work on this.

I would also note that there has been significant activity around the *Book of Confessions* over the last several years. There is the adoption of an updated translation of the Heidelberg Catechism. But the addition of the Belhar Confession would seem to be most relevant to the overture before your presbytery. I wonder whether the discussion of the overture before you might explore ways in which the Belhar Confession fails to meet the needs of our moment as identified in the overture. Being clear about that in the overture, or its rationale, would be helpful to the GA commissioners who will receive and act on the overture, should it gain approval in your presbytery.

Does this help?

Blessings,

Barry

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From: Kate T. Duffert <Kate.Duffert@pcusa.org>
Sent: Wednesday, July 17, 2019 10:56 AM
To: lesliebeld@aol.com; Barry Ensign-George <Barry.Ensign-George@pcusa.org>
Cc: Kerry Rice <Kerry.Rice@pcusa.org>
Subject: RE: Overture Requesting Commission to Write a New Confession

Hello Leslie,

I have looked through the Overtures that were brought to the 220th (2012)- 223rd (2018) General Assemblies to see if there were any recommendations regarding the writing of a new confession. It does not appear to me that this is business that has already been addressed by the assembly. I am including Ray Jones in this e-mail as he is the current acting Director of Theology, Worship, and Evangelism and he may have insights about any original confessions that may be considered in that area.

Thanks for being in touch!

Feel free to reach out with any additional questions,

Kate

Kate Trigger Duffert, MDiv
Program Assistant for General Assembly Business
Churchwide Ministries
Office of the General Assembly
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
502.569.5418

My work is supported by per capita funds, which unite all Presbyterians in sharing God's love through mission and ministry.

From: Leslie Belden <lesliebeld@aol.com>
Sent: Tuesday, July 16, 2019 4:40 PM
To: Kate T. Duffert <Kate.Duffert@pcusa.org>; Barry Ensign-George <Barry.Ensign-George@pcusa.org>
Cc: Kerry Rice <Kerry.Rice@pcusa.org>
Subject: Overture Requesting Commission to Write a New Confession

Kate and

I'm sending this note to you, Kate, as Program Assistant for GA Business and OGA Records, and to you, Barry Ensign-George, as Director of Theology and Worship, so that you can give feedback on whether a new confession has been in the works or is projected to be written.

A church in our presbytery, the Presbytery of Arkansas, has submitted an Overture for our presbytery to approve and send in to be considered at the 224th General Assembly in Baltimore that requests that a commission be formed to write a new confession. I attach that Overture so that I don't misrepresent it. My question to the two of you, and I'm copying Kerry Rice because he may also be able to give some feedback, is whether the GA has entertained a similar request in recent years or whether a new confession is already being considered by the denomination.

Thank you, and Blessings,

Rev. Dr. Leslie Smith Belden
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lesliebeld@aol.com

Concurrence to Item 02-134 from the Presbyteries of de Cristo, Huntingdon, and Tres Rios.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 02-134

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) that Item 02-134 raises the following issues that the assembly should consider.

Item 02-134 asks the assembly “to form a *commission* to write a new confession ...” (emphasis added). The Constitution contains no direction as to the process for writing a new confession, only for the consideration of proposed confessions referred to it (G-6.03). However, the term “commission” has a particular meaning and function within our Constitution, as defined in G-3.0109: “A commission is empowered to consider and conclude matters referred to it by a council.” More appropriate to this task is the constitutional term “committee,” (or “special committee” as defined in Standing Rule K.1 in the *Manual of the General Assembly*). Should the assembly agree with the intent of the overture, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution recommends the overture be amended to read, “form a [~~commission~~] [committee] to write a new confession.”

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-134

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-134—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

This overture proposes forming a commission to write a new confession for the PC(USA), with special attention to theological anthropology.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 02-134.

The rationale for the overture makes a strong case. Distortions in the understanding of what it means to be human, to be created in the image of God, and to live as sinful creatures loved by God have contributed to racism, sexism, homophobia, destruction of the environment, and other injustices that have become imbedded in our social, political, and ecclesiastical systems. New forms of technology have already been changing the nature of family life, and inequalities seem likely to be magnified by differences in access to employment, education, and social goods, including ways to mitigate the effects of climate change and environmental toxins. The contemporary context calls for a renewed statement of our theology of human nature and the implications that theology has for those issues, now amplified by the social, psychological, and spiritual impacts of the coronavirus. These are crucial topics for our day and the days ahead, and it would be beneficial to have that theology in a confession to inform the church’s faith and work moving into the future.

The task of preparing a new confession is major and was last undertaken in the preparation of the Brief Statement of Faith adopted in 1991. A committee of real theological depth and diversity needs several years to work, partly to discern the nature of the epoch into which the church would be speaking, primarily to its members, but also to the vast human community and worldwide church. If there is to be a decisive turn away from the major models of production and consumption, which has in various ways exploited the poor and people of color in particular, and a state system based on massive military outlays and intensified surveillance, then the commitment to sustainability also implies re-evaluating humanity’s relations with nature. Is the Presbyterian Church ready for such a task, and should it be undertaken alone?

Presbyterian theological historian Eugene TeSelle identified six main purposes of confessional statements: “controversial” confessions, which challenge and are primarily prophetic in nature; teaching documents such as catechisms; “reforming” confessions addressed most to the church itself; “church-founding” confessions that justify a new formation; “irenic” (peace-making, or union-celebrating) confessions; and “apologetic” confessions (defending faith and practice to outsiders). (See Eugene TeSelle, “C-67 and the *Book of Confessions*,” in *Church & Society*, 92:5, 2002, pp. 44–45.)

When, in a somewhat indirect response to the Reparations Task Force Report in 2004, the church turned to The Confession of Belhar, it was addressing not only the matter of racial justice but affirming a need to listen to voices from the two-thirds world or global South, and lifting up the work of fellow members of the newly unified World Communion of Reformed Churches. In TeSelle’s terms, Belhar served a prophetic and reforming task in the mid-1980s during the theological struggle against apartheid in South Africa, a task somewhat paralleled by the Kairos Document (South Africa), and a task modeled on the Theological Declaration of Barmen of 1930s Germany. But twenty-five years later in the U.S., Barmen was serving a church unifying function, against church-dividing forces.

It should not be forgotten that in 2006, the PC(USA) affirmed but did not approve a theological declaration focused on the church-dividing issue of massive economic and political inequality, commonly termed, the Accra Confession (<http://www.pcusa.org/media/uploads/hunger/pdf/accra-confession.pdf>). Particularly during the credit crisis of 2008–09 and the grinding of the Iraq and Afghan wars, Accra seemed prescient about new forms of “empire” causing vast suffering. Looking back from 2020, and noting Accra’s ecological awareness, it shares a number of elements with Pope Francis’ *Laudate Si*, though its style shares the Barmen “family resemblance” with Belhar.

If Belhar addressed race as its most salient concern, and Accra an imperial “neo-liberal” economy, people noticed that women’s concerns and perceptions had not yet been given confessional status, so to speak. ACSWP pays close attention to the confessions because our social witness as a church is so clearly based on the Confession of 1967 and A Brief Statement of Faith (the basis of *Why and How the Church Makes a Social Policy Witness* (1993).

The Confession of 1967 was begun after the 1958 union of the United Presbyterian Church of North America and the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, as A Brief Statement of Faith was begun after the 1983 Reunion of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. and the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. This history begs the question: is the PC(USA) keeping up with the ecumenical reality of its membership and a degree of secularization that makes the later 1960s look almost pious? Granting the good arguments this overture makes, should the General Assembly not consider whether it is time to deepen relations with the PC(USA)’s Full Communion partners: the United Church of Christ, the Reformed Church in America, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church? None use confessions the way we do, and the Lutherans have now gone quite a bit further ecumenically with the Episcopal Church but working with churches that share a somewhat similar cultural and social location could reinforce needed cooperation on the local and regional levels.

Such an ecumenical aspect would stand in considerable contrast to the theme proposed for a new confession by the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations (GACEIR). Their Item 02-14 would focus a new confession on “the sins of racism and racialized supremacy,” going back to the Roman Catholic Church’s Doctrine of Discovery, which justified European colonization of non-baptized peoples, in part to Christianize them (sometimes). Their communication describes the false doctrines of white supremacy and white fear of “replacement” by people of color that need repudiation. Their argument underlines the inadequacy, for example, of the brief 2001 apology for slavery adopted, perhaps on a kind of reflex, without much debate. But their argument does not consider other issues, issues that arguably exacerbate racial divides (including educational and housing re-segregation), despite greater levels of racial tolerance and diversity among younger U.S. Americans overall. The past is still present in many ways, perhaps like an old country road, but popular music and culture present some elements of hope.

Hence ACSWP’s advice to answer Communication 094 with the response to Item 02-134. The realities of Item 02-14 are not to be denied, as the PC(USA) has historically benefitted from several kinds of privilege, but this overture gives more possibilities for intersectional thinking and “the development of an interconnected ethics in topics such as love, justice, sexual identity, equality, immigrant status, ecology, and reconciliation.”

ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-134

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-134—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) to approve Item 02-134.

When considering patriarchy, sexism, and misogyny as sin, and considering human sexuality, as understood in the 21st century, the confessions of the PC (USA) are silent. We do, however, have many resources to draw from as advocacy for a refreshingly new confession that would address these concerns in much the same way as the Confession of Belhar addresses racism and reconciliation.

These resources include:

1. “A Social Creed for the Twenty-First Century”: An ecumenical message of hope adopted by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA in 2008. “The creed’s foundation lies in the Christian bases of faith, hope and love and offers a vision of society that ‘shares more and consumes less, seeks compassion over suspicion and equality over domination, and finds security in joined hands rather than massed arms. Inspired by Isaiah’s vision of a ‘peaceable kingdom,’ we honor the dignity of every person and the intrinsic value of every creature, and pray and work for the day when none ‘labor in vain, or bear children for calamity’ (Isa. 65:23). We do so as disciples of the One who came ‘that [all] may have life, and have it abundantly’ (John 10:10), and stand in solidarity with Christians and with all who strive for justice around the globe. In faith, responding to our Creator, we celebrate the full humanity of each woman, man, and child, all created in the divine image as individuals of infinite worth.” <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/1629>

While the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advised the approval of “A Social Creed for the Twenty-First Century,” there was also a strong desire for additional emphasis on women’s justice issues, which a new confession could possibly address.

2. The 222nd General Assembly (2016) approved an alternate resolution to Overture 11-05, which sought the admission of, and apology for, harms done to the LGBTQ members of the PC(USA). The alternate resolution included:

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) resolves to continue the journey as a denomination to become more open, understanding, and accepting of our LGBTQ/Q family and does the following:

- Issues the following statement: “Followers of Jesus Christ know that no person can claim divine favor through personal merit, but only by the grace of God. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) acknowledges that actions we and our members have taken over the years have at times led God’s beloved children who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning to feel that they stand outside the grace of God and are unwelcome in the PC(USA). We deeply regret that, due to human failings, any person might find cause to doubt being loved by God. We affirm the God-given dignity and worth of every human being, and renew our commitment to ‘welcome one another, as Christ has welcomed [us], for the glory of God.’ [Romans 15:7]”

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advised that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve Item 11-05 as originally written, saying,

The PC(USA) is a confessing church and the Reformed tradition allows us the opportunity to confess our faith and our transgressions. The Book of Order states as worshipping communities to “take [the] opportunity to seek and to offer forgiveness for hurts, misunderstandings, and broken relationships among themselves; [and to] respond to God’s act of reconciliation by exchanging signs and words of reconciliation and of Christ’s peace” (W-2.6001b(1)–(2)).

Hurt and moral injury has occurred within the PC(USA) as sins of omission and commission. Therefore the opportunity to seek reconciliation (conciliation) through confession of wrong is urged and supported. The Belhar Confession calls us to take our acts of repentance and reconciliation personally and corporately.

We believe:

- that Christ’s work of reconciliation is made manifest in the church as the community of believers who have been reconciled with God and with one another;
- that unity is, therefore, both a gift and an obligation for the church of Jesus Christ; that through the working of God’s Spirit it is a binding force, yet simultaneously a reality which must be earnestly pursued and sought: one which the people of God must continually be built up to attain;
- that this unity must become visible so that the world may believe that separation, enmity and hatred between people and groups is sin which Christ has already conquered, and accordingly that anything which threatens this unity may have no place in the church and must be resisted; (10.3)

Clergy women who happen to be lesbian or transgendered have been denied the opportunity to share their gifts for the common good. Further, many women have served in silence and have had to deny their full authentic selves. The harm and injury done to the LGBTQ community cannot be overridden by the fear of alienating members of the denomination. The PC(USA) has united its stance on acceptance and ordination of LGBTQ members, and ordered ministries. This acknowledgment and apology serves to unite our members. (References: Daniel 9; Belhar Confession).

3. The “Confessional Nature of the Church Report”: Added to *The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Part I, Book of Confessions* by action of the 209th General Assembly (1997) (pages v-xxv). This document provides clear understanding of Reformed theology as it relates to confessions, as well as clear guidance when considering additional or deletions to *The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Part I, Book of Confessions*.

Of special note from “The Confessional Nature of the Church Report,” as relates to a new confession being written for consideration of inclusion in *The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Part I, Book of Confessions*:

- “When Christians make a confession, they say, “This is what we most assuredly believe, regardless of what others may believe and regardless of the opposition, rejection, or persecution that may come to us for taking this stand.” “A confession is a public declaration of what a community of Christian believe” (p. vi).
- When to write a new confession of faith: “Throughout the history of the Christian movement churches have written confessions of faith because they feel that they must do so, not just because they think it would be a good idea. Confessions of faith may result from a sense of urgent need to correct some distortion of the truth and claim of the gospel that threatens the integrity of the church’s faith and life from within the church. They may result from some political or cultural movement outside the church that openly attacks or subtly seeks to compromise its commitment to the gospel. Sometimes the urgency to confess comes from the church’s conviction that it has a great new insight into the promises and demands of the gospel that is desperately needed by both church and world. Frequently, all three occasions—internal danger, external threat, and great opportunity—are behind the great confessions of the church at the same time. In any case, the church writes confessions of faith when it faces a situation of life or a situation of death so urgent that it cannot remain silent but must speak, even at the cost of its own security, popularity, and success”(vii).

4. The Assessment of Proposed Amendments to *The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Part I, Book of Confessions* (pp. xxv-xxx) states:

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The church's confessions are far more than ecclesial artifacts or intellectual abstractions, for The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) states its faith and bears witness to God's grace in Jesus Christ in the creeds and confessions in the *Book of Confessions*. In these confessional statements the church declares to its members and to the world

- who and what it is,
- what it believes,
- what it resolves to do.

Thus, any proposed change to the Book of Confessions should enhance the church's understanding and declaration of who and what it is, what it believes, and what it resolves to do (p. xxvii)

For these reasons, the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) to approve Item 02-14.

GACEIR COMMENT ON ITEM 02-134

COGA has recommended that this item be referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). However, should the assembly determine that this item of business is core and critical to our governance and sustainability, and needs to be considered by 224th General Assembly (2020), GACEIR provides this comment.

The General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations (GACEIR) believes that it is important for the church to think anew about who we are and that a big part of that requires confession. We support this overture with Item 02-14.

OGA COMMENT ON ITEM 02-134

COGA has recommended that this item be referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). However, should the assembly determine that this item of business is core and critical to our governance and sustainability, and needs to be considered by the 224th General Assembly (2020), OGA provides this comment.

The process for amending the *Book of Confessions* is set forth in the *Book of Order* at G-6.03, and does not involve a commission. If the assembly desires to initiate the process of writing a new confession, the first steps are:

1. The proposal to amend the *Book of Confessions* is approved by the General Assembly for study in the church.
2. The General Assembly appoints a committee of ruling elders and ministers of the Word and Sacrament, numbering not fewer than fifteen, of whom not more than two shall be from any one synod, to consider the proposal. This committee shall consult with the committee or council from which the proposal originated. It shall report its findings to the next General Assembly.

Further, the OGA advises that, if the assembly intends to direct the committee to focus on particular themes, that intention should be spelled out in the action taken since overture rationales are not approved and have no official status.

Item 02-135

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 304.]

On Amending G-6.04e Regarding Two-Thirds Affirmative Vote to Amend the Book of Order—From the Presbytery of the Inland Northwest.

The Presbytery of the Inland Northwest overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall G-6.04e be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added is shown as italic.]

“e. The Stated Clerk receives written advice that a proposed amendment to the Book of Order has received the affirmative votes of ~~a majority~~ *two-thirds* of all the presbyteries. The proposed amendment so approved shall become effective one year following the adjournment of the assembly transmitting the proposed amendment.”

Rationale

A constitution should provide stability and require broad consensus to change. The current practice of requiring only a majority of all presbyteries to vote in the affirmative treats constitutional change as a simple motion. This does not provide stability or require broad consensus, nor does it adequately protect the unity of the body or the rights of the minority. Requiring two-thirds of presbyteries to vote in the affirmative for a change in the *Book of Order* would:

1. Better balance the tension between the following parliamentary principles:
 - a. The unity of the body shall be protected;
 - b. The rights of the minority shall be protected;
 - c. The will of the majority shall prevail.
2. Restore the threshold for constitutional change to the norms of *Robert's Rules of Order*.

Further Rationale and Response to Objections

1. Objection—"A majority shall rule" (F-3.0205). Response—This is a general principle. It is not a prescriptive rule. It is a statement about how we normally do business. It does not apply to all motions, votes, or decisions (for example, the motion to end debate/previous question requires 2/3 majority). Debating and voting on normal motions and amending a constitution are different categories.

2. Objection—"Replacing a majority with a 2/3 threshold would substitute the discernment of a minority for that of the majority." Response—

a. A constitution is an established, agreed upon authority describing what we do and how we do it. It is an aid for stability and unity in a group. For this reason, a high degree of consensus is usually required for change. Requiring broad consensus to amend a constitution is part of what it means to have a constitution.

(1) A constitution "... defines the primary characteristics of an organization ... prescribes how the society functions; and includes all rules that the society considers so important that they (a) cannot be changed without previous notice to the members and the vote of a specified large majority (such as a two-thirds vote), and (b) cannot be suspended" (*Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* (RONR) 11th ed., pp.12–13)

(2) Broad consensus in important matters is not synonymous with substituting the will of a minority over the majority. If this were so, then all votes requiring a super-majority would be inherently unjust. Passing a motion with 51 percent support and rescinding an action previously adopted (requiring 2/3) are different categories.

(3) Votes requiring a super-majority indicate something or someone is being protected.

b. Requiring 2/3 for constitutional change is one way the rights of the minority are protected. It increases the likelihood of a high degree of agreement before foundational documents effecting the whole body are amended and altered.

c. Requiring 2/3 for constitutional change is a way to protect the rights of the majority. The Constitution of the PC(USA) is for the whole church.

(1) The church is "... The particular congregations of the PC (USA) ... taken collectively..." (F-3.0201). The church is more than its councils.

(2) The presbyters gathered in councils who vote on constitutional change represent a tiny minority of the church. The rights of those not present are protected by requiring a high degree of consensus in this voting minority.

d. The congregations and presbyteries of our church are expected to have bylaws. Unless special provision has been made, changing these bylaws requires a 2/3 majority with previous notice. This does not violate the rights of the majority.

3. Objection—"This overture would ... 'equate our rules and our theology—thus elevating the rules which should always be subordinate with Scripture and theology.'" Response—"The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) consists of the *Book of Confessions* and the *Book of Order* (F-3.04)."

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- a. Our constitution does not present itself as a hierarchy of authority between these two parts.
 - b. The *Book of Order* does present itself as including that which is mandated. (The “Preface” to the *Book of Order* differentiates between “shall,” “should,” “may,” etc. “Shall” indicating that which is mandatory and required).
 - c. The *Book of Order* contains theology, and not practice only.
 - d. As stated previously, our presbyteries and congregations are required to have bylaws for procedures and rules (G-3.0106—“a manual of administrative operations”). The provisions of these bylaws require a super-majority to amend and adopt, even as rules.
 - e. Because presbyteries have local bylaws adapted to local circumstances, the *Book of Order* does not need to function as a manual of operations.
4. Objection—“This has been rejected by past General Assemblies.” Response—This is not in itself an argument. What were the reasons given? Were they good reasons? Without additional information, this is an argument that we shouldn’t change because we haven’t changed in the past.
 5. Objection—“This overture would impede the church’s ability to respond to current needs and to correct errors.” Response—As Christians in the Reformed tradition, we recognize, “... the human tendency to idolatry... (F-2.05).” Requiring a 2/3 majority for constitutional change could help prevent us from making errors, and guard against the idolatry of following the spirit of the age. A 2/3 majority still provides an opportunity and mechanism for change and reform.
 6. Objection—“This overture would limit access to and participation in the decision-making process.” Response—This overture would limit constitutional change to that which has wide agreement.
 7. Objection—“There is the question of procedural justice.” Response—A body is free to change how it amends its constitution, “...provided that, in the procedure of adopting them (i.e. these changes), it conforms to parliamentary law or its own existing rules (RONR [11th ed.], p.10, III. 15–20).”

Concurrences to Item 02-135 from the Presbyteries of de Cristo and Foothills.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 02-135

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) to disapprove Item 02-135.

The overture would amend G-6.04e by striking “a majority of” and inserting “two-thirds,” increasing the number of affirmative votes of presbyteries necessary to amend the *Book of Order*.

Similar overtures have been considered by numerous General Assemblies, including both the 222nd (2016) and 223rd (2018) General Assemblies. In both of those cases, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution as well as other advisory and advocacy committees advised the General Assembly to disapprove the proposed amendment. The assemblies followed that advice, which can be found on PC-Biz: (<https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/5293>) and (<https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000232>). The Advisory Committee on the Constitution reaffirms its previous advice.

The focus of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution’s advice at prior assemblies was the historic understanding in our church that while the rights of minorities are honored and taken extremely seriously, ultimately “a majority shall govern” (F-3.0205).

The rationale provided with the overture claims that a two-thirds vote would be preferable for stability and because “broad consensus” should be required to amend a constitution. It further claims that several “parliamentary principles” would be held in “better balance” with this standard, and that it would “restore the threshold for constitutional change to the norms of *Robert’s Rules of Order*,” the first of which is that “the unity of the body shall be protected.”

In fact, the words “consensus” and “unity” appear only once each in *Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised*, 11th Edition (*Robert’s Rules*)—at the end of the introduction, in a paragraph explaining the British parliament’s movement from a consensus model toward majority rule—where it states:

This evolution came about from a recognition that a requirement of unanimity or near unanimity can become a form of tyranny in itself. In an assembly that tries to make such a requirement the norm, a variety of misguided feelings—reluctance to be seen as opposing the leadership, a notion that

causing controversy will be frowned upon, fear of seeming an obstacle to unity—can easily lead to decisions being taken with a pseudoconsensus which in reality implies elements of default, which satisfies no one, and for which no one really assumes responsibility.

That said, “stability” is closer to the *Robert’s Rules* principle that results in its recommended practice of requiring a two-thirds vote for the amendment of a constitution and/or bylaws. *Robert’s Rules’* stated reason for the requirement is that such a motion “is a particular case of the motion to Amend Something Previously Adopted” (RONR pg. 592, ll. 3-4), and the general parliamentary principle resulting in the requirement is that “the requirements for changing a previous action are greater than those for taking the action in the first place” (RONR, pg. li).

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution notes in the first place that the governing documents of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) are considerably more complex than those contemplated by *Robert’s Rules*. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has corporate bylaws. It also has a Constitution composed of both a *Book of Confessions* and a *Book of Order*, as well as the *Manual of the General Assembly* that includes rules and authorizations that in a less complex organization might be expected to be found in a single document titled bylaws.

The standard for amending the *Book of Confessions*, it is noted, is considerably more rigorous than that for the *Book of Order*. That said, the standard for amending the *Book of Order* is not simply a majority vote of a General Assembly, which would fall short of the *Robert’s Rules* standard.

Robert’s Rules, in its discussion of the amendment of a constitution and/or bylaws, puts forth another acceptable standard as an alternative to a two-thirds vote (by which it means a two-thirds vote of those present and voting at an assembly), which is “a majority of the entire membership” (RONR pg. 592, ll. 10–12). The current constitutional amendment process requires first that any proposed amendment to the constitution acquire either the affirmative vote of a synod or the concurrence of at least one other presbytery before being submitted, and then requires the approval (by majority vote) of both a General Assembly and a majority of all the presbyteries. The process provides for faithful discernment of the will the whole church—through its elected and ordained leaders—before amending the constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that the current constitutional amendment process more than satisfies *Robert’s Rules’* requirement for the amendment of a constitution and/or bylaws.

COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 02-135

COGA has recommended that this item be referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). However, should the assembly determine that this item of business is core and critical to our governance and sustainability, and needs to be considered by the 224th General Assembly (2020), COGA provides this comment.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly advises disapproval of this item. We are called as a people to be responsive to the moving of the Holy Spirit, to be not only reformed, but always being reformed (F-2.02). To require a supermajority of presbyteries to amend the *Book of Order* would impede our ability to be responsive to the moving of the Holy Spirit, especially in such a time as this when we are called to be nimble and adaptive to the moving of the Holy Spirit among us to respond to how and who God is calling us to be.

Item 02-136

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 303.]

On Establishing the Authority of Presbyteries to Define Severance Plans for Installed Ministers—From the Presbytery of Beaver-Butler.

The Presbytery of Beaver-Butler overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall G-3.0303c be amended as follows: [Text to be added is shown as italic.]

“c. establishing minimum compensation standards, *including provisions for severance payments*, for pastoral calls and Certified Christian Educators and Certified Associate Christian Educators within the presbytery;”

Rationale

In 1993, the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission ruled in the case *Saurbaugh v. the Presbytery of Great Rivers* that “The *Book of Order* does not give the presbyteries power to require congregations to pay compensation upon dissolution of pastoral relationships” (*Minutes*, 1994, Part I, p. 155, *Remedial Case 206-13,11.094* attached)

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In subsequent years the church has maintained that while a presbytery can have guidelines and policies concerning severance for ministers at the dissolution of a pastorate, the presbytery has no authority to enforce those policies.

This overture seeks to remedy that omission in the *Book of Order* by making explicit the authority of presbyteries to create and enforce severance policies by linking that authority to the power to set minimum wages and approve calls.

The overture does not attempt to set a national severance policy, but to clarify the presbytery's relationship to both the session and the minister during times of transition.

Concurrences to Item 02-136 from the Presbyteries of Baltimore, Blackhawk, Charlotte, de Cristo, Detroit, Florida, Grace, Hudson River, Kiskiminetas, Mission, Monmouth, New Castle, North Alabama, Northern New York, Pittsburgh, Plains and Peaks, San Fernando, San Gabriel, Santa Fe, Savannah, Shenango, Southern New England, The James, Upper Ohio Valley, Utah, Utica, and Whitewater Valley.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 02-136

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) to disapprove Item 02-136.

The overture seeks to amend G-3.0303c by inserting the words “including provisions for severance payments” between “compensation standards” and “for pastoral calls,” so that the provision would read that

“the presbytery has authority to:

“... c establish minimum compensation standards, *including provisions for severance payments*, for pastoral calls and Certified Christian Educators and Certified Associate Christian Educators within the presbytery;”

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution notes, first, that the word “severance” is problematic. Pastors are not employees. Pastoral calls are covenants among three parties—the pastor, the congregation, and the presbytery. When calls are dissolved by the presbytery, terms relating to the pastor's compensation must be agreed upon by the congregation. Signed, negotiated agreements containing those terms of dissolution are enforceable contracts.

The issue raised in the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission's ruling in *Saurbaugh v. Presbytery of Great Rivers* (PJC206-13) was that absent a congregational vote concurring with such terms, a presbytery has no authority to require their enforcement, as argued in the rationale.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that nothing in the proposed amendment would change the requirement that only agreed upon terms of dissolution are enforceable by presbyteries. Furthermore, the amendment would not require the adoption of such provisions, but rather only “authorize” them. Such policies may already be adopted by presbyteries without a constitutional amendment.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-136

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 02-136.

When a pastor and a church need to end their mutual relationship, there needs to be equity in severance. Sometimes a pastor leaves without a just severance, which creates unfair stress in a time of transition. Some pastors might receive a fair severance package, others might receive none. This overture calls for presbyteries to establish minimums to prevent both undue hardship and retaliation in the moments that lead to the termination of the relationship between pastor and church.

According to the 2009 “God's Work in Women's Hands: Just Compensation and Just Compensation,” the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) defines pay equity as seeking fairness in compensation. While the policy addresses gender discrimination in compensation, this call for equity should apply to severance packages regardless of gender. By requiring presbyteries to set minimum severance policies, the denomination can move towards a more equitable compensation in the church.

Item 02-137

[Referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). See pp. 10–11, 303.]

On Amending G-3.0106 to Add an Antiracism Policy with Suggested Training for All Members of Each Council—From the Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley.

02 RECOMMENDED REFERRALS TO THE 225TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2022)

The Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley respectfully overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall the fourth paragraph of G-3.0106 (Administration of Mission) of the Form of Government be amended as follows: [Text to be added is shown as italic.]

“All councils shall adopt and implement a sexual misconduct policy and a child and youth protection policy, and an antiracism policy with suggested training for all members of each council.”

Rationale

From Selma to Montgomery, from Tuskegee to Tuscaloosa, from Auburn to Anniston, from the Black Belt to Birmingham, the Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley knows the pain of our racist history and the difficulty of changing behavior. We recognize the General Assembly’s call for “Facing Racism,” for study and action, and give thanks for the resource materials provided. Nevertheless, we see that councils have been slow to respond. Councils have adopted and enforced sexual misconduct policies and policies to protect vulnerable populations. Why have councils not been doing the work of “Facing Racism”? Why have councils responded differently? The responses regarding sexual misconduct and protecting vulnerable people have been directed by “shall,” while “Facing Racism” merely urges, makes available, encourages, and commends. This presbytery, whose very name reflects black and white, women and men, working together in mission for education and health care, calls upon the General Assembly to turn overcoming racism into a “shall” for all our councils.

Concurrence to Item 02-137 from the Presbytery of Baltimore, Coastal Carolina, de Cristo, Giddings-Lovejoy, Grand Canyon, Mississippi, North Alabama, and Santa Fe, and the Synod of the Northeast.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 02-137

Advisory Committee on the Constitution Advice on Item 02-137.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 224th General Assembly (2020) that Item 02-137 raises the following issues the assembly should consider:

Item 02-137 seeks to amend section G-3.0106 by adding the following to the fourth paragraph: “All councils shall adopt and implement a sexual misconduct policy and a child and youth protection policy, *and an antiracism policy with suggested training for all members of each council.*”

The term “members” is used constitutionally to refer to members of congregations, of persons elected to the session as “members of the session” (as in G-2.0301), of ministers of the Word and Sacrament who are continuing members of presbytery (G-3.0104), and of officers of presbytery and moderators of synod and General Assembly being enrolled as members during their period of service (G-3.0301). G-3.0105 refers to a “member of the body” of a council in reference to a person’s participation in the body during meetings. The term “member” is not used of commissioners to synods or the General Assembly, or of commissioners to presbytery except as noted above.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that the Constitution is not intended to serve as a Manual of Operations. Generally, this would advocate against the creation of lists of requirements or rubrics in how to implement requirements.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution recommends that if the body agrees with the intent of the overture, that it amend the recommendation to read “... a sexual misconduct policy, and a child and youth protection policy, and an antiracism policy.”

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-137

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-137—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP)

This overture to amend G-3.0106 proposes to add an antiracism policy with suggested training for all members of each council.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 02-137 with amendment by adding the following paragraph:

“2. For implementation and assessment, the 224th General Assembly (2020) directs the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee and appropriate ministries of the Racial Equity and Women’s Intercultural Ministries unit to assist presbyteries”

and synods by providing resources and guidance and by assessing the impact of this rule change after six years of implementation, reporting back to the General Assembly their findings.]”

The Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley and other concurring presbyteries are to be commended for their sincere desire to see the PC(USA) implementing the “Facing Racism” policy (2018, renewing a 1999 version). If this overture is passed, it is important that there are both personal and shared outcomes for any antiracism policy and training. Training in and of itself does not mandate tangible action beyond certification that a training is offered, was attended, and completed. In a church that is 89 percent white and largely suburban, the amendment we propose is meant to encourage mid councils to be both visionary and realistic about the kind of training required to dismantle white supremacy and transform us into the Beloved Community in our particular areas.

ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-137

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-137—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC)

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 02-137.

We concur with the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee and encourage the approval of including an antiracism policy with suggested language, but we also believe it should be included in a standalone manner separate from the mandate to have a sexual misconduct policy and a child and youth protection policy.

GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 02-137

General Assembly Committee on Representation Comment on Item 02-137. On Amending G-3.0106 to Add an Antiracism Policy with Suggested Training for All Members of Each Council.

This item has been recommended to be referred to the 225th General Assembly (2022). However, should the assembly determine that this item of business needs to be considered by the 224th General Assembly (2020), GACOR provides this comment.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation believes that training in cultural proficiency, implicit bias, and anti-racism are important at all levels of the denomination. The inclusion of such training in the *Book of Order* would ensure that members are equipped and aware of the implications of racism in their work. Training like this would be best if connected to the constitutional requirement of advocating for diversity in leadership and equipping the church.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation is made up of sixteen persons, elected by the General Assembly, who are drawn from members and elders, ruling and teaching, from across the church in accordance with F-1.0403. Its constitutional mandate and central functions are described in G-3.0103 of the Book of Order (Form of Government).

REAC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 02-137

Advice and Counsel on Item 02-137—From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC)

The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee advises that the 224th General Assembly (2020) approve Item 02-137 with the following amendment:

REAC advises that a new paragraph be added to G-3.0106 Administration of Mission to read as follows:

“[All councils shall adopt and implement a dismantling structural and systemic racism policy and training.]”

“REAC shall be a prophetic voice for involving people of color in the formation of public policy and monitor the implementation of policies adopted by the church that impact the quality of life of people of color in the church and in the world” (Organization for Mission, VI.1).

Over the years, the *Book of Order* has been reduced in scope and specific content. Noticeably absent is the language related to addressing systemic and structural racism. Previous efforts to address racism in the church and society are not enough. Though they have brought awareness they have not yielded the desired results for people of color. Facing racism and overcoming racism are only steps to achieving God’s beloved community of eradicating racism. White supremacy and other racist attitudes undermine the work of the church. Therefore, REAC advises the inclusion of “*All councils shall adopt and implement a dismantling structural and systemic racism policy and training*” as a stand-alone requirement.

SECTION THREE

SUPPLEMENT:

Roll of the General Assembly,
Standing Rules,
Moderators and Clerks,
Members of Entities Elected by the General Assembly

THE ROLL OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

COMMISSIONERS AND YOUNG ADULT ADVISORY DELEGATES

Abingdon

Teaching Elder Paul Min
Ruling Elder Patricia Neel

Albany

Teaching Elder Kathi Jones
Ruling Elder Arthur Fullerton
YAAD Michael Casey

Arkansas

Teaching Elder Ruskin Falls
Ruling Elder Ron David
Teaching Elder Marie Mainard-O'Connell
Ruling Elder Ruth Hamilton
YAAD Connor Button

Atlantic Korean

Teaching Elder Yoon Sang Nam
Ruling Elder Kim Robinson

Baltimore

Teaching Elder Amy Carlson
Ruling Elder Darcel Glenn-Cooper
Teaching Elder Kimberly Ashby
Ruling Elder Robert Stepling
YAAD Emma Kate Lander

Beaver Butler

Teaching Elder Mary Kitchen
Ruling Elder Wayne McCoy

Blackhawk

Teaching Elder Anita Stuart-Steva
Ruling Elder Phil Rarick
Teaching Elder David Terrinoni
Ruling Elder Laurie Walker

Boise

Teaching Elder Ruth Goldthwaite
Ruling Elder Madeline Buckendorf
YAAD Milton Miller

Boston

Ruling Elder Mark Vogel
YAAD Annaelle Djomo

Carlisle

Teaching Elder Ron Martin-Minnich
Ruling Elder Pat Butler
Teaching Elder Graham Fowler
Ruling Elder Cheryl Betts

The Cascades

Teaching Elder Patricia Berger
Ruling Elder Beth Outtersen
Teaching Elder Thomas Berry
Ruling Elder Carole Eckerd

Cayuga Syracuse

Teaching Elder Ben Fitzgerald-Fye
Ruling Elder William Newell

Central Florida

Teaching Elder Emese Asztalos
Ruling Elder H. Baldwin Hamilton
Teaching Elder Melanie Ruta
Ruling Elder Josue Raymond

Central Florida, *continued*

Teaching Elder Michael Bodger
Ruling Elder Cheryl Carson

Central Nebraska

Teaching Elder Sharon Rees
Ruling Elder Brian Johnson
YAAD Keeran Woode

Charleston Atlantic

Teaching Elder Patricia Jones
Ruling Elder Priscilla Holtzclaw
Teaching Elder Patrick Perryman
Ruling Elder Irene Whaley

Charlotte

Teaching Elder Laldinpuia Rodawla
Ruling Elder William Watkins
Teaching Elder Claire George-Drumheller
Ruling Elder Corita Younge Floyd
Teaching Elder Phanta Lansden
Ruling Elder Sarah Johnson Hancock
Teaching Elder Ardith Skidmore
Ruling Elder Renda Brinson
YAAD Camden Thomas-Bush

Cherokee

Teaching Elder Elizabeth Lovell Milford
Ruling Elder Nancy Bertrand

Chicago

Teaching Elder Paige Stephan
Ruling Elder Sandra Zeles
Teaching Elder Michael Miller
Ruling Elder Sylvia Hope Daniels
Teaching Elder Stuart Barnes Jamieson
Ruling Elder Ariel Gloor
Teaching Elder M. Elizabeth Wagner
Ruling Elder Jose' Luis Ocampo, Jr.
YAAD Catherine Lynch

Cimarron

Teaching Elder Andrew Long
Ruling Elder Mark Southard

Cincinnati

Teaching Elder Shawn Barkley
Ruling Elder Bill Bogdan
Teaching Elder Kris Moore
Ruling Elder Darlene Nored
YAAD Margaret Heidenreich

Coastal Carolina

Teaching Elder Emile Harley
Ruling Elder Matlynn Yeoman
Teaching Elder Johnie Bennett
Ruling Elder Robert Hill
Teaching Elder Karen Allen
Ruling Elder Linda Hayes

Dakota

Teaching Elder Maeng-Ho Ahn

THE ROLL OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

de Cristo

Teaching Elder Elizabeth Smith
Ruling Elder Ruth McPherson
YAAD Leslie Courville

Denver

Teaching Elder Louise Westfall
Ruling Elder Pat Queen
Teaching Elder Bill Davis
Ruling Elder Daphne Rice-Allen

Des Moines

Teaching Elder Meghan Davis
Ruling Elder Tom Daft
YAAD Katherine Pike

Detroit

Teaching Elder Mark Phillips
Ruling Elder Dave Bunch
Teaching Elder Julie Delezenne
Ruling Elder Barbara Russell
Teaching Elder Jasmine Smart
Ruling Elder Stefanie Lewis
YAAD Tyler Innis

Donegal

Teaching Elder Sarah Kneier
Ruling Elder Julie Allport
Teaching Elder Ann Osborne
Ruling Elder John Graham
YAAD Julia Wilson

East Iowa

Teaching Elder Daniel DeBeer
Ruling Elder Janalee Kosowski
Teaching Elder Sarah Hegar
Ruling Elder Bob Nolan

East Tennessee

Teaching Elder Roy Scarbrough
Ruling Elder Lionel Hodges
Teaching Elder Gloria Mencer
Ruling Elder John Thomason
YAAD Mason Warren

Eastern Korean American

Teaching Elder Joseph Chu
Ruling Elder Won-Jong Rhee

Eastern Oklahoma

Teaching Elder Jeff Cranton
Ruling Elder Elaine Elsloo Dodd

Eastern Oregon

Teaching Elder Laura Hudson
Ruling Elder Barbara Clark
YAAD Tatiana O'Neal

Eastern Virginia

Teaching Elder Monica Gould
Ruling Elder Joseph Prueher
Teaching Elder Chris Carrasco
Ruling Elder Kenneth Lucas

Eastminster

Teaching Elder Carolyn Griffeth
Ruling Elder Sam Ewing
YAAD Monique Cobbin

Elizabeth

Teaching Elder Ronald Thompson
Ruling Elder Arthur Winter

Flint River

Teaching Elder Stephanie Boaz
Ruling Elder Patricia Kauffmann
YAAD Abby Boyd

Florida

Teaching Elder Brad Clayton
Ruling Elder Joanne Kublik
YAAD Ryan Obray

Foothills

Teaching Elder Mel Davis
Ruling Elder Lori Malvern
Teaching Elder Leslie Lang
Ruling Elder James Cheeks, Jr.

Genesee Valley

Teaching Elder Colin Pritchard
Ruling Elder Roger Estes
Teaching Elder Michelle Sumption
Ruling Elder Sue Tedesco

Geneva

Teaching Elder Debbie Grohman
Ruling Elder C. Thomas Bailey
YAAD Audra Burrall

Giddings Lovejoy

Teaching Elder Erin Counihan
Ruling Elder Carrie Schildroth
Teaching Elder Jeffrey Snell
Ruling Elder Ellen Schroeder

Glacier

Teaching Elder Courtney Arntzen
Ruling Elder Randy Houtz

Grace

Teaching Elder Katy Rigler
Ruling Elder Robert Warren
Teaching Elder Kendal Land
Ruling Elder Martin Osaе
Teaching Elder Matt Curry
Ruling Elder Crysta Brantley
Teaching Elder Lynette Solomon
Ruling Elder Lyndon Olson
YAAD Rowan Sankar

Grand Canyon

Teaching Elder Ann Conklin
Ruling Elder Alan Hale
Teaching Elder Jose Olagues
Ruling Elder Cheryl Williams
YAAD Jason Knorr

Great Rivers

Teaching Elder Maura McGrath Nagle
Ruling Elder Diane Ludington
Teaching Elder Chuck Goodman
Ruling Elder Penny Frame

THE ROLL OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Greater Atlanta

Teaching Elder Francis Githieya
Ruling Elder Cynthia Smith
Teaching Elder Morgan Hay
Ruling Elder Destiny Williams
Teaching Elder Hyunsung Samuel Cho
Ruling Elder Linda Curry
Teaching Elder Rafael Lemos Viana
Ruling Elder Tom Whitworth
Teaching Elder Russell Weekley
Ruling Elder Bokassa Leade Bukalo
YAAD Corinna Papotto

Heartland

Teaching Elder Nikki Cooley
Ruling Elder Ann Ditty
Teaching Elder John Soule
Ruling Elder Greg Take
YAAD Sam Vaughan

Holston

Teaching Elder Brian Wyatt
Ruling Elder William Reese

Homestead

Teaching Elder Sue Coller
Ruling Elder Kristi Hill
YAAD Marshall Severson

Hudson River

Teaching Elder Erin Moore
Ruling Elder Constance Knapp
Teaching Elder Jeffrey Geary
Ruling Elder David Burpee
YAAD Luke Torres-Rossi

Huntingdon

Teaching Elder Gary Califf
Ruling Elder Beth Farmer
YAAD Ethan Reed

Indian Nations

Teaching Elder Jennifer Kirbas
Ruling Elder Charlotte Lovett

The Inland Northwest

Teaching Elder Scott Kinder-Pyle
Ruling Elder Kathy Storm
YAAD Lydia Pierson

The James

Teaching Elder Brint Keyes
Ruling Elder Andrew Sanders, Jr.
Teaching Elder Hyun Chan Bae
Ruling Elder Kenna Payne
Teaching Elder Judith Thomson
Ruling Elder Marilyn Johns
YAAD Noah Morgan

John Calvin

Teaching Elder Jennifer Dawson
Ruling Elder Reed Click
YAAD Sophia Gentle

The John Knox

Teaching Elder Don Best
Ruling Elder Linda Stovall

Kendall

Teaching Elder Phil Price
Ruling Elder Catherine Talkington

Kiskiminetas

Teaching Elder Lonnie Long
Ruling Elder Deborah Snyder
YAAD Isaac Solida

Lackawanna

Teaching Elder Barry Ballard
Ruling Elder Diane Scheuer
YAAD Mary O'Brien

Lake Erie

Teaching Elder Ronee Christy
Ruling Elder Laura Russell
YAAD Bryce Preston

Lake Huron

Teaching Elder Matthew Schramm
Ruling Elder Heather Bailey

Lake Michigan

Teaching Elder Chrissy Westbury
Ruling Elder Leslie Gilreath
Teaching Elder David Schell
Ruling Elder Thomas Wilcox
YAAD Jillian Goshorn

Lehigh

Teaching Elder Stephen Emick
Ruling Elder Phyllis Walker
YAAD McKenzie Lazar

Long Island

Teaching Elder Joshua Jong
Ruling Elder Ellen Gove
YAAD Aiseosa Irowa

Los Ranchos

Teaching Elder Robin Clardy
Ruling Elder Deborah Mayhew
Teaching Elder Chineta Goodjoin
Ruling Elder Christopher Mears
YAAD Miles Peterson

Mackinac

Teaching Elder Anne Hebert
Ruling Elder Cyndi Couchene
YAAD Henry Sale

Maumee Valley

Teaching Elder Cathi King
Ruling Elder Tom Polker
YAAD Chloe Smith

Miami Valley

Teaching Elder Michael Isaacs
Ruling Elder Bruce Saunders
YAAD Anne Paquette

Mid-Kentucky

Teaching Elder Megan McCarty
Ruling Elder Dee Hoge
YAAD Cara Bridgman

Mid-South

Teaching Elder Rebecca Luter
Ruling Elder Carrie Harris

THE ROLL OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Middle Tennessee

Teaching Elder Chris Joiner
Ruling Elder Geoff Lackey
Teaching Elder Heidi Hudnut-Beumler
Ruling Elder Connie Hamblen
Teaching Elder Mike Wilson
Ruling Elder Theresa Denton
YAAD Austin Fiala

Midwest Korean American

Teaching Elder Mooyoung Lim
Ruling Elder Brian Yim
YAAD Mary Chung

Milwaukee

Teaching Elder Robert Ater
Ruling Elder Cathy Manthei
YAAD Elizabeth Tan

Minnesota Valleys

Teaching Elder Elaine Boyd
Ruling Elder Stan Menning

Mission

Teaching Elder Michelle Veters
Teaching Elder Kevin Jones
Ruling Elder Bearman Floyd
Teaching Elder Bill Clark
Ruling Elder Cara Herlin
YAAD Zach Shrull

Mississippi

Teaching Elder Barron Banks
Ruling Elder Dan Davis
YAAD Katie Borum

Missouri River Valley

Teaching Elder Jennifer Blake
Ruling Elder Dennis Brown
YAAD Justus Jeanpierre

Missouri Union

Teaching Elder Julie King
Ruling Elder Frank Yates

Monmouth

Teaching Elder Stephen Heinzl-Nelson
Ruling Elder Joyce Davies
Teaching Elder Cynthia Parker
Ruling Elder Iver Kennedy
YAAD Jordan Heinzl-Nelson

Muskingum Valley

Teaching Elder Bob Meyer
Ruling Elder Frank Walburg

National Capital

Teaching Elder Lisa Kenkeremath
Ruling Elder Mike Rankin
Teaching Elder Shawn MacDonald
Ruling Elder Warren Clayton
Teaching Elder Henry Brinton
Ruling Elder Mark Eakin
Teaching Elder Sam Atiemo
Ruling Elder Miriam Dewhurst
YAAD Rebecca Washburg

Nevada

Teaching Elder Adrian Doll
Ruling Elder Melva O'Neill

New Brunswick

Teaching Elder Karen Hernandez-Granzen
Ruling Elder Cherry Oakley
YAAD Nora Flamer

New Castle

Teaching Elder Emma Horn
Ruling Elder Rourke Moore
YAAD Ellie Jetton

New Covenant

Teaching Elder Tim Marquez
Ruling Elder Anne Wilson
Teaching Elder Laura Grice
Ruling Elder Forbes Baker

New Harmony

Teaching Elder Josie Holler
Ruling Elder Marion Slater
YAAD Breanna McFadden

New Hope

Teaching Elder Jody Moore
Ruling Elder Mary Bethel
Teaching Elder Katie Crowe
Ruling Elder Ida Adams
Teaching Elder Sanghyun James Lee
Ruling Elder Jerry Slaymaker
Teaching Elder Deborah Kirk
Ruling Elder Gary Wires
YAAD Christopher Morgan

New York City

Teaching Elder Chris Shelton
Ruling Elder Frances Coppin-Thom
Teaching Elder Robert Brashear
Ruling Elder Terri Youn
YAAD Christian Pisco

Newark

Teaching Elder Dan Martian
Ruling Elder Loretta Hazelwood
YAAD Christopher Amponsah

Newton

Teaching Elder Amy Sandlin
Ruling Elder Alec Jain
Teaching Elder David Young
Ruling Elder Kenneth Nickel
YAAD Juliet DiBonaventura

North Alabama

Teaching Elder Gregory Bentley
Ruling Elder Sherrill Biehn
YAAD Preston Rowley

North Central Iowa

Teaching Elder Sara Hill
Ruling Elder Sara McNerny
YAAD Brienna Evans

THE ROLL OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Northeast Georgia

Teaching Elder Andy Cooke
Ruling Elder Miriam Risher
YAAD Jay Bangle

Northern Kansas

Teaching Elder Kent Winters-Hazelton
Ruling Elder Roxie Baer
YAAD Avery Cooper

Northern New England

Teaching Elder Carl Hilton-VanOsdall
Ruling Elder Jeanine Cunningham
YAAD Ella Hilton-VanOsdall

Northern New York

Teaching Elder Lori Danielson
Ruling Elder Linya Bell

Northern Plains

Teaching Elder Robert Boyar
Ruling Elder Scott Dobovsky

Northern Waters

Teaching Elder Dorothy Duquette
Ruling Elder Sue Hendrickson
YAAD Katherine Lisak

Northumberland

Teaching Elder Lisa Kraus
Ruling Elder John Polhill

Northwest Coast

Teaching Elder Faith McClellan
Ruling Elder Moon Lee
YAAD Maya Schlosser-Hall

Presbiterio Del Noroeste

Teaching Elder Iris Santoni Ortiz
Ruling Elder José Valentín Sívico
YAAD Aliahliz Martínez Pérez

Ohio Valley

Teaching Elder Felipe Martinez
Ruling Elder Mary C McClellan
YAAD Logan Recob

Olympia

Teaching Elder Ed Wegele
Ruling Elder Ron Marshall

The Pacific

Teaching Elder Paula Mann
Ruling Elder Sandra Loden-Hunt
Teaching Elder James Kim
Ruling Elder Eric Beck
YAAD Dresden Vogt

Palisades

Teaching Elder Berj Gulleyan
Ruling Elder Donna Frohnapfel
YAAD Jarrett Cuavers

Palo Duro

Teaching Elder George Records
Ruling Elder Karen Copple
YAAD Parker Adamson

Peace River

Teaching Elder Terri Jo Crego
Ruling Elder Harry Belk, Jr.
Teaching Elder Dawn Mayes
Ruling Elder Barbara Weiss
YAAD Carson Brown

The Peaks

Teaching Elder Morgan Whitfield
Ruling Elder Pam Claterbaugh
Teaching Elder Melissa McNair-King
Ruling Elder Janice Wells
YAAD Megan Ingram

Philadelphia

Teaching Elder Leah Quarles
Ruling Elder Eck Gerner
Teaching Elder Todd Stavrakos
Ruling Elder Lois Hayman-El
Teaching Elder Pamela McShane
Ruling Elder Lloyd Higgins
Teaching Elder Anna Grant-Borden
Ruling Elder Megan Acedo
YAAD Will Gillespie

Pines

Teaching Elder Jim Freeman
Ruling Elder Donna Rose
YAAD Esther Seo

Pittsburgh

Teaching Elder David Wood
Ruling Elder Dawn Harvin
Teaching Elder Scott Hill
Ruling Elder John Ferguson
Teaching Elder Tammy Wiens
Ruling Elder Eddie Willson
Teaching Elder Charissa Howe
Ruling Elder Mark Roth
YAAD Samuel Smallwood

Plains And Peaks

Teaching Elder Vickie Kintzel
Ruling Elder Becky Cranwell

Prospect Hill

Teaching Elder Kevin Freese
Ruling Elder Gwen Detlefsen

Providence

Teaching Elder David Bender
Ruling Elder Ann White
YAAD NeTorrian Patton

Pueblo

Teaching Elder Charles Johnson-Kelly
Ruling Elder Ruth White

Redstone

Ruling Elder Bobbi Jo Huebner
Teaching Elder Susan Blank
Ruling Elder Joshua Scully
Teaching Elder Laura Blank
YAAD Samantha Phillips

THE ROLL OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The Redwoods

Teaching Elder Cynthia Alloway
Ruling Elder Charles Stark
YAAD Hudson Davis

Riverside

Teaching Elder In Yang
Ruling Elder Cherylyn Thornton
YAAD Christopher Stanley

Sacramento

Teaching Elder Jeri Viera Dalhke
Ruling Elder Peg Vanderkar
YAAD Greg Kristian

St Andrew

Teaching Elder John Semmes
Ruling Elder Murphy Jones, Jr.
YAAD Gracyn Ashmore

St Augustine

Teaching Elder Alexandra Hedrick
Ruling Elder Yvette Grant
Teaching Elder Joseph Medearis
Ruling Elder Bob Bell
YAAD Emma Cottrell

Salem

Teaching Elder Kim Priddy
Ruling Elder Cynthia Ingle
Teaching Elder Kaye Barrow-Ziglar
Ruling Elder Elizabeth Hooten
Teaching Elder Paul Sink
Ruling Elder Jack Hartle
YAAD Nolan Chilton

San Diego

Teaching Elder Mike Wallman
Ruling Elder Maurice Caskey
Teaching Elder Fairlight Collins Lower
Ruling Elder Wells Lyman

San Fernando

Teaching Elder Randy Lovejoy
Ruling Elder Jo Zimmerman

San Francisco

Teaching Elder Talitha Amadea Aho
Ruling Elder Sung Kim
Teaching Elder Kamal Hassan
Ruling Elder Enicia Montalvo
YAAD Eden Chaloehtiarana

San Gabriel

Teaching Elder N'Yisrela Watts-Afryie
Ruling Elder Maria Cacarnakis

San Joaquin

Teaching Elder Ara Guekguezian
Ruling Elder Carolyn Foxe
YAAD Gabriella Knutsen

San Jose

Teaching Elder Anne McAnelly
Ruling Elder Hanafi Tanojo
YAAD Nol Carlen

Presbiterio De San Juan

Teaching Elder Richard Rojas
Ruling Elder Ian Mendez Rivas
YAAD Stephanie Negron-Fernández

Santa Barbara

Teaching Elder Tom Stephen
Ruling Elder Susan Freer
YAAD Casey Crouch

Santa Fe

Teaching Elder Thomas Hart
Ruling Elder Nelson Capitan
YAAD Derek Capitan

Savannah

Teaching Elder Ricky Porter
Ruling Elder Barbara Conner
YAAD Elizabeth Sevier

Scioto Valley

Teaching Elder Sarah Juist
Ruling Elder Kae Merold
Teaching Elder Mark Gauen
Ruling Elder Kathi Bubb
YAAD Milo Browne

Seattle

Teaching Elder Kelly Wadsworth
Ruling Elder Todd Peterson
Teaching Elder Eyde Mabanglo
Ruling Elder Glen Ferguson
YAAD Stephanie Neu

Shenandoah

Teaching Elder Amanda Thomas
Ruling Elder Kathryn Baker
Teaching Elder Howard Boswell
Ruling Elder Jeff Hornbeck
YAAD William Fitzgerald, III

Shenango

Ruling Elder Mark Arnold

Sheppards And Lapsley

Teaching Elder Lou Ann Sellers
Ruling Elder Lin Veasey
Teaching Elder Kathy Wolf Reed
Ruling Elder Rush Watson
YAAD Annabelle Beavers

Sierra Blanca

Teaching Elder Caryn Thurman
Ruling Elder Nancy Maushak

South Alabama

Teaching Elder Sarah Erickson
Ruling Elder Larry Kirkland Jr
YAAD Noah Beaver

South Dakota

Teaching Elder Janice Palmer
Ruling Elder Paul Penn

South Louisiana

Teaching Elder Jerry Egbert
Ruling Elder Henrietta Harris
YAAD Connor Couvillion

THE ROLL OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Southeastern Illinois

Teaching Elder Karen Russell
Ruling Elder Lynn Neal
YAAD Haiden Charles Wickline

Southern Kansas

Teaching Elder Catherine Neelly Burton
Ruling Elder Sarah Emerson

Southern New England

Teaching Elder Jenny Peek
Ruling Elder Walter Manuel

Presbiterio Del Suroeste

Teaching Elder Miguel Angel Dros Lorenzo
Ruling Elder Jaime González Cruz
YAAD Jairy Chacón Gutiérrez

Stockton

Teaching Elder Joshua Trautmann
Ruling Elder Bill Stigile

Susquehanna Valley

Teaching Elder Mark Montfort
Ruling Elder Junieta Brooks
YAAD Emma Kindig

Tampa Bay

Teaching Elder Laurie Palmer
Ruling Elder Sally Spear
Teaching Elder Andrew Walton
Ruling Elder Kathryn Rawson
YAAD Hadley Owen

Transylvania

Teaching Elder Scott Cervas
Ruling Elder William Reed
YAAD Nathan Thacker

Tres Rios

Teaching Elder Tracy Spencer Brown
Ruling Elder Bill Rose
YAAD Tai Spain

Trinity

Teaching Elder Julie Bird
Ruling Elder Yvette Howard
Teaching Elder David Torrey
Ruling Elder Ron Bartlett

Tropical Florida

Teaching Elder David Massey
Ruling Elder Yadira Rodriguez
YAAD Samuel Ortiz

Twin Cities Area

Teaching Elder Lisa Johnson
Ruling Elder Elona Street-Stewart
Teaching Elder Brian Entz
Ruling Elder Marian Michael
YAAD William Parker

Upper Ohio Valley

Teaching Elder Ruth Ellen Bates
Ruling Elder Robert Milner

Utah

Teaching Elder Nancy Holve
Ruling Elder Bobbie Ramer
YAAD Marie Pohl

Utica

Teaching Elder Sam Pendergrast
Ruling Elder Letty Umidi

Wabash Valley

Teaching Elder Austin Wicks
Ruling Elder James Nixon
YAAD Morgan Blank

Washington

Teaching Elder Dawn Sherwood
Ruling Elder Gloria Schmalz

West Jersey

Teaching Elder Sarah Craven
Ruling Elder Jason Russell
Teaching Elder Nicole Duran
Ruling Elder Rebecca Neindorff

West Virginia

Teaching Elder Claire Butler
Ruling Elder George Lilley
YAAD Rachel McNeel

Western Colorado

Teaching Elder Alan Te Brink
Ruling Elder Peggy Sconce

Western Kentucky

Teaching Elder Renee Meyer
Ruling Elder Carol S. Brand

Western New York

Teaching Elder Katelyn Nutter Dowling
Ruling Elder Louise Wasko
Teaching Elder Catherine Rieley-Goddard
Ruling Elder Donna Freiert
YAAD Quin Buisch

Western North Carolina

Teaching Elder Dwight Christenbury, III
Ruling Elder Sally McGinnis
Teaching Elder Kimberleigh Wells
Ruling Elder Collin Caldwell
YAAD Vance Stiles

The Western Reserve

Teaching Elder Matthew Bauhof
Ruling Elder Alan Gruber
YAAD Natalily Kyremes-Parks

Whitewater Valley

Teaching Elder Daren Hofmann
Ruling Elder Carla Beard
Teaching Elder Alice McDowell
Ruling Elder Ted Smith
YAAD Eli Eckert

Winnebago

Teaching Elder Matthew Sauer
Ruling Elder Daniel Crump
YAAD Sarah Seager

Wyoming

Teaching Elder Jason Harshberger
Ruling Elder Warren VanGenderen

Yellowstone

Teaching Elder Teresa Kendall
Ruling Elder Sandy Welch

THE ROLL OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Yukon

Teaching Elder Curtis Matz
Ruling Elder Susan Lundgren
YAAD Lauren Lindemuth

APPOINTED COMMITTEE MODERATOR

Presbiterio De San Juan

Teaching Elder Raul Santiago-Rivera

OTHER ADVISORY DELEGATES

Theological Student Advisory Delegates

Christópher Abreu Rosario
Ryan G. Atkinson
Kelly Bratkowski
Nell Herring
Gina Meester
Ryan Miller
Jamie Nobles
Patrick O'Conner
Amy Simes
Emily Sutphin
Sharon Tatum
Kevin Wright

Columbia Theological Seminary
Union Presbyterian Seminary
Austin Theological Seminary
Columbia Theological Seminary
Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary
San Francisco Theological Seminary
Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary
San Francisco Theological Seminary
Union Presbyterian Seminary
Princeton Theological Seminary
Univ of Dubuque Theological Sem
Univ of Dubuque Theological Sem

Missionary Advisory Delegates

Doug Dicks
Joshua Heikkila
Sarah Henken
Tracey King-Ortega
Esther Shin
Martin Han
Marlene Van Brocklin
Michael Weller

Israel and Palestine
Ghana
Columbia
Nicaragua
Egypt
South Korea
USA/Sri Lanka
Ethiopia

Ecumenical Advisory Delegates

Michael Blair
Gordon Cowans
Francisco J Hernandez
Nicolas Kazarian

Adrian V. Nelson
Christopher D. Olkiewicz
Sonia Andrea Skupch
Bassem Thabet

Anita Sue Wright Torres
Valente Tseco
Yonas Yigezu Dibisa

United Church of Canada
United Church of Jamaica and the Cayman Islands
United Church of Christ in the Philippines
Greek Orthodox Church Archdiocese of North America
African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Evangelical Church of the River Plate
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Jordan and the Holy Land
United Presbyterian Church of Brazil
Presbyterian Church of Mozambique
Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus

CORRESPONDING MEMBERS

Office of the General Assembly

J. Herbert Nelson
Tricia Dykers-Koenig
Laurie Griffith
Jihyun Oh
Kerry Rice
Cora Brown

Stated Clerk
Associate Stated Clerk
Associate Stated Clerk
Associate Stated Clerk
Associate Stated Clerk
Assistant Stated Clerk

THE ROLL OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Office of the General Assembly, *continued*

Tim Cargal	Assistant Stated Clerk
Molly Casteel	Assistant Stated Clerk
Luke Choi	Assistant Stated Clerk
DeAmber Clopton	Assistant Stated Clerk
Amanda Craft	Assistant Stated Clerk
Deborah Davies	Assistant Stated Clerk
Julia Henderson	Assistant Stated Clerk
valerie izumi	Assistant Stated Clerk
Rick Jones	Assistant Stated Clerk
Martha Miller	Assistant Stated Clerk
Diane Minter	Assistant Stated Clerk
Manuel Silva-Esterrich	Assistant Stated Clerk
Nancy Taylor	Assistant Stated Clerk
Kris Valerius	Assistant Stated Clerk
Flor Vélez Díaz	Assistant Stated Clerk
Teresa Waggener	Assistant Stated Clerk
Dianna Wright	Assistant Stated Clerk

Presbyterian Mission Agency

Diane Moffett	President
Joseph Morrow	PMAB Chair
Patsy Smith	PMAB Member
Melinda Sanders	PMAB Member
Jeffrey Joe	PMAB Member
Warren Lesane	PMAB Member
Mark Brainerd	PMAB Member
Shannan Vance-Ocampo	PMAB Member
Sinthia Hernandez-Diaz	PMAB Member
Courtney Steininger	ACWC Member
Thomas Priest Jr	REAC Member
Rachael Eggebeen	ACSWP Member
Kathy Francis	Director, Communications
Rosemary Mitchell	Director, Mission Engagement
Sara Lisherness	Director, CPJ, WM
Rhashell Hunter	Director, RE&WIM
Ray Jones	Director, TFE

A Corporation Board, Administrative Services Group

Kathy Lueckert	President
Bridget-Anne Hampden	A Corp Co-chair
Christopher Mason	A Corp Co-chair
April Davenport	Assoc General Counsel
Ruth Gardner	Director, Human Resources
Denise Hampton	Controller
Michael Kirk	General Counsel

Presbyterian Women

Susan Jackson-Dowd	Executive Director
Jyungin Lee	Moderator

Board of Pensions

Frank Spencer	President
Fairfax Fair	Chair

THE ROLL OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Presbyterian Foundation

Tom Taylor
Eustacia Moffett Marshall

President
Chair

Presbyterian Investment & Loan Program

James Rissler
Tom McNeill

President
Chair

Presbyterian Publishing Company

David Dobson
Mary Gene Boteler

President
Chair

PERMANENT AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONS

Advisory Committee on the Constitution

Alyson A. Janke
Michael E. Williams
Cathy Urich
Carla Campbell
Daniel Saperstein
Forrest Claassen
Greg Goodwiller
Judy Woods
Christian Boyd

2020 Vision Team

Sabrina Slater

**Advisory Commission to Address Issues
in the Synod of the Covenant**

Patrice Hatley

Family Leave Task Force

Contina Lundy

Moving Forward Implementation Commission

Marco Grimaldo

**Predicament of Black Women and Girls
Study Group**

Kerri Allen

Rules of Discipline Task Force

Paige McRight

Safe and Sacred Space Task Force

Nancy Cavalcante

**Socioeconomic and Political Realities in
Central America Team**

Douglass Sullivan-Gonzalez

**Special Committee on Per-Capita Based Funding
and National Church Financial Sustainability**

Laura Cheifetz

**Special Committee on Racism Truth
and Reconciliation**

Marta Pumroy

**Special Committee on Reformed Perspectives in
Christian Education**

Emily Chudy

Stated Clerk Nomination Committee

Wilson Kennedy

Advisory Committee on Litigation

Jeana Lungwitz

**Committee on the Office of the General
Assembly**

Margaret Elliott
Lynn Hargrove
Clayton Anderson James
Sallie Watson
Stephanie Anthony
Leanne Masters
Luis Ocasio Torres
Eliana Maxim
Sam Bonner
Barbara Gaddis
Nigel Leon Lovell-Martin

Committee on Theological Education

Sandra Tracy

GA Nominating Committee

Lindsey Anderson

GA Committee on Representation

Byron Elam

Permanent Judicial Commission

Deborah Cohn

Presbyterian Historical Society

Ernie Higginbotham

THE ROLL OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Survivors of Sexual Misconduct

Carol Howard Merritt

Task Force Investigating the Need for an Advocacy Committee for LGBTQIA+ Concerns

Shea McGinnis

SYNOD EXECUTIVES, STATED CLERKS

Dean Strong	Alaska-Northwest
Antonio Roldán Rodríguez	Boriquen En Puerto Rico
Charles B Hardwick	The Covenant
Sara Dingman	Lincoln Trails
Landon Whitsitt	Mid-America
Nancy Talbot	The Northeast
Kathy Runyeon	The Pacific
Lynn Smit	The Rocky Mountains
Mark Hong	S California And Hawaii
Joyce Lieberman	South Atlantic
Conrad Rocha	The Southwest
Valerie Young	The Sun
Susan Wonderland	The Trinity

THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTION PRESIDENTS

Theodore J. Wardlaw	Austin Theological Seminary
Leanne Van Dyk	Columbia Theological Seminary
Paul Timothy Roberts Sr.	Johnson C. Smith Seminary
David H. Crawford	McCormick Theological Seminary
David Esterline	Pittsburgh Theological Seminary
Craig Barnes	Princeton Theological Seminary
Brian Blount	Union Presbyterian Seminary
Jeffrey Bullock	Univ of Dubuque Theological Seminary
Katharine Rhodes Henderson	Auburn Seminary

MODERATORS/CO-MODERATORS OF FORMER ASSEMBLIES

Fahed Abu-Akel	Jan Edmiston
Denise Anderson	Cindy Kohlman
Susan R. Andrews	Neal Presa
Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri	Herbert D. Valentine
David Lee Dobler	

ECUMENICAL REPRESENTATIVES

Dora Arce Valentín	Presbyterian Reformed Church in Cuba (IPRC)
James Bhagwan	Pacific Conference of Churches
Boimah Freeman	Presbyterian Church of Liberia
Hakob Gevorgyan	Diocese of the Armenian Church of America
Jean Hawxhurst	United Methodist Church
Rosangela Jarjour	Fellowship of Middle East Evangelical Churches
María de la Concepción Jiménez de Ramirez	Presbyterian Church in Venezuela (IPV)
Isaac Kalonji	Presbyterian Church of Kinshasa
Alexander Malemelo	Church of Central Presbyterian Harare Synod
Hermann Weinlick	Moravian Church
Abraham Wright	International Council of Community Church

THE ROLL OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

ASSEMBLY ASSISTANTS

Sara Babcock	Joyce Lieberman
Rebecca Blair	Jeff Moles
Bronwen Boswell	Hiram A. Perez-Cordero
Stephen Choi	Pam Prouty
Jodi Craiglow	Ginny Rainey
Diane Curtis	Miguel Rosa Morales
Mathew Eardley	Sam Shin
Brian Ellison	Veronica Soto
Terry Epling	Arenys Torres
Rhoda Frasier	James Tse
Annica Gage	Daniel van Beek
Bridgett Green	Ailih Weeldreyer
Marsha Heimann	Beatrix Weil
Ken Hockenberry	Bill Wildhack
Therese Howell	Maureen Wright
Langley Hoyt	Sharon Youngs
Teresa Larson	

OTHER STAFF AND VENDORS

Jered Michael Brown	Debbie Gardiner
Omar Chan	John Glenn
Jayne Culp	Vicente Guna
David Dinkel	Robert Hay
Sarah Doerrer	Courtney Hemmelgarn
Kate Trigger Duffert	Brian Henson
Randy Hobson	David Staniunas
Sherri Hunter	Marsha Stearly
John Kim	Terri Stephenson
Lydia Kim	Angie Stevens
Steve Maier	Fred Tangeman
Bobbie Montgomery	Norma Thieman
Jason Raff	Joel Townsend
Sonce Reese	Stephanie Vasquez
Catherine Reuning	Yvonne Wathen
Katie Rhodes	Brunhilda Williams-Curington
Jake Souder	Nathan Young

Standing Rules of the General Assembly

[AS APPROVED AND WITH SPECIAL RULES BY THE 224TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2020).]

APPROVED SPECIAL RULES

1. Approved that the meetings of the 224th General Assembly (2020) and of the Assembly Committee on Business Referral (01) be conducted by gathering electronically through an online platform and conducting business through PC-Biz.
2. That for the purpose of these electronic meetings, the 224th General Assembly (2020) approved these special rules of order and suspend any standing rules that interfere with them:
 - a. All information about meetings of the assembly, and access for voting participants, will be through PC-Biz.
 - b. Online meeting service availability shall begin at least fifteen minutes before the start of each meeting.
 - c. The presence of a quorum shall be established by sign-in to PC-Biz at the beginning of the meeting. Thereafter, the continued presence of a quorum shall be determined by the online list of participating members.
 - d. While every effort will be made to provide stable access to the platforms, each member is responsible for his or her audio and internet connections; no action shall be invalidated on the grounds that the loss of, or poor quality of, a member's individual connection prevented participation in the meeting.
 - e. In order to be enrolled as participants with voice and/or vote, commissioners, advisory delegates, and corresponding members must participate in one of the live technology orientation opportunities prior to the convening of the assembly.
 - f. The only committee will be 01 Assembly Committee on Business Referral, which shall recommend referral of all items of business either to the 224th General Assembly (2020) meeting in plenary, or to the 225th General Assembly (2022). The committee may choose to propose items to be considered in an assembly plenary consent agenda, to be taken up as the first order of business on the second day of the 224th General Assembly (2020). The committee may choose to form subcommittees to review synod and entity minutes and recommend needed action to the assembly.
 - g. The Assembly Committee on Business Referral shall assume the usual functions of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures to recommend any needed changes in order of business, limits on debate, or changes in the docket, and to review minutes of the assembly and consider protests.
 - h. Commissioners' resolutions shall not be received or referred. There shall be no new business.

Introduction

Values Present at General Assembly

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. ... If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. (1 Cor. 12:4-7 and 26-27)

The General Assembly constitutes the bond of union, community and mission among all its congregations and councils, to the end that the whole church becomes a community of faith, hope, love and witness. (G-3.0501)

With glad and grateful hearts, we affirm these core values in our worship, work, and witness together in gatherings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.):

- That the common life of the whole church, as evidenced in our meetings, will reflect the mind of Christ, demonstrating consolation, spiritual sharing, compassion and sympathy, and doing nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regarding others as better than ourselves. We will be in full accord and strive to model the faithful, obedient, humble, and self-emptying witness of Jesus Christ.
- That our engagement with one another in the ministry of the gathered church will reflect the transforming love of God, enabling us to discern God's will together. We will use our gifts on behalf of one another and the world, giving glory to God. We will love genuinely and hold fast to all that is good. We will rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, and persevere in prayer. We will live in harmony with one another and overcome evil with good.
- These values will enable us
 - to engage with one another in love, humility, grace, and servant discipleship, as the council of the whole church;
 - to encourage and increase collaboration within and among all councils of the church;

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- to participate in discussion, deliberation, and discernment in ways that are fair and honest and open;
- to focus each meeting of the General Assembly to encourage the full and prayerful participation of those seeking the mind of Christ for the whole church.

We acknowledge these core characteristics of gatherings of the General Assembly:

- Affirming the Presbyterian distinctives that God is sovereign and God alone is Lord of the conscience;
- Encountering and learning from Presbyterians and many others from across the United States and around the world;
- Gathering again with old friends in the family reunion that is General Assembly;
- Creating and expanding generative relationships with fellow Christians;
- Learning from individuals who are quite different from one another;
- Witnessing with joy and thanksgiving the emergence of new leaders for the church;
- Experiencing an intentional, faithful process for discernment and decision making;
- Experiencing God's presence through worship, devotions, hallway prayers, and Christ-centered conversations;
- Hoping and yearning together that our mutual witness will point to the reign of God;
- Demonstrating the church is not focused on any one cause or individual;
- Growing in our understanding of Christ and the church;
- Meeting sisters and brothers in Christ who represent a particular perspective and who listen and share with care and respect;
- Making decisions through contemplation, prayer, and heartfelt sharing;
- Continuing a history and heritage together since 1789.

We demonstrate and sustain our core values through these central commitments.

- *Reflect the Body and Seek the Mind of Christ*
In all things, the General Assembly reflects the body of Christ and seeks the mind of Christ through worship, prayer, discernment, and action.
- *A Broad Context for Christ's Broad World*
The General Assembly provides a helpful, faithful context for understanding the beauty and diversity of the body of Christ in the world.
- *Expansive and Spiritual Deliberation*
The General Assembly embraces an easily understood and accessible process that creates opportunities for questions, prayer, and God's unexpected movement, rather than hurrying to yes/no votes.
- *Order and Flexibility*
The General Assembly deliberates with fairness, attention to process, order, and the encouragement of minority voices, while creating space for decision making grounded in discernment and dialogue and for the emergence of new leadership.
- *Reunion and Affirmation*
The General Assembly encourages the best of our Presbyterian tradition and friendships new and old.
- *Faithful Stewardship*

The General Assembly demonstrates faithful stewardship of human and financial resources.

STANDING RULES FOR MEETINGS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY



Sources of Business for the Meeting

1. **Papers in General**
 - a. Papers to Be Considered
 - b. Received Less Than 60 Days Prior to General Assembly
 - c. Translations
2. **Reports of Entities, Commissions, and Committees**
 - a. Reports Deadline
 - b. Budget Consultation
 - c. Appropriate Background Information
 - d. Report Length
 - e. Report with Recommendations
3. **Overtures**
 - a. Definition
 - b. Concurrences
 - c. Writing Overtures
 - d. Submitting Overtures
 - e. Overture Advocate
4. **Entity and Synod Minutes**
 - a. Submit for Review
 - b. Review Process
5. **Presbytery Reports**
6. **Commissioners' Resolutions**
 - a. Who May Propose
 - b. Deadline
 - c. Existing General Assembly Policy
 - d. May Not Amend *Book of Order*
 - e. Already Before Assembly
 - f. Same Issues as Previous Assembly
 - g. Referral
 - h. Referral Declined
7. **Communications and Resource Material**
 - a. Provide Comment or Advice
 - b. Forty-five Day Deadline
 - c. Resource Materials
 - d. Advice and Counsel Memoranda
8. **Advisory Committee on the Constitution Report**
 - a. Report
 - b. Presented Directly to General Assembly

1. Papers in General
Papers to Be Considered

a. The General Assembly shall consider only those papers delivered to the Stated Clerk in compliance with Standing Rule A. Ordinarily, such papers shall have been forwarded to the Stated Clerk postmarked, or electronically delivered, no later than sixty days prior to the convening of the General Assembly.

Received Less Than 60 Days Prior to General Assembly

b. All papers intended for consideration by the General Assembly that are forwarded to the Stated Clerk and postmarked less than sixty days, but no later than forty-five days prior to the convening of the General Assembly, shall be reviewed by the Stated Clerk, who shall determine whether or not to refer them to the Assembly Committee on Business Referral. The Stated Clerk shall report to the committee regarding those papers not referred.

Translations

c. It is the responsibility of the Stated Clerk to distribute the business of the assembly, with translations as appropriate, in a manner that allows the church to carefully discern the work of the assembly.

2. Reports of Entities, Commissions, and Committees

Reports Deadline

a. All reports from entities, commissions, and committees of the General Assembly shall be delivered to the Stated Clerk on or before 120 days prior to the convening of the General Assembly. The Stated Clerk shall publish these reports (print or electronic) and distribute them so that they shall reach the commissioners thirty days before the convening of the General Assembly.

Budget Consultation

b. An entity, commission, or committee submitting a report with a recommendation that affects the work or budget of another entity(ies) shall submit evidence that a consultation has been held with the affected entity(ies).

Appropriate Back- ground Information

c. Committees, agencies, or corporations presenting reports shall provide the appropriate background information necessary to interpret or understand the recommendations or responses to referrals to the members of the General Assembly committees to which the business is referred. Any and all documents or publications referred to in these reports that require approval by the assembly for publication and distribution to the church, including but not limited to curriculum, study papers/guides, position papers, and program resources, shall be made available to commissioners at the time the reports are published.

Report Length

d. All reports shall be limited to five thousand words except the report of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the length of which shall be determined by the Stated Clerk and the Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. A request for an exception to the length of a report, up to ten thousand words, shall be submitted to the Stated Clerk no later than forty-five days prior to the deadline for the submission of the report and shall include the anticipated length of the report. The Stated Clerk may assess a fee of the entity or committee whose report exceeds five thousand words for the costs incurred in translating, printing and distributing the excess pages. Payment of the fee shall be submitted to the treasurer of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation. If the Stated Clerk and the representatives of any body are unable to agree, the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall determine the length of the report.

Reports with Rec- ommendations

e. All reports that bring recommendations shall use the following form:

The [name of agency, commission, or committee] requests the [# of the assembly] General Assembly [year] of the PC(USA) to [state the specific action or actions the General Assembly is being asked to take].

To this shall be appended a rationale, stating the reasons for submitting the requests and/or the report of the entity, commission, or committee.

3. Overtures

Definition

a. Overtures are items of business that have been approved by a presbytery (with concurrence of another presbytery) or a synod and shall request the General Assembly to take a particular action, or approve or endorse a particular statement or resolution. (See *Book of Order*, G-3.0302d.)

Concurrences

b. Concurrences are items of business that have been approved by a presbytery that recommend an action identical to that in an overture already received for that assembly. The first concurrence received by the Stated Clerk, fulfilling *Book of Order*, G-3.0302d, must be submitted by the deadlines appropriate for the overture and entitles the submitting presbytery to an overture advocate. Subsequent concurrences must meet the forty-five-day rule for business.

Writing Overtures

c. The stated clerk of a presbytery or synod considering an overture to the General Assembly shall:

(1) Examine the most recently published *Minutes of the General Assembly* to determine if a similar overture has already been passed.

(2) Consult with the Office of the General Assembly to determine whether the desired action has been voted by any previous General Assembly.

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(3) Consult with the Office of the General Assembly to determine whether a similar overture has already been proposed in order that the presbytery or synod may concur with the existing overture.

(4) Draft the overture in the following form:

“The Presbytery of _____ overtures the [# of the assembly] General Assembly [(year)] of the PC(USA) to [state the specific action the General Assembly is asked to take].”

To this shall be appended a rationale, stating the reasons for submitting the overture.

Submitting Overtures

d. Submitting Overtures

(1) Overtures proposing an amendment to the Constitution or requiring an interpretation by the General Assembly of the *Book of Order* (see *Book of Order*, G-6.04a and G-6.02) must be delivered in writing to the Stated Clerk postmarked no later than 120 days prior to the convening of the General Assembly, and shall be promptly referred to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (see *Book of Order*, G-6.02 and G-6.04).

(2) All overtures that have financial implications for current or future years' budgets must be delivered in writing to the Stated Clerk postmarked no later than sixty days prior to the convening of the General Assembly. Overtures with financial implications not received within the designated time limit shall not be considered, but shall be returned to the originating council.

(3) All other overtures intended for consideration by the General Assembly shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk, postmarked no later than forty-five days before the convening of the General Assembly.

(4) Overtures not received within the designated time limits shall not be considered, but shall be returned to the originating council for reconsideration.

(5) Presbyteries or synods submitting overtures with a recommendation(s) that affects the work or budget of a General Assembly entity(ies) shall submit evidence that the affected entity(ies) has (have) been consulted. If such evidence is not submitted, the Stated Clerk shall recommend that the overture be received and referred to a future session of the General Assembly so that consultation may take place.

e. Overtures that do not propose constitutional amendment or interpretation, and that are postmarked at least sixty days prior to the convening of the General Assembly, shall be published (print or electronic) in the reports distributed by the Stated Clerk. Overtures received in the same manner, postmarked no later than forty-five days prior to the convening of the General Assembly, shall be distributed to the commissioners before the convening of the General Assembly.

Overture Advocate

f. Overture Advocate

Each presbytery or synod that submits an overture shall notify the Stated Clerk of the name of an overture advocate *who* shall be available to provide information on the background and intent of the overture to any assembly committee to which the overture may be referred. Each council who submits an overture or concurrence may appoint only one overture advocate. (See Standing Rule E.2.g.)

4. Entity and Synod Minutes

Submit for Review

a. Entities and synods required to submit minutes for review by the General Assembly shall submit such minutes on a calendar year basis so as to present minutes of all meetings for the calendar year (from January 1 through December 31) preceding the year in which is held the session of the General Assembly to which such minutes are submitted. The minutes shall contain the attestation that they have been approved by the entity or synod submitting them in the manner regularly in use within that body.

Review Process b. The assembly committee to which it is assigned is authorized to approve minutes of the agencies and entities without referral to plenary unless discrepancies occur that call for reporting to the assembly. Minutes of General Assembly agencies will be reviewed in accordance with the “Guidelines for Preparation of Minutes of Agencies” as printed in the *Manual of the General Assembly*. Minutes of the synods will be reviewed in accordance with “Guidelines for Reviewing Synod Records” as printed in the *Manual of the General Assembly*.

5. Presbytery Reports

Each presbytery shall act upon all papers sent to the presbytery to be voted upon in ample time to permit the stated clerk of the presbytery to transmit the results to the Stated Clerk so that they are received no later than one year following the adjournment of the assembly responsible for the proposed amendments

6. Commissioners’ Resolutions

Who May Propose a. An item of new business, in the form of a commissioners’ resolution, must be signed by commissioners representing at least one other presbytery. Such resolutions must be delivered in writing to the Stated Clerk or the Stated Clerk’s designee. No commissioner may sign more than two such resolutions.

Deadline b. The Stated Clerk shall determine and announce at the first meeting at which business is conducted the deadline for receipt of commissioners’ resolutions. The deadline shall not be earlier than twenty-four hours after the assembly has convened.

Existing GA Policies c. In the preparation of a resolution, commissioners are urged to be aware of existing General Assembly policies relevant to their proposal and, where appropriate, to make reference to these policies.

May Not Amend Book of Order d. Commissioners’ resolutions shall not contain business that requires an amendment to or interpretation of the Constitution (see *Book of Order*, G-6.04a).

Already Before Assembly e. The Stated Clerk shall not transmit as new business any resolution that deals with matters of business already before the General Assembly, nor transmit any resolution whose purpose can be achieved by the regular process of amendment and debate.

Same Issues as Previous Assembly f. Should the commissioners’ resolution deal with substantially the same issue considered by one of the two previous sessions of the General Assembly, the Stated Clerk shall recommend that the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures take one of the following actions on the commissioners’ resolution: “refer to a subsequent assembly,” “decline for consideration,” or “take no action.”

Referral g. If the proposed resolution does deal with new business, the Stated Clerk shall transmit it to the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures with a recommendation for its referral.

Referral Declined h. The Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures may decline to refer proposed items of new business if it decides that the matters proposed are already before the assembly or that the purpose of the proposals can be reached by the process of amendment and debate. Proposed items of business not referred, whether declined by the Stated Clerk or the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures, shall be identified in the first report of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures distributed to commissioners after the period docketed for committee meetings, with a brief description of the content and a statement of the reasons for declining the proposed business. Twenty-five percent of commissioners present and voting is required to overturn action of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures to decline, take no action, or refer a commissioners’ resolution to a subsequent assembly. Should the assembly overturn a Bills and Overtures decision not to refer an item of business, the assembly committee who would ordinarily receive this item will be reconvened for the purpose of considering the business. If a commissioners’ resolution affects a substantial change in an existing social witness policy, the Stated Clerk should recommend to the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures that it be referred to the next General Assembly.

7. Communications and Resource Material

Provide Comment or Advice

a. Communications and resource material provide comment or advice on business already under consideration by the assembly and shall neither contain nor constitute business to be considered by the assembly. Communications may be directed to the General Assembly

(1) by entities of the General Assembly that desire to comment on a single item of business coming before the General Assembly from any source other than their own entity, but which do not introduce new business,

(2) by organizations in which the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) holds membership, and

(3) by other denominations in correspondence with the General Assembly.

Forty-five Day Deadline

b. All communications intended for consideration by the General Assembly shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk, postmarked no later than forty-five days before the convening of the General Assembly.

Resource Materials

c. Resource material (except for previously published books), including advice and counsel memoranda from advocacy and advisory committees, shall be prepared as necessary by entities of the General Assembly and shall not exceed 1,000 words on each item of business referred. This material shall be submitted to the Stated Clerk, postmarked no later than forty-five days before the convening of the assembly meeting, who shall then publish (print or electronic) and distribute the material to all commissioners prior to the assembly.

Advice and Counsel Mem- oranda

d. Advice and counsel memoranda are resources prepared by the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC), and the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns for the purpose of providing information about existing policy, current work on specific topics, recent developments, and other factors useful to commissioners as they consider issues before the assembly.

8. Advisory Committee on the Constitution Report

Report

a. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution shall report to the General Assembly its findings along with its recommendations on all questions requiring an interpretation by the General Assembly of the *Book of Order*, including proposals for constitutional change. The General Assembly shall vote on the recommendations, and may amend or decline to approve them (*Book of Order*, G-6.02). The Advisory Committee on the Constitution shall report any editorial changes made to the *Book of Order* since its last report to the General Assembly.

Presented Directly to General Assembly

b. The report of the committee shall be presented directly to the General Assembly. The General Assembly may take action on the recommendations immediately, or it may refer them to an assembly committee for consideration by that committee and report to the General Assembly for action later during the same session of the General Assembly.



Commissioners, Delegates, and Other Participants at the Meeting

1. **Commissioners**
 - a. Election
 - b. List Delivered by 180 Day Deadline
 - c. Able to Attend
 - d. Entitlements, Expenses
 - e. Newly Created Presbytery's Commissioners
 - f. Alternates
2. **Advisory Delegates**
 - a. Definition
 - b. Categories
 - c. Voting Privileges
 - d. Young Adult Advisory Delegates
 - e. Theological Student Advisory Delegates
 - f. Missionary Advisory Delegates
 - g. Ecumenical Advisory Delegates
3. **Corresponding Members**
 - a. Definition
 - b. Entitled to Speak, Not Vote
4. **Advisory Committee on the Constitution**
5. **Other Participants**
 - a. Special Guests
 - b. Assembly Committee Moderators
 - c. Ecumenical Representatives
 - d. Resource Persons
 - e. Presbytery Staff
 - f. Ecumenical Visitors
 - g. Interfaith Representatives
6. **List of Participants**

1. Commissioners

Election

a. Each presbytery shall elect commissioners to the General Assembly in accordance with *Book of Order*, G-3.0501. The number of commissioners attending General Assembly will be based on the number of active members, including resident clergy members of presbytery. The figures for active members will be taken from the information recorded in *Minutes of the General Assembly*, Part II, *Statistics* of the year in which per capita apportionment is assessed for the year in which General Assembly meets.

List Delivered by 180 Day Deadline

b. Presbyteries shall elect commissioners in sufficient time to permit the list of commissioners to be delivered to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly 180 days prior to the convening of the session of the General Assembly to which they are commissioned.

Able to Attend

c. Ministers of the Word and Sacrament and ruling elders considered for election as commissioners must be able to be in attendance for the duration of the General Assembly.

Entitlements, Expenses

d. Commissioners shall be entitled to speak under the rules, and to vote and present motions in meetings of the General Assembly and of assembly committees to which they are assigned. Commissioners shall be reimbursed for approved expenses.

Newly Created Presbytery's Commissioners

e. In the case of a newly created presbytery, the presbytery shall be entitled to elect commissioners to the General Assembly if the qualifying enrollment of ministers of the Word and

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Sacrament and congregations in that presbytery shall have been completed by December 31 of the year preceding the assembly meeting (see *Book of Order*, G-3.0501).

Alternates

f. Presbyteries may elect alternates in number up to, but not exceeding, the number of commissioners to which the presbytery may be entitled. Such alternates shall be seated with other visitors to the assembly.

2. Advisory Delegates

Definition

a. Advisory delegates are persons who are active members in one of the constituent churches or councils of the General Assembly (or, in the case of ecumenical advisory delegates, of a denomination of Christians designated by the General Assembly) who are selected to attend the meeting of the General Assembly in an advisory role so that the assembly may be assured of hearing and taking cognizance of their special viewpoints.

Categories

b. There shall be four categories of advisory delegates: young adult, theological student; missionary, and ecumenical. When the ratio of advisory delegates to commissioners exceeds one to three, the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall be authorized to make changes to the Standing Rules to create a ratio of less than one to three. The expenses of each advisory delegate shall be paid by the General Assembly (see Standing Rule I.3.) on the same basis as the expenses of commissioners (see Standing Rule B.2.f.(2) below for exception).

Voting

Privileges

c. Advisory delegates shall be assigned to assembly committees as voting members and shall have the privilege of the floor of the General Assembly without vote. Only voting members shall have the privilege of proposing or seconding a motion. When certain issues come before a plenary session of the General Assembly, the advisory delegates may be polled prior to the vote of commissioners to determine their advice.

Young Adult Advisory Delegates

d. Young Adult Advisory Delegates

(1) Each presbytery shall appoint an active member of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), who shall be between the ages of seventeen and twenty-three years on the date the General Assembly convenes, to be a young adult advisory delegate.

(2) Presbyteries shall elect young adult advisory delegates in sufficient time to permit the list of advisory delegates to be delivered to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly 180 days prior to the convening of the session of the General Assembly to which they are elected.

Theological Student Advisory Delegate

e. Theological Student Advisory Delegates

There shall be a delegation of theological student advisory delegates each year: two from each of the theological institutions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); one from each of the theological institutions in a covenant relationship with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); and one each from three selected other theological seminaries. The selection process for these delegates is as follows:

(1) Each theological institution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall nominate three students who, at the time of the General Assembly, will have at least one year of study remaining in their degree program. Two of these students shall be designated by the institution as delegates and the other student shall be designated as the alternate. Such a student must be either an inquirer or a candidate in preparation for ministry under care of a presbytery, or a student nominated by the Presbyterian School of Christian Education. These nominations shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly 180 days prior to the convening of the session of the General Assembly to which they are elected, who shall transmit the names of the two students to be delegates to the presbytery of jurisdiction for election. The presbyteries shall then certify the election to the Stated Clerk when completed.

(2) Each theological institution in covenant relationship with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall nominate two students who, at the time of the General Assembly, will have at least one year of study remaining in their degree program. One of these students shall be designated by the institution as the delegate and the other student as the alternate. Such a student must be either an inquirer or a candidate in preparation for ministry under care of a presbytery. These

nominations shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly 180 days prior to the convening of the session of the General Assembly to which they are elected, who shall transmit the name of the delegate to the presbytery of jurisdiction for election. The presbyteries shall then certify the election to the Stated Clerk when completed.

(3) All non-Presbyterian theological schools represented by corresponding members on the Committee on Theological Education and one additional non-Presbyterian theological seminary shall be asked to nominate one theological student advisory delegate and one alternate. The additional non-Presbyterian seminary shall be chosen on a rotating basis, descending alphabetically, from those that have at least twelve Presbyterian enrollees (either inquirers or candidates under the care of a presbytery) as of October 1 in the year preceding the assembly. These nominations shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly 180 days prior to the convening of the session of the General Assembly to which they are elected, who shall transmit the name of the delegate to the presbytery of jurisdiction for election. The presbyteries shall then certify the election to the Stated Clerk when completed.

(4) Nominated students shall have at least one more year of study following the assembly remaining in their degree program. The Stated Clerk shall forward the name of the nominated students to the presbyteries of jurisdiction for election and confirmation.

**Missionary
Advisory
Delegates**

f. Missionary Advisory Delegates

(1) There shall be eight missionary advisory delegates who shall be chosen by the Worldwide Ministries Division from persons who are members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and mission personnel assigned by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in another country in which this church is engaged in mission. To the degree possible, the selection shall provide a global geographical representation with no two delegates representing the same country or geographical area and rotating the geographical representation. The Worldwide Ministries Division shall notify the Stated Clerk at the time these persons are named.

(2) The expenses to the General Assembly of each missionary advisory delegate shall include transportation only from the point of entry or domicile of the delegate in the United States and return.

**Ecumenical
Advisory
Delegates**

g. Ecumenical Advisory Delegates

There shall be up to fifteen ecumenical advisory delegates. Ten of these delegates shall be from churches outside of the United States. No more than five shall be from member churches of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. Ecumenical advisory delegates shall be selected by the highest ecclesiastical authorities of their churches, in response to the invitation of a previous General Assembly. The assembly shall extend such invitations at the recommendation of the Presbyterian Mission Agency upon nomination by the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations.

3. Corresponding Members

Definition

a. The following persons shall be corresponding members: Moderators of earlier General Assemblies; the Stated Clerk, Associate and Assistant Stated Clerks, and other members of the staff of the Office of the General Assembly as designated by the Stated Clerk; the members of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly; the members of the PMAB Coordinating Committee and staff of the Presbyterian Mission Agency designated by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, and of the ministry areas and related entities designated by the council; the chair (or co-chairs) of the Board of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, and other persons designated by the Board; all members of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution; the executives or, when there is no executive, the stated clerks of synods; one person designated by each entity reporting directly to the General Assembly, including permanent, special, and advisory committees (additional persons may be designated by such bodies if authorized by the Moderator of the preceding General Assembly in consultation with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly); the moderator of Presbyterian Women in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc. or her designee; and the presidents (or their designee) of the theological institutions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and seminaries related by covenant agreement.

**Entitled to
Speak, Not Vote**

b. Corresponding members shall be entitled to speak, under the rules, in meetings of the General Assembly and of assembly committees on matters related to the work of the body represented, but they may neither vote nor present motions.

4. Advisory Committee on the Constitution

During the General Assembly, three or more members of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution [this committee] shall be present at the session of the General Assembly to advise the General Assembly and its Moderator on constitutional matters.

5. Other Participants

Special Guests

a. The assembly, out of honor, courtesy, recognition, and the need for information and resource material, may recognize other persons as guests or observers. As such, they may be invited by the General Assembly to speak to the assembly for the purpose of conveying greetings or messages, or bringing enlightenment or information germane to the decision-making process. An assembly committee may extend a similar invitation at its own meeting.

Assembly Committee Moderators

b. When the moderator of an assembly committee is not a commissioner to the current assembly (Standing Rules C.1.c), they shall have voice in committee and voice in plenary on business from their committee.

**Ecumenical
Representatives**

c. Ecumenical representatives are individuals sent at the initiative of another church to be the official representative of that church. The Stated Clerk may announce to member churches of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches the date and place of the next meeting of the General Assembly. When officially certified through appropriate ecclesiastical channels at least forty-five days prior to the convening of the General Assembly, these persons shall be welcomed as guests of the General Assembly and introduced to the council through the report of the assembly committee addressing ecumenism. The assembly may assume the expense and housing of such guests on the same basis as the expense of commissioners, but shall not reimburse any travel expenses to the assembly site.

**Resource
Persons**

d. The assembly may welcome persons invited by the Presbyterian Mission Agency or another entity of the General Assembly for the purpose of establishing or affirming particular ecumenical, mission, or program relationships, or assisting the entity in the presentation of particular items of business. Any expense reimbursement shall be the responsibility of the inviting entity.

Presbytery Staff

e. The presbytery's executive staff person (or designee) and the presbytery's stated clerk shall be supplied with all reports and materials related to the General Assembly, but shall not be entitled to speak in plenary meetings or in meetings of assembly committees unless called upon by a moderator to provide information.

**Ecumenical
Visitors**

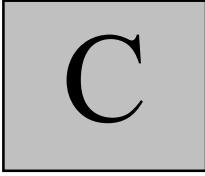
f. Ecumenical visitors are individuals attending a session of the General Assembly at their own initiative. These persons are welcomed to the assembly as unofficial visitors. The assembly shall assume no expenses for these ecumenical visitors.

**Interfaith
Representatives**

g. Interfaith Representatives↓Three observers of other faiths or religious traditions, who shall be representatives chosen by recognized religious bodies of non-Christian religious traditions and/or faith communities shall be present at the assembly at the invitation of the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations. The interfaith representatives shall be present with the church in its deliberations, and to speak to the assembly for the purpose of conveying greetings or messages, or bringing information germane to the decision-making process. The assembly may assume the expense of housing and on the same basis as the expense of commissioners, but shall not reimburse any travel expenses to the assembly site.

6. List of Participants

Upon request, the Stated Clerk shall make available the list of participants registered for a session of the General Assembly to entities of the General Assembly, councils of the denomination, educational institutions, ministers of the Word and Sacrament, ruling elders, and independent organizations composed primarily of members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). A fee will be charged for lists or mailing labels to cover the costs incurred for printing, postage, and handling.



Formation of Committees and Referral of Business

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| <p>1. Assembly Committee Structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Number and Designation of Assembly b. Committee Assistants c. Assembly Committee Moderator and Vice Moderator d. Assembly Committee on Business Referral e. Orientation | <p>3. Referring Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Recommendation for Referral of Business b. General Assembly Action on Referrals c. How Business Is Referred d. Referral Considered by One Committee e. Referring Overtures to Committees |
| <p>2. Assigning Commissioners to Assembly Committees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Committee Assignments b. Notification of Assignment c. Assignment List Provided d. Random Selection Process | <p>4. Tentative Docket</p> |

1. Assembly Committee Structure

a. The Stated Clerk shall propose the number and designation of assembly committees to the General Assembly, which shall include a Committee on Mid Councils. The Stated Clerk shall present the proposed committee structure to the General Assembly for consideration and ratification at the first assembly meeting at which business is transacted. In making these proposals, the Stated Clerk shall consult with the appropriate General Assembly entity or entities, and may consult with other persons.

b. The Stated Clerk shall propose to the General Assembly for appointment the names of persons to serve as committee assistants for the duration of the General Assembly. The Stated Clerk shall consult with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly before recommending persons to serve as committee assistants. Persons proposed shall not be commissioners to the General Assembly or staff members of entities of the General Assembly or any person who is a member of the Presbyterian Mission Agency or any person who is a member of any other entity of the General Assembly. A committee assistant shall be appointed to provide staff services to each assembly committee. The appointments shall be made in accordance with *Book of Order*, F-1.0401.

c. The Moderator of the General Assembly shall appoint a moderator and a vice moderator to each committee. The moderator positions are filled by commissioners to the upcoming General Assembly or may be from an assembly within the last six years. All vice moderator positions shall be filled by commissioners to the upcoming General Assembly. Final appointment shall be made only after consultation with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, and then also with representatives of the General Assembly Committee on Representation regarding the inclusivity mandated in the *Book of Order*, F-1.0403 and G-3.0103. The moderators of at least one-half of the assembly committees, including any committees dealing with finance and budgets, shall be ruling elders. The moderators of at least one-half of the assembly committees should be women. The moderators of at least two-thirds of the assembly committees shall be current commissioners. No more than one person from

Number and Designation of Assembly Committees

Committee Assistants

Assembly Committee Moderator and Vice Moderator

STANDING RULES

any one presbytery may be appointed to serve as a moderator. All synods shall be equitably represented.

Assembly Committee on Business Referral

d. The moderators and vice moderators of the assembly committees, as a group, shall function as the Assembly Committee on Business Referral. The moderator and vice moderator of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures shall function as the moderator and vice moderator of this committee as well. This committee shall report to the assembly for its action at the first meeting of the General Assembly for the transaction of business.

Orientation

e. The Stated Clerk shall conduct an orientation for moderators, vice moderators, and committee assistants of assembly committees no less than three weeks prior to the convening of the General Assembly. The orientation shall include information regarding business likely to be referred to each committee; suggested procedures for dealing with business referred to committees, especially the use of *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*; utilization of available resources, both persons and materials; and preparation and presentation of assembly committee reports. The Stated Clerk, following consultation with the Presbyterian Mission Agency, may invite persons designated by the council as General Assembly resource coordinators to participate in the orientation. During this orientation, the Assembly Committee on Business Referral shall meet and carry out the duties given it by these rules. The Assembly Committee on Business Referral shall also meet, if necessary, just prior to the convening of the assembly and its function shall end at the convening of the assembly.

2. Assigning Commissioners to Assembly Committees

Committee Assignments

a. Forty-five days before the convening of the General Assembly, the Stated Clerk shall assign each commissioner and advisory delegate to one of the assembly committees by the random selection process described in this standing rule.

Notification of Assignment

b. No later than thirty days before the convening of the assembly, commissioners shall receive the number and designation of committees. At the same time that the number and designation of committees is communicated, the Stated Clerk shall notify each person of the assignment, the time of their first meeting, and the necessity to confirm appropriate housing and travel arrangements.

Assignment List Provided

c. The Stated Clerk shall provide a list of the assignments to those who need it to facilitate the work of the General Assembly.

Random Selection Process

d. Commissioners and advisory delegates shall be assigned to assembly committees by random selection as follows:

(1) The Stated Clerk shall divide the presbyteries into six regional districts. Each district shall be composed of one or more presbyteries so arranged that, insofar as possible, the presbyteries in the district have contiguous boundaries and the numbers of commissioners in the several districts are approximately equal. Within each district the presbyteries shall be arranged alphabetically. The commissioners from each presbytery shall be listed alphabetically in two parallel lists: the first containing the names of the ministers of the Word and Sacrament; the second, the ruling elders. In those cases where the presbytery has not designated commissioners, the position shall be listed as vacant so that the name may be inserted later when the Stated Clerk is notified. The names of moderators and vice moderators of assembly committees shall be removed from the list and the names below them shall be moved up to fill the vacated positions. The ministers of the Word and Sacrament commissioners and vacant positions for minister of the Word and Sacrament commissioners shall be numbered in sequence. The list of ruling elder commissioners in each district shall be rotated downward so that no ruling elder commissioner is opposite a minister of the Word and Sacrament commissioner from the same presbytery. Separate lists of groups identified in *Book of Order*, F-1.0403, shall be prepared, insofar as it may be practical, to assure the most equitable distribution of such commissioners to the various committees in accordance with *Book of Order*, F-1.0403.

STANDING RULES

(2) The Stated Clerk shall list the young adult advisory delegates in one list arranged in the alphabetical order of the presbyteries that designated the delegates. In any case where the presbytery has not designated a young adult advisory delegate, the position shall be listed as vacant so that the name may be inserted later when the Stated Clerk is notified.

(3) The Moderator shall pick by lot a number from one to ten. This number shall identify the number of the name in the first column of names in each district in which the assignment will begin. It will also identify the number of the young adult advisory delegates in which assignment will begin.

(4) The Moderator shall then pick by lot a second number equal from one to the number equaling the total number of committees. This number shall identify the assembly committee in the order in which the committees are arranged in the standing rules to which the first assignment of members shall be made.

(5) The assignment of members of the assembly committees shall then proceed in sequence. When initial assignments have been made to all committees in sequence so that the committees with the fewest number of commissioners are full, additional assignment shall be made to the other committees in the same manner, until all commissioners and young adult advisory delegates have been assigned to committees.

(6) The Stated Clerk shall assign missionary advisory delegates and ecumenical advisory delegates to assembly committees in consultation with those delegates. Ordinarily not more than two persons in each of these categories shall be assigned to any one assembly committee.

(7) Theological student advisory delegates will be assigned to committees at the same time and in the same way as are commissioners to ensure their full participation and attendance.

(8) Names of commissioners and advisory delegates received after these assignments have been made shall be inserted in the appropriate position in the original list and assigned to the committee to which that position was assigned.

3. Referring Business

Recommendation for Referral of Business

a. The Stated Clerk shall submit to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly a recommendation for the referral of all items of business coming before the General Assembly.

General Assembly Action on Referrals

b. After making any necessary changes, this committee shall present the prepared referrals to the Assembly Committee on Business Referral so that it may recommend referrals to the first meeting of the General Assembly for the transaction of business. Ordinarily, this committee shall recommend referrals to the General Assembly for its action. When the General Assembly is not scheduled to meet in time to act on its recommendation, the committee may refer business. Such referrals shall be reported to the General Assembly at its next business meeting.

How Business Is Referred

c. Items of business to be considered by the General Assembly shall be referred in one of the following ways:

(1) for consideration by an assembly committee and recommendation for action by the General Assembly;

(2) for consideration and action by an assembly committee with a report of the action to the General Assembly;

(3) for consideration by the General Assembly through its inclusion in a consent agenda when the committee has approved a motion by 75 percent or more;

(4) for consideration by the General Assembly in a plenary business session.

**Referral
Considered by
One Committee**

d. Each item of business referred to a committee shall ordinarily be considered by only one assembly committee, but in no case should there be more than one committee making a recommendation on an item of business. Business of a related nature shall be assigned to a single committee insofar as possible.

**Referring
Overtures to
Committees**

e. The Stated Clerk shall present such items of business to the Assembly Committee on Business Referral, along with a recommendation for their referral. In the event that the presbytery or synod disagrees with the referral recommendation, this procedure shall be followed: The presbytery or synod shall be entitled to submit a written statement regarding the background and intent of the overture at the time the overture is initially being considered for referral by the Assembly Committee on Business Referral. If, after that committee makes its recommendation, the presbytery or synod still disagrees with the referral recommendation, the presbytery or synod shall notify the Stated Clerk, in writing, of its disagreement. The overture advocate will then be entitled to speak to the background and intent of the overture at a special meeting of the Assembly Committee on Business Referral that shall be held no more than twenty-four (24) hours prior to the convening of the assembly.

4. Tentative Docket

a. The Stated Clerk shall submit to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly a tentative docket. After making any necessary adjustments, this committee shall present a proposed docket to the Assembly Committee on Business Referral so that it may recommend the docket to the first meeting of the General Assembly for the transaction of business.

b. The reports and recommendations of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly regarding the initial docket of the General Assembly and referrals of business shall be referred to the Assembly Committee on Business Referral, along with any items of business not included in them (see Standing Rules I.4.b.(3) and I.4.b.(4)). Review of the minutes of the synods pursuant to G-3.0502c and of statement(s) of compliance with decisions of the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission by councils, reported by the Stated Clerk pursuant to IV.B.2.e. of the *Organization for Mission*, shall be assigned to the same assembly committee. Following the convening of the assembly, such matters shall be directed to the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures.



Beginning of the General Assembly Meeting

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|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Registration and Seating <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Registration of Commissioners and Delegates b. Commissioners with Disabilities c. Assigned Seats d. Alternates e. Ecumenical Representatives f. Presbytery Staff Seating g. Access to Commissioner and Advisory Delegate Seating | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Quorum 3. Committee Moderators and Overture Advocates Meeting |
|---|---|

1. Registration and Seating

Registration of Commissioners and Delegates

a. The Stated Clerk shall enroll commissioners and delegates on the opening day of the General Assembly and at such other times as may be necessary. The Stated Clerk shall determine any question that may arise regarding registration of commissioners and delegates. Any complaints regarding such decision shall be received by the Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures.

Commissioners with Disabilities

b. A commissioner certified by his or her presbytery as having a disability warranting assistance shall be entitled to designate a person to function as an assistant without vote during all proceedings of the General Assembly, including executive sessions and committee meetings, in order that the commissioner may fully participate in those proceedings. The expenses of the assistant shall be paid for by the General Assembly on the same basis as expenses of commissioners. The Stated Clerk shall also enroll assistants to commissioners who have been certified by his or her presbytery as having a disability warranting assistance.

Assigned Seats

c. The Stated Clerk shall assign each commissioner, advisory delegate, and corresponding member to a seat in advance of the meeting. They shall occupy the assigned seats during each meeting of the General Assembly at which business may be transacted. An assistant to commissioner who has been certified by his or her presbytery as having a disability warranting assistance shall be assigned a seat adjacent to the commissioner.

Alternates

d. When a principal commissioner is replaced by an alternate prior to or during the course of an assembly session, whether for the remainder of the session or for a period of time during the session, the alternate shall assume that assembly committee position and seat assignment.

Ecumenical Representatives

e. Ecumenical representatives shall be seated on the floor of the assembly in a section clearly designated for such guests.

Presbytery Staff Seating

f. The presbytery's executive staff person (or designee) and the presbytery's stated clerk shall be provided assigned seating in proximity to the area that corresponding members are seated.

**Access to
Commissioner
and Advisory Del-
egate Seating**

g. The only persons who shall be permitted access to the commissioner and advisory delegate seating area during plenary sessions are commissioners, advisory delegates, assistants enrolled by the Stated Clerk to assist commissioners having a disability warranting assistance, the Stated Clerk, Associate and Assistant Stated Clerks, and other staff and assembly assistants who are assigned responsibilities that require access to this area, including assisting at the floor microphones, delivery of official messages to commissioner and advisory delegates, and locating commissioners who are needed on the platform. The Stated Clerk will provide special credentials for the particular staff and assembly assistants who are authorized to enter the commissioner/advisory delegate seating area. Registered presbytery staff may have access to the seating area to contact their commissioners and advisory delegates during breaks in business.

2. Quorum

At the first meeting of the General Assembly for the transaction of business, the Stated Clerk shall recommend to the General Assembly that the roll call of commissioners be established by registration. Alternately, the Stated Clerk may call the roll of commissioners and advisory delegates by calling the names of absentees as they appear on the roll. After any needed corrections have been made, the Stated Clerk shall announce whether or not a quorum is present (see *Book of Order*, G-3.0503). When commissioners and advisory delegates subsequently register, they shall be seated by the General Assembly. A commissioner who has not registered may not be seated and may not vote.

3. Committee Moderators and Overture Advocates Meeting

The Office of the General Assembly shall, on the first business day of the assembly, before committees meet to consider business, organize a forum where assembly committee moderators shall meet with overture advocates to discuss procedures for participation in committee discussion of business related to the overture that they are advocating.



Committee Meetings

- 1. Committee Leadership and Support**
 - a. Moderator and Vice Moderator
 - b. Recorder
 - c. Committee Assistant
- 2. Procedures for Assembly Committee Meetings**
 - a. Open Meetings
 - b. Time of Worship and Prayer
 - c. Parliamentary Procedures
 - d. Use and Preparation of Resources
 - e. Reports of Special Committees
 - f. Privilege to Speak
 - g. Overture Advocates/ Signer of Commissioners' Resolution
 - h. Responsibilities of Overture Advocate
- 3. New Business**
 - a. Consider Only Matters Referred
 - b. Proposing Amendment to Constitution
 - c. Constitutional Matters
 - d. Approval Requirement
 - e. Presentation of
 - f. Referral to Advisory Committee on the Constitution
- 4. Organizational Meeting**
- 5. Public Hearings**
 - a. Schedule
 - b. Time Limits for Presentations
 - c. Hearing Form
- 6. Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures**
 - a. Responsible for Referral of Business
 - b. Coordination Between Committees
 - c. Distribution of Materials
 - d. Requests to Schedule Event
- 7. Reports of Assembly Committees**
 - a. Writing the Report
 - b. Content
 - c. Fiscal Implications
 - d. Identify Entity
 - e. PMA to Determine Entity
 - f. Votes Recorded
 - g. Confer with Entity Affected by Action
 - h. Minority Report

1. Committee Leadership and Support

Moderator and Vice Moderator

a. The moderator presides over the committee's deliberations. The moderator may request the vice moderator or others to preside and to assist in the work of the committee.

Recorder

b. Each committee shall have available to assist in its work a recorder appointed by the Stated Clerk. The recorder shall be appointed from a pool of individuals who will already be attending the General Assembly, including staff members, local volunteers, and others. The recorder shall keep an accurate record of the actions of the committee with the votes on each indicating the number of committee members voting in the affirmative, or negative, or those abstaining; and shall assist in drafting the committee report.

Committee Assistant

c. Each committee shall have available to assist in its work a committee assistant. The committee assistant may address the committee offering suggestions regarding procedure, but shall not participate in its deliberations on any issue before the committee as an advocate of one position or view regarding its action. The committee assistant shall assist the committee in securing desired resources.

2. Procedures for Assembly Committee Meetings

Open Meetings

a. Meetings of assembly committees shall be open to the public (as space permits) provided, however, that the committee may go into executive session at any time in accordance with the Open Meeting Policy printed in the *Manual of the General Assembly*. Ordinarily, the committee assistant will be expected to remain with the committee in executive session.

Time of Worship and Prayer

b. Each meeting of the committee shall include a time of worship and opportunity for prayer.

Parliamentary Procedure

c. Committee meetings shall be conducted in accordance with *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* except when in contradiction to the Constitution of the PC(USA). Prior to a vote, methods of deliberation shall be consistent with the principles of Presbyterian government. (F-3.02 and G-3.0305)

Use and Preparation of Resources

d. Use and Preparation of Resource Material:

(1) Each committee determines the use to be made of the resource material or resource persons available to assembly committees. Each assembly committee determines whether or not to permit the distribution of particular materials to the committee members.

(2) Resource material (except for previously published books or interpretive brochures), including advice and counsel memoranda, that provides background or advice on items of new business, including commissioners' resolutions, shall be prepared as necessary by entities of the General Assembly and shall be as succinct as possible. This material shall be submitted to the assembly committee leadership team prior to presentation to the assembly committee to which the business has been referred. The Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures, with a commitment to equitable presentation of different perspectives, shall distribute this resource material to the full assembly.

Resource material provided for the committee by the appropriate General Assembly entity shall include well-written presentations from the variety of different perspectives on any issue under consideration. These presentations on other perspectives should come from the most articulate and informed proponents of that particular point of view. A report including a summary of the actions taken on this issue by our ecumenical partners and previous General Assemblies shall also be prepared by an appropriate General Assembly entity.

Reports of Special Committees

e. When business has been referred by a previous assembly to a special task force, committee, or commission created for that purpose, the assembly committee receiving that report shall set aside no less than ½ hour (30 minutes) to hear a presentation by the special task force (or committee or commission) giving background on their report. Each committee shall determine if additional time is required for presentation.

Privilege to Speak

f. During the deliberations of the committee, in contrast to public hearings, only the following persons, having been recognized by the moderator, may speak:

- (1) Members of the committee;
- (2) Committee assistant;
- (3) Persons with special expertise, including elected members or staff members of General Assembly entities; when such experts advocating a particular point of view have spoken to the committee, the committee moderator shall offer to the committee the opportunity to hear from experts advocating a different point of view;
- (4) Members of special committees, task forces, commissions created by previous assemblies (see E.2.d and K.1.f), overture advocates, and signers of commissioners' resolutions;
- (5) Persons invited by the committee through a majority vote of the committee; and
- (6) Representatives of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, who may speak to overtures, commissioners' resolutions, or other business on which the Advisory Committee on the Constitution has presented advice or recommendations, or matters that propose amendments to the Constitution, or that affect compatibility with other provisions of the Constitution.

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(7) In the event that business being considered by an assembly committee has been referred to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution for advice, representatives of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution shall be entitled to speak.

(8) The committee moderator provides that the total time allotted to persons, other than members of the committee, who speak for or against a recommendation be equal so far as possible except as outlined in E.2.e.

Overture Advocates/ Signer of Commissioners' Resolution

g. Overture advocates and one signer of each commissioners' resolution shall be responsible for being available at the time selected by any assembly committee considering the matter. The overture advocate or one of the signers of a commissioners' resolution shall be entitled to speak, as an individual (or in cooperation with other overture advocates in a pre-arranged presentation), to the background and intent of the overture or resolution immediately after the motion is made and seconded, placing the overture or resolution on the floor of the committee or subcommittee.

Responsibilities of Overture Ad- vocate

h. Overture advocates who have been designated by their presbytery or synod to speak to the response from a General Assembly entity to a referral of an overture shall be responsible for being available at the time selected by the assembly committee considering the response. The overture advocate shall be entitled to speak to the background and intent of the overture or as asked for clarification by the committee concerning the original intent of the overture.

i. A representative of any agency affected by an overture or commissioners' resolution, either with respect to the use of its financial resources or its mission priorities, shall be entitled to speak to the item of business immediately after the presenter of the overture or the commissioners' resolution, and shall be allocated reasonable time to speak.

j. The financial effect of each recommendation on any agency or entity of the denomination that would be affected by the action shall be clearly presented at the time that an overture or commissioners' resolution is considered by the committee.

3. New Business

Consider Only Matters Referred

a. Each assembly committee shall consider only matters referred to it by the General Assembly. No assembly committee may initiate new business except as it relates to the business of the particular assembly committee.

Proposing Amendment to Constitution

b. New business initiated in an assembly committee proposing an amendment to the Constitution or requiring an interpretation of the Constitution by the General Assembly (*Book of Order*, G-6.04b and G-6.02) shall be referred to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, which shall report its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly.

Constitutional Matters

c. Any other new business initiated in an assembly committee that touches upon constitutional matters shall be communicated in writing to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution and the Stated Clerk. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution shall consider each matter so referred and report its findings and recommendations, which may include proposals for constitutional change, to the assembly committee and the Stated Clerk. The assembly committee shall vote on the recommendations and may amend or decline to approve them. The advice of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution on these matters shall be transmitted to the General Assembly with the report of the assembly committee.

Approval Requirement

d. Recommendations and reports to the assembly regarding such new business must be approved in assembly committees by three-fourths of the committee members voting on the matter.

Presentation of

e. New business, other than that described in this standing rule, must be presented in accordance with Standing Rule A.8.

Referral to Advisory Com- mittee on the Constitution

f. New business initiated in an assembly committee proposing an amendment to the Constitution (*Book of Order*, G-6.04) or requiring an interpretation of the Constitution by the General Assembly (*Book of Order*, G-6.02) shall be referred to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, which shall report its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly. Any other new business initiated in an assembly committee that touches upon constitutional matters shall be communicated in writing to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution and the Stated Clerk. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution shall consider each matter referred and report its findings and recommendations

STANDING RULES

(which may include proposals for constitutional change) to the assembly committee and the Stated Clerk. The advice of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution on these matters shall be transmitted to the General Assembly with the report of the assembly committee.

4. Organizational Meeting

a. Ordinarily, the initial meeting of each assembly committee is an organizational meeting in private session for up to one hour for the purpose of developing intragroup dynamics and determining procedural matters, such as approval of the committee's agenda and consideration of the style in which the committee plans to operate.

b. During this executive session, business items before the committee shall not be discussed or acted upon.

5. Public Hearings

Schedule

a. Each committee, with the exception of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures, shall schedule at its convenience one or more public hearings on matters before it, including on any commissioners' resolutions submitted to it. Public hearings are the opportunity for the committee to hear from those who do not have other avenues for addressing the committee—including those who are not Presbyterian. For this reason, those who are given privilege to speak to the committee in E.2.f.(1-7) are not entitled to address the committee during public hearings.

Time Limits for Presentations

b. The committee may limit the time for the presentation by any person during a public hearing, including an elected member or staff member of an entity of the General Assembly. If the time allotted for the public hearing is not sufficient to accommodate all the persons wishing to speak, a method shall be approved by the assembly committee that ensures that an equal number of persons on each side of an issue have an opportunity to speak. Any person denied the right to speak at the hearing may appeal to the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures on the basis that the method employed in selecting speakers was not fair.

Hearing Form

c. Any person who wishes to be heard in a public hearing shall sign up on a hearing form, posted in a public place in the building in which the assembly is being held, no later than the close of business on the second day of the General Assembly or noon of the day after the subsequent referral of business to the committee by the General Assembly. The location of hearing forms shall be announced during the first session of the assembly. In the event that an issue is expected to be controversial, those wishing to speak shall be asked to indicate whether they wish to speak for or against the recommendation.

6. Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures

Responsible for Referral of Business

a. This committee shall neither retain any items of business for its own consideration, nor suppress any matter that comes before it. However, business that substantially duplicates matters already before the assembly may be declined by this committee and reported to the assembly with a statement of the committee's action.

Coordination Between Committees

b. This committee shall keep itself informed of the subjects being considered by the other assembly committees, and, when any subject is taken up by more than one committee, this committee shall advise the moderators of those committees regarding ways to avoid redundant or inconsistent recommendations.

Distribution of Materials

c. This committee shall determine whether or not particular materials may be distributed to the commissioners and delegates to the General Assembly, and specify the time and manner of distribution of any authorized by it. Particular materials distributed in assembly committees shall not be distributed to the full assembly without the approval of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures, including the time and manner of distribution.

STANDING RULES

Requests to Schedule Event

d. The committee shall review requests from entities of the General Assembly, councils, other entities related to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in any way, or coalitions in which this denomination or any of its entities participate, to schedule meetings, briefings, hearings, or other events of any kind during those hours when the General Assembly or its committees are in session.

7. Reports of Assembly Committees

Writing the Report

a. The moderator, vice moderator, committee assistant, and recorder, together with such other persons as the moderator may designate, shall draft the report of the committee following the sample form provided by the Stated Clerk.

Content

b. The reports of assembly committees shall contain only (1) the recommendations to be submitted to the General Assembly, and, where necessary, a brief statement of the committee's reasons for such recommendations, and (2) the actions taken by the committee on items referred to the committee for action. Material necessary to identify the item of business and brief explanations may be included in the report. Extensive background information and detail contained in other documents in the hands of the commissioners shall not be included.

Fiscal Implications

c. Each assembly committee shall include with each recommendation or action in its report statements advising the General Assembly whether or not the recommendation or action has fiscal implications affecting any budget under consideration by the assembly.

Identify Entity

d. Recommendation for assembly action, or action taken by the committee, shall identify the entity that is directed to carry out and report back to the General Assembly regarding the matter dealt with by the recommendation or action.

PMA to Determine Entity

e. When the entity to which an assembly action is directed is a part of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, such as a division or related entity, the Stated Clerk shall automatically amend the language so that the action is directed to the Presbyterian Mission Agency. The Presbyterian Mission Agency shall determine which entity shall carry out the responsibility and report to the assembly on the matter.

Votes Recorded

f. The votes recorded in the assembly committee on each recommendation or action shall be included in the report for the information of the commissioners, but shall be omitted from the *Journal* of the General Assembly.

Confer with Entity Affected by Action

g. If the report of an assembly committee proposes or records an action affecting the interests of an entity of the General Assembly or of a council other than the General Assembly, it shall be the responsibility of that assembly committee to confer with the representative(s) designated by the entity or council concerned before proposing such action to the General Assembly or taking such an action.

Minority Report

h. Minority Report

(1) A minority of the members of an assembly committee, or an individual member of an assembly committee, may submit in writing views that differ from those in the committee report. If the moderator of the committee shall affirm in writing that the positions expressed as recommendations for action by the assembly in a written minority report were presented to the whole committee during its consideration of the matter, the Stated Clerk shall reproduce the minority report and distribute it with the report of the committee.

(2) A minority report must be appropriate for consideration as a substitute motion (see *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*, 2011, p. 527).



General Assembly Plenary Meeting

1. **Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures Reports**
 - a. Report at Beginning of Each Meeting
 - b. Limits on Debate/Changes in Docket
 - c. Review Minutes
 - d. Requests for Communicating with Assembly
 - e. Referral of Protests
2. **Reports of Assembly Committees**
 - a. Distribution
 - b. Adequate Docket Time
 - c. Committee Moderators
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3. **Minority Reports**
 - a. Must Stand as Full and Complete Substitute
 - b. Reasons Supporting Committee's Recommendation
4. **Committee Reports on the Budget**
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 - a. Approval for Announcements
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9. **Distributing Study Documents**
 - a. Distribution
 - b. Responsible Entity Identified
10. **Forming Social Policy**
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 - a. Where Allowed
 - b. Prohibited in Building

1. Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures Reports

Report at Beginning of Each Meeting

- a. The Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures shall report at the beginning of each meeting, recommending any necessary changes in order of business and any referrals it may have considered since its last report.

STANDING RULES

Limits on Debate/Changes in Docket

b. The Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures may, at any time, recommend limits on debates or changes in the docket to facilitate the handling of business. The reports of the committee shall take precedence over any other business, including orders of the day.

Review Minutes

c. This committee shall review the minutes of the General Assembly daily, report to the General Assembly any suggested corrections, and recommend approval of the minutes. The minutes shall be posted on the church's website and two printed copies of the minutes shall be posted in different places during the following day for examination by commissioners. The minutes of the meetings of the General Assembly during the last two days of its session shall be submitted for review and approval within ten days after the adjournment of the General Assembly to a subcommittee of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures.

Requests for Communicating with Assembly

d. During the assembly, requests for the privilege of communicating with the General Assembly shall be referred to the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures. This includes requests from assembly committees who wish to include reports or presentations that don't relate directly to an item of business that is before the assembly. The Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures shall confer with persons making such requests about the time and the manner in which their concerns may be brought to the attention of the General Assembly. The Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures shall recommend to the General Assembly a response regarding any possible presentation to the assembly at the beginning of the plenary where the presentation will occur.

Referral of Protests

e. Protests expressing disagreement with an action or failure to act on the part of the General Assembly shall be referred to the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures, which shall decide whether or not the protest is decorous and respectful. Should the committee decide the protest is decorous and respectful, the protest shall be entered in the Minutes. The committee may prepare an answer to be printed with any protest so entered (see *Book of Order*, G-3.0105b).

2. Reports of Assembly Committees

Distribution

a. Electronic copies of the written reports of assembly committees shall ordinarily be distributed to commissioners no later than the close of the meeting prior to the one at which they are to be considered. When necessary the Stated Clerk shall arrange for the reproduction and distribution of reports.

Adequate Docket Time

b. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, in consultation with the Stated Clerk, shall docket adequate time for the reports of committees, including ample time for debate and action. If a report requires more time than docketed, the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures shall consult with the committee for additional time to complete consideration of the report.

Committee Moderators

c. Committee moderators should move the approval of recommendations with minimum comment, and material in the commissioners' provided resources shall not be read.

Financial Implication

d. The financial effect of each recommendation on budgets previously approved or under consideration shall be clearly presented at the time that the recommendation is considered by the assembly.

3. Minority Reports

Must Stand as Full and Complete Substitute

a. In order to be considered by the assembly, a minority report shall not only set aside the majority report but also be able to stand as a full and complete substitution for the majority report recommendations. A minority report shall be moved as a substitute only after the majority report has first been moved. When this happens, the assembly shall first consider (and may amend) the majority report. When consideration of the majority report is completed, the assembly may then consider (and may amend) the minority report. Further efforts to perfect each report shall be held to a minimum in order that the assembly can concentrate instead on the issue of whether to make the proposed substitution.

STANDING RULES

Reasons Supporting Committee's Recommendation

b. The moderator of the committee, or another member of the committee, shall present reasons supporting the committee's recommendation. They may be presented before any minority report is moved or presented during the narrative report of the committee, or presented during debate on the question of whether or not the substitution shall become the main motion. (See also Standing Rule E.7.h.)

4. Committee Reports on the Budget

Per Capita Budget

a. At the first meeting of the General Assembly for the transaction of business following the meetings of assembly committees, the assembly shall hear a report on the per capita budget from the committee that has reviewed that budget.

Amended Per Capita Budget

b. On the final day of the assembly, an amended per capita budget that incorporates the financial implications of actions taken by the assembly shall be presented to the assembly for approval.

5. Plenary Meeting Procedures

Debate

a. In debate on any pending matter, no commissioner or delegate shall be allowed to speak more than two minutes until all other commissioners or delegates who desire to speak on the pending matter have been heard.

Voting Methods

b.(1) The General Assembly shall ordinarily decide questions by electronic voting. The Moderator may also call for unanimous consent by voice vote or show of hands. All decisions made by assembly standing committees by a three-quarters (supermajority) vote shall be placed on the assembly plenary consent agenda to be considered as the first order of plenary business following committee meetings. Any actions requesting constitutional change must be considered in plenary.

(2) In addition to all consent items from assembly committees, the following items shall be placed on the assembly plenary consent agenda:

(a) All unchallenged nominations from the General Assembly Nominating Committee.

(b) Unanimous recommendations from assembly agencies and entities for confirmations of those offices that, according to the Manual of the General Assembly, require General Assembly confirmation.

(3) In all cases, the right of any commissioner to remove any item from the plenary consent agenda or to call for one of the other forms of voting shall be preserved."

Mindful of Effort Required to Fulfill Recommendations Constitutional Questions

c. In view of the relative ease in which studies and programs may be approved, commissioners and other assembly committee members are cautioned to be mindful of the effort required of staff and elected members to carry out the General Assembly's instructions.

d. When the General Assembly is in plenary session considering an item of business, questions arising in debate concerning constitutional matters shall be referred to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC) present at the plenary (see Standing Rule B.4.). In cases where the ACC cannot give an immediate response, the Moderator may entertain a motion to postpone the pending motion until the ACC is prepared to advise the assembly concerning the question that has been asked.

Electronic Devices

e. Commissioners are expected to be present when meetings are in session both physically and mentally. The use of electronic devices for purposes other than those directly related to the current topic is therefore discouraged when meetings are in session. Commissioners are also expected to adhere to the General Assembly Social Media Policy.

Emergency Messages

f. Emergency messages will be relayed to a commissioner or advisory delegate during plenary meetings by way of a written message delivered by one of the Stated Clerk’s designated staff or assembly assistants.

Confidentiality

g. Any person permitted to remain during any executive session is expected to agree to be bound by the confidentiality required of commissioners.

6. General Assembly Nominating Committee

Presentation of Nominations

a. Unless the General Assembly shall have made some other provision, the nominating committee shall present to each session of the General Assembly a nominee for election to each vacancy on the entities of the General Assembly that shall exist because of a scheduled end of term, resignation, death, incapacity to act, change of residence, or any other reason.

May Decline to Submit Nomination

b. The General Assembly Nominating Committee may decline to submit a nomination(s) to a particular vacancy(s) when requested to do so by the affected entity because of an expected merger of entity or a transfer of duties between entities in order to reduce the number of persons serving on a particular entity(s).

Nominating from the Floor

c. Nominating from the Floor

(1) Nominations by commissioners shall be in order unless the vacancy is required to be filled upon nomination from some other source.

(2) When any nomination for service on a General Assembly committee, council, or board comes from the floor of the assembly, the commissioner making the nomination will provide the General Assembly Nominating Committee, no later than 48 hours after the convening of the General Assembly, with pertinent information about the person whose name is being presented, as well as the name of the particular person nominated by the nominating committee whose nomination is being challenged. Such information shall be provided on the “Nomination by Commissioner Form” provided for use at the assembly and available from the Stated Clerk. The availability of the pertinent information provided by the person challenging the nominating committee’s nominee shall be announced to the assembly at least twenty-four hours in advance of the nomination being made from the floor.

(3) In the event that there are nominations from the floor, the election shall proceed as follows:

(a) The General Assembly will deal with one challenged position at a time.

(b) The name of the General Assembly Nominating Committee’s nominee shall be placed in nomination by its moderator. The Moderator of the General Assembly shall call upon the commissioner who is placing a nomination from the floor to put that name in nomination.

(c) Once the names are placed in nomination, the order of speaking shall be first, the commissioner or a designee speaking on behalf of the floor nominee and second, the General Assembly Nominating Committee member or a designee speaking to its nominee. Both the commissioner (or designee) and the General Assembly Nominating Committee member (or designee) shall speak from the platform. Such speech shall not exceed three minutes in length. There shall be no other speeches seconding the nomination of any nominee.

(d) Without further discussion or debate, the General Assembly will move to vote.

7. Docket Time for Special Greetings

Head of Communion

a. When the Head of Communion of a member church of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, the World Council of Churches, or the National Council of Churches is in attendance at a session of the General Assembly as an ecumenical advisory delegate or as an ecumenical representative, and proper notice is provided, the assembly shall provide up to three minutes of docket time to each such Head of Communion to present a greeting to the assembly.

Assignment of Docket Time

b. The placing of this greeting on the docket will be assigned by the Stated Clerk.

8. Announcements and Nonofficial Printed Materials

Approval for Announcements

a. Only announcements connected directly with the business of the General Assembly shall be read from the platform and all notices shall be submitted either to the Moderator or the Stated Clerk for approval. Telegrams and special letters shall be reported to the General Assembly only at times to be designated by the Moderator.

Nonofficial Printed Material

b. Ordinarily, printed materials that are not official business before the General Assembly may only be distributed at authorized booths in the General Assembly Exhibit Hall. Other distribution is permitted to be handed out twenty-five feet or more from entrances to the building in which the General Assembly meets.

9. Distributing Study Documents

Distribution

a. Whenever the General Assembly itself shall require the distribution of a document for study (whether the proposal originates through the recommendation of an entity, the presentation of an overture or resolution, or arises during the conduct of the assembly's business) with a request for a response (whether the response is sought from individuals, congregations, councils, organizations of any kind, or any combination of these), the study document shall be accompanied by resource materials, bibliography, and aids as set forth in the document "Forming Social Policy," Section 5, printed in the *Manual of the General Assembly*. Along with a response instrument and the resource materials, bibliography, and aids, the document shall be distributed on a schedule that provides for the study guide and all accompanying material to be in the possession of the proposed respondents for a minimum of twelve months before the due date of the response.

Responsible Entity Identified

b. The entity to be responsible for receiving the responses and reporting to the General Assembly the summary of the responses shall be identified in the material. The report on the responses to the study may be presented no earlier than to the General Assembly that convenes in the second year after the session of the General Assembly that approves the study.

10. Forming Social Policy

The entities of the General Assembly, including its committees, commissions, and special committees, shall be governed by the document, "Forming Social Policy" printed in the Manual of the General Assembly, when that entity is considering making a social witness policy.

11. Peaceful Demonstrations

Where Allowed

a. Peaceful demonstrations shall be allowed twenty-five or more feet outside of the entrances to the building in which General Assembly meets.

Prohibited in Building

b. Spontaneous or planned demonstrations by individuals or groups are prohibited inside the building where the General Assembly meets. The Moderator of the General Assembly shall declare all demonstrations that occur in plenary session out of order and, if demonstrators fail to immediately disband and desist, may recess the General Assembly to a fixed time and place. This rule does not prohibit the spontaneous or planned celebration of an action of the General Assembly or of any event in the life of the church.



General Assembly Meeting Worship

Services of Worship

- a. Moderator of Preceding General Assembly Responsible for Planning
- b. Ecumenical Worship
- c. In Conformity with Directory for Worship

Services of Worship

Moderator of Preceding General Assembly Responsible for Planning

a. The Moderator of the preceding General Assembly shall plan daily worship at the General Assembly, and a worship service including the celebration of the Lord's Supper; and shall provide, in advance, suitable leadership for these periods of worship. The Lord's Supper shall be celebrated at the first service of worship of the General Assembly session, and the Moderator shall preside on this occasion and preach a sermon or deliver an address. The Moderator shall seek advice to ensure inclusivity in the planning of appropriate daily worship periods. The Moderator shall assure adequate transmittal of information about the planning of worship periods to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

Ecumenical Worship

b. The Stated Clerk shall plan an ecumenical period of worship and provide, in advance, suitable leadership for this period of worship.

In Conformity with Directory for Worship

c. The various acts of worship planned for the session of the General Assembly shall be in conformity with the requirements of the Directory for Worship, and shall be developed and led according to the guidance of the document, "Presbyterians at Worship in Mass Assemblies." In the preparation and conduct of all worship services, care shall be taken that all language, sight, hearing, accessibility, and other barriers be eliminated so that there can be full participation of all attendees. [Example: That printed orders of service also be printed in braille and that signing be available.]



Persons in Ordered Ministry and Elections

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| <p>1. Moderator of the General Assembly</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Title/Functions b. Stand with Either Co-Moderator or Vice-Moderator Candidate c. Election d. Vice Moderator e. Vacancy | <p>2. Stated Clerk of the General Assembly</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Title/Functions b. Election c. Acting Stated Clerk d. Associate Stated Clerks |
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1. Moderator of the General Assembly

Title/Functions

- a. Title and Functions of the Moderator at the General Assembly

(1) The Moderator of the General Assembly is an ecclesiastical person in ordered ministry, along with the Stated Clerk, of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The ministry of the Moderator is grounded in the ministry of baptized persons and in the particular ordained ministry of ruling elders and ministers of the Word and Sacrament.

(2) The office of Moderator may be shared by Co-Moderators. In this case, the office of Vice Moderator will remain vacant until the next election of a Moderator.

(3) The title of the Moderator is “The Moderator of the [number] General Assembly [(year)] of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).”

(4) The Moderator of the General Assembly is a commissioner of the General Assembly.

(5) When the Moderator presides at the assembly, it is to be a sign of the bond of unity, community, and mission in the life of the church. During the period between assemblies, the Moderator serves as an ambassador of the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace, telling the story of the church’s life and upholding the people of God through prayer.

(6) The Moderator shall preside over the General Assembly that elects him or her, and over the meetings of the next General Assembly until a successor is elected. The Moderator possesses the authority necessary for preserving order and for conducting efficiently the business of the council (*Book of Order*, G-3.0104).

(7) The Moderator(s) and the Vice Moderator (when filled) shall submit a written report of their work to the session of the General Assembly at which their successors are installed.

Stand with Either Co-Moderator or Vice-Moderator Candidate

- b. At the discretion of the candidate, he or she may choose to stand for election with a Co-Moderator or with a Vice Moderator candidate. When choosing to stand with another Moderator candidate, both candidates:

- (1) must fulfill all the requirements specified in these Standing Rules,
- (2) notify the Stated Clerk of their intention to stand for election together, and
- (3) will together determine how to fulfill the duties of the office.

Election

- c. Election of the Moderator

STANDING RULES

(1) Each person nominated to serve as Moderator of the General Assembly must be a commissioner to the General Assembly. Action by presbyteries to endorse candidates for Moderator of the General Assembly shall not take place until after the adjournment of the immediately preceding assembly. The Office of the General Assembly shall provide resourcing and orientation for Moderatorial candidates.

(2) Ordinarily, no later than forty-five days prior to the convening of the assembly, the Moderatorial candidates will announce the name of a commissioner each has selected to offer to the assembly to elect as Vice Moderator, as appropriate.

(3) The following guidelines are intended to create an equal and open opportunity for moderatorial candidates. To this end, the following procedures shall be observed:

(a) Candidates shall covenant not to spend in excess of \$2,000 in making their candidacy known to the church. This \$2,000 includes out of pocket expenses as well as the estimated value of in-kind contributions, but does not include travel and meeting expenses.

(b) Each candidate shall submit to the Stated Clerk an itemized statement of expenses, including travel and meeting expenses related to his/her candidacy and in-kind contributions. This statement shall be submitted to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly prior to the convening of the General Assembly. This information shall be distributed to commissioners and advisory delegates prior to the election of the Moderator. The statement of expenses of all candidates shall be kept on file in the Office of the General Assembly following the meeting of the General Assembly.

(c) The Office of the General Assembly shall not reimburse a candidate for campaign expenses, but shall assume expenses involved in printing and distributing material submitted for information packets as outlined in Standing Rule H.1.c.(3)(g).

(d) In order to encourage reliance on the leading of the Holy Spirit in the selection of the Moderator, neither candidates or their advocates are allowed to communicate with commissioners and/or advisory delegates.

(e) Distribution of written campaign materials at General Assembly shall be limited to the public distribution area.

(f) Candidates are encouraged to meet and make themselves available for conversation with commissioners and advisory delegates within the scope of these procedures.

(g) Not less than fifteen days before the convening of the General Assembly, the Stated Clerk shall publish for commissioners and advisory delegates an electronic information packet containing the following material regarding each candidate for Moderator who is known to the Stated Clerk and who wishes to be included:

(i) A photograph, a biographical sketch, a personal statement by the candidate that includes a statement regarding the candidate's sense of call to the ordered ministry,

(ii) A written presentation by the presbytery having jurisdiction over the candidate, if that council has endorsed the candidate,

(iii) The responses of the candidate to a questionnaire developed by the Stated Clerk.

The layouts for the presentation under this standing rule (as outlined above) may be chosen by the candidates, but all material including photographs submitted for each presentation shall be provided in electronic format as well as print. The material shall be submitted to the Stated Clerk no less than forty-five days before the convening of the General Assembly for reproduction and distribution, and shall be accompanied by a statement indicating the willingness of the candidate to serve as Moderator, if elected.

(4) The Moderator of the General Assembly shall be elected in the following manner:

(a) When the General Assembly is ready to elect its Moderator, each candidate shall be nominated by a commissioner to the assembly in the following manner: the

STANDING RULES

commissioners making nominations shall be recognized at microphones on the assembly floor. Upon recognition by the assembly Moderator, the nominator shall say one of the following statements:

(i) “Moderator, I place in nomination for the office of Moderator of the ___ General Assembly Ruling Elder/Minister of the Word and Sacrament ___ from the Presbytery of ___ and Ruling Elder/ Minister of the Word and Sacrament ___ from the Presbytery of ___.”

(ii) “Moderator, I place in nomination for the office of Moderator of the ___ General Assembly Ruling Elder/Minister of the Word and Sacrament ___ from the Presbytery of __. And for Vice Moderator of the __ General Assembly Ruling Elder/ Minister of the Word and Sacrament ___ from the Presbytery of ___.”

The nominator shall then return to his/her seat on the plenary floor. No seconds to nominations are required.

(b) After nominations are closed, each nominee shall be afforded an opportunity to address the General Assembly for a time not to exceed five minutes, expressing the concerns that nominee feels to be the most important for the church. The order of speaking shall be determined by lot, the drawing conducted by the most recent Moderator attending the General Assembly

(c) At the conclusion of all the presentations by the nominees, they shall respond to questions from the floor. The first question shall be addressed to the nominee who spoke first in the original presentation, and the same question shall then be put to the other nominees in the same order in which they spoke earlier. The second question shall be directed to the second nominee in this order and then to each of the other nominees in sequence. Each nominee shall be afforded an opportunity to answer each question. This process shall continue for a period not to exceed the number of nominees times fifteen minutes, or for one hour, whichever is shorter, unless terminated earlier by vote of the General Assembly.

(d) Where there is only one nomination for Moderator, the election may be by acclamation. Where there is more than one, the election may be by secret ballot in a format which is determined by the Stated Clerk and announced to commissioners and advisory delegates prior to the convening of the assembly.

(5) The Stated Clerk shall provide a service of installation for the newly elected Moderator and Vice Moderator, as appropriate, as the last item of business at the session in which the Moderator is elected. The families of the newly elected officers and all present previous Moderators shall be invited to the platform. The service shall use the order of service for “Installation of Governing Body Officers and Staff” from the *Book of Occasional Services*. The processional banner of the Moderator shall precede the newly elected Moderator into the assembly. The Moderator’s cross and stole shall be presented by the most recent serving Moderator. The newly elected Moderator invites a person to lead the prayer of installation. The most recent serving Moderator gives the charge, a hymn is sung by the assembly, and the newly elected Moderator gives the benediction.

Vice Moderator

d. Vice Moderator

(1) The Vice Moderator represents the assembly at the request of the Moderator. When the Vice Moderator serves in this capacity, all those duties incumbent on the Moderator shall be expected of him/her.

(2) Each proposed Vice-Moderator candidate shall include biographical information and a photograph in electronic format to be included with the Moderator candidate information.

(3) The Moderator may request the Vice Moderator to preside and to assist in the performance of other functions of the Moderator during and following the General Assembly.

Vacancy

e. Vacancy in the Office of the Moderator or Vice Moderator

(1) Should the office of the Moderator of the General Assembly become vacant, the Vice Moderator shall fulfill the functions of the Moderator. In such circumstance, all constitutional obligations and functions as prescribed by the Standing Rules of the General Assembly and the *Book of Order* shall be incumbent upon the Vice Moderator of the General Assembly.

(2) Should the office of the Vice Moderator of the General Assembly also become vacant, the most recent living Moderator shall fulfill the functions of the Moderator as specified in the Constitution of the church.

2. Stated Clerk of the General Assembly**Title/Functions**

a. Title and Functions of the Stated Clerk at the General Assembly

(1) The title of the Stated Clerk is “The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)” and may be used by the incumbent until a successor is elected and takes office.

(2) The Stated Clerk is accountable, through the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, to the General Assembly for the performance of the duties of the office, and shall present to each meeting of the General Assembly a report on the state of the church.

(3) The Stated Clerk is responsible for all matters related to the sessions of the General Assembly and all other matters relative to and arising from the General Assembly for which no other assignment has been made.

(4) The Stated Clerk shall also be responsible for guidance of the procedures for candidates seeking the office of Moderator, and for supervision of the election of each Moderator.

(5) In accordance with directives from previous General Assemblies and in consultations with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and other General Assembly agencies, the Stated Clerk is authorized to decide on matters pertaining to facilities and special events that must be established before the first meeting of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures.

(6) The Stated Clerk shall receive all reports, communications, overtures, and any other materials appropriate for General Assembly consideration. The Stated Clerk shall recommend to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, for presentation to the Assembly Committee on Business Referral, a referral of such items of business coming before the General Assembly (Standing Rule C.3.e.).

(7) The Stated Clerk shall prepare for consideration of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly a proposed docket for the General Assembly’s consideration of its business (Standing Rule C.4.a.). The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall present the proposed docket to the first meeting of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures so that it may recommend a docket to the commissioners at the first business session. The docket presented to the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures shall provide a time early in the General Assembly for a report by the Stated Clerk on the state of the church, and for a report by the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

(8) The Stated Clerk shall propose to the General Assembly the number of assembly committees and a name for each committee after consultation with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly and the appropriate General Assembly entity or entities (Standing Rule C.1.). The Stated Clerk shall present the committee structure to the General Assembly for ratification at the first business session. Each commissioner and advisory delegate shall be assigned by random selection to one assembly committee at least forty-five days before the opening date of the General Assembly (Standing Rule C.2.).

STANDING RULES

(9) The Stated Clerk shall provide opportunity for orienting the commissioners, advisory delegates, and others taking part in the session of the General Assembly. The use of *Robert's Rules of Order*, sources of parliamentary advice, and the availability of resource persons and materials to facilitate their work should be part of the orientation.

(10) The Stated Clerk shall be the parliamentarian for the meetings of the General Assembly, or arrange for the service of a professional parliamentarian.

(11) The Stated Clerk shall transmit to the councils and agencies of the assembly, persons who presented business to the assembly, and others affected by the assembly's actions, a report on actions of the General Assembly on matters pertaining to their concerns. The Stated Clerk shall transmit to the presbyteries all assembly actions on which the presbyteries are requested to take action.

(12) As soon as practicable after the adjournment of the General Assembly, the Stated Clerk shall publish the assembly's proceedings and other documents as the assembly may direct in an appropriate format (i.e. print or electronic) to be determined by the Stated Clerk.

Election

b. Election of the Stated Clerk

(1) The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) requires the election of a Stated Clerk and the standing rules describe the procedures for the election. The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly shall be elected for a term of four years and is eligible for reelection to additional four-year terms. The Stated Clerk is accountable to the General Assembly for the performance of the assigned functions.

(2) The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly shall be elected in the manner described in this standing rule. No member of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly or other persons involved in this procedure as a member of the search committee or as a person providing staff services to the committee may be considered for nomination as Stated Clerk. The incumbent Stated Clerk may not participate in any way in the election process described in this standing rule. In the year there is an election of a Stated Clerk, the Moderator shall appoint a temporary Stated Clerk during the period of the election at the General Assembly.

(3) The General Assembly that meets prior to the end of the term of a Stated Clerk shall elect a Stated Clerk Nomination Committee.

(a) The slate of nominees for the nomination committee shall consist of the following: three members of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (nominated by the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, one of whom shall serve as moderator of the committee), one member of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (nominated by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board), and five at-large members nominated by the General Assembly Nominating Committee in the following categories: one mid council stated clerk and four persons (two ruling elders and two ministers of the Word and Sacrament) from among commissioners who have attended an assembly in the past six years. The General Assembly Nominating Committee shall present to the assembly for election the slate of nominees for the Stated Clerk Nomination Committee. The slate presented shall reflect the denomination's commitment to inclusiveness.

(b) Nominations from the floor for the nomination committee shall be in order following the distribution of the printed list of proposed nominees by the General Assembly Nominating Committee and a declaration by the Moderator that the names are in nomination. Names placed in nomination from the floor shall be in opposition to a particular name of an at-large member placed in nomination by the General Assembly Nominating Committee, and must be in the same category (H.2.b.(3)(a)). More than one person may be placed in nomination from the floor in opposition to an at-large nominee.

(c) The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall be responsible for providing the nomination committee with an up-to-date position description.

STANDING RULES

(d) The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly will ensure that an adequate budget for the nomination process is provided in the Office of the General Assembly and shall designate staff services for the Stated Clerk Nomination Committee.

(e) The nomination committee shall begin its work no later than 300 days before the start of the assembly that will elect the Stated Clerk.

(f) The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall be responsible for conducting the end-of-term evaluation of the Stated Clerk.

(g) The nominating committee shall announce that persons seeking the position of Stated Clerk shall file a completed application form and a resume or personal information form (PIF) with the committee 180 days before the opening of the General Assembly.

If the incumbent wants to be considered, he or she will notify the committee in writing and submit a current resume or PIF 180 days before the opening of the General Assembly. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall provide a copy of the end-of-term evaluation to the Stated Clerk Nominating Committee.

(h) Additional written material may be requested by the committee. No one may be nominated to serve as Stated Clerk who has not provided an application to the committee.

(i) The committee shall review and evaluate all applications to determine the constitutional eligibility of the candidates. Any candidate who is determined to not be eligible will be notified in writing within forty-five days of receipt of their resume or PIF.

(j) The committee shall interview all eligible candidates using the same methodology and select one as the committee's recommendation. All members of the committee shall ordinarily participate in the interview. The committee shall declare its nominee no later than sixty days before the opening of the General Assembly.

(k) Any of the applicants for the position of Stated Clerk, including the incumbent Stated Clerk if not the nominee of the committee, who wish to be placed in nomination against the nominee of the committee shall declare their intention to the committee to do so no later than forty-five days before the opening of the General Assembly.

(l) At the convening of the General Assembly, the Office of the General Assembly shall distribute to commissioners and advisory delegates an information packet containing the following material regarding each candidate for Stated Clerk who wishes to be included:

(i) A photograph, a biographical sketch, a personal statement by the candidate, including a statement regarding the candidate's sense of call to the ordered ministry,

(ii) The responses of the candidate to a questionnaire developed by the committee based upon issues that will be before the church as presented in business to be considered by the General Assembly.

(iii) The material submitted shall be typewritten on paper 8-1/2 x 11 inches in size. The layouts for the presentation under this standing rule (as outlined above) may be chosen by the candidates, but the copy submitted for each presentation shall be provided in one color on one side of one sheet. The material shall be submitted to the Office of the General Assembly no less than thirty days before the convening of the General Assembly for reproduction and distribution and shall be accompanied by a statement indicating the willingness of the candidate to serve as Stated Clerk, if elected.

(m) The candidates may not distribute any other materials, print or electronic, including flyers, buttons, tokens or other objects that would denote a campaign for the office of Stated Clerk.

(n) Other organizations supporting the candidacy of a particular candidate may not distribute materials electronically, through the mail, or at the General Assembly with the knowledge, support, or permission of that candidate. Should a candidate discover that an organization is advocating or campaigning for him or her, it is expected that the candidate

STANDING RULES

will request that organization to cease its activities. The same expectation will be true of organizations that are critical of a particular candidate for Stated Clerk.

(o) Each candidate will be provided a place to meet and talk with commissioners and advisory delegates two days before the election. Only information provided by the Office of the General Assembly may be distributed in those rooms. Other materials, apart from that packet, are not permitted. Each candidate for Stated Clerk will be allowed to post the times when he/she will be available for conversation in that room.

(p) Any questions concerning interpretation of the election process outlined in H.2.b. shall be determined by the Stated Clerk Nomination Committee.

(4) The General Assembly, by majority vote, shall elect the Stated Clerk in the following manner:

(a) Within forty-eight hours of the convening of the assembly, the Stated Clerk Nomination Committee shall place in nomination a single nominee.

(b) The Moderator shall then invite other nominations from those who have completed the nomination process. Only one speech, made by a commissioner or a member of the Stated Clerk Nomination Committee not to exceed five minutes in length, shall be made to nominate each nominee. There shall be no speech seconding any nomination. Each person nominated from the floor shall reaffirm a willingness to serve as Stated Clerk, if elected.

(c) In the event there are no other nominations, the election shall proceed immediately as follows:

(i) The nominee for Stated Clerk shall be given an opportunity to address the assembly for a time not to exceed five minutes, expressing the nominee's views regarding the functions and work of the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

(ii) The Moderator shall inquire of commissioners whether there are questions to be asked of the Stated Clerk Nomination Committee. Time allocated shall not exceed fifteen minutes. The Moderator shall inquire of commissioners whether there are questions to be asked of the nominee for Stated Clerk. The time allocated should not exceed fifteen minutes, after which the voting shall take place.

(d) In the event there are other nominations, the election shall proceed as follows:

(i) The election of the Stated Clerk shall take place as the first order of business on the next to last day of the assembly's session.

(ii) Each nominee shall be given an opportunity to address the assembly for a time not to exceed five minutes, expressing the nominee's views regarding the functions and work of the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly. The nominees shall speak in the same order as the presentation of nominating speeches.

(iii) The Moderator shall inquire of commissioners whether there are questions to be asked of the nominees for Stated Clerk. The first question shall be addressed to the nominee who was nominated first and the same question shall then be put to the other nominees in the same order in which they were nominated. The second question shall be directed to the second nominee in this order and then to each of the other nominees in sequence. Each nominee shall be afforded an opportunity to answer each question. This process shall continue for a period not to exceed the number of nominees times fifteen minutes, or for one hour, whichever is shorter, unless terminated earlier by vote of the General Assembly, after which the voting shall take place.

(5) Should there be a vacancy in the office of the Stated Clerk, the General Assembly Nominating Committee shall propose to the assembly, if the assembly is in session, members for the Stated Clerk Nomination Committee, or shall propose to the Moderator for appointment, if the assembly is not in session, to a Stated Clerk Nomination Committee. This committee shall be composed of members as outlined in Standing Rule H.2.b. and begin the process of a search for a candidate for Stated Clerk. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall designate an acting Stated Clerk until such time as a Stated Clerk is elected.

STANDING RULES

(6) The Stated Clerk Nomination Committee shall be dismissed at the adjournment of the session of the General Assembly at which the committee presents a nominee for Stated Clerk.

(7) A new Stated Clerk shall normally assume office thirty days after the adjournment of the assembly. A longer period of transition between Stated Clerks may be negotiated by the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, but shall not exceed ninety days.

Acting Stated Clerk

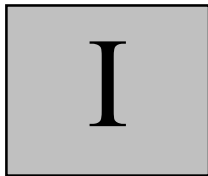
c. Acting Stated Clerk

In case of the incapacity, resignation, or death of the Stated Clerk, the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall designate an Acting Stated Clerk until such time as the Stated Clerk is able to resume the duties or the General Assembly elects a new Stated Clerk. The person so designated may be one of the Associate Stated Clerks or another person eligible for election as Stated Clerk.

Associate Stated Clerks

d. Associate Stated Clerks

The General Assembly may elect one or more Associate Stated Clerks as the General Assembly shall determine. The Stated Clerk shall nominate persons to fill each such office after consultation with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. The term of office shall be four years, subject to reelection at the pleasure of the General Assembly.



General Assembly Arrangements

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| <p>1. Date and Place of Meeting</p> <p>a. Determining Date and Place</p> <p>b. Presbytery Invitations</p> <p>c. Criteria</p> <p>d. Rotating the Place of the Meeting</p> | <p>3. Reimbursing Commissioner Expenses</p> <p>a. Reimbursement/Per Diem</p> <p>b. Reimbursement for Alternate Commissioner</p> |
| <p>2. Meeting Arrangements</p> <p>a. Arrangements and Housing</p> <p>b. Assembly Assistants</p> <p>c. Simultaneous Interpretation</p> <p>d. Sponsorship of Events</p> | <p>4. Assembly Meeting Work Group</p> <p>a. Membership</p> <p>b. Responsibilities</p> |

1. Date and Place of Meeting

Determining Date and Place

a. The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall meet on the date and at the place fixed by the preceding General Assembly for a period, which shall be known as a session of the General Assembly, preferably between May 15 and July 31, subject to the possibility of change (see Standing Rule I.4.b.(10) and *Book of Order*, G-3.0503, for exceptions). The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall recommend to the General Assembly for its action the date and place of meeting six years hence and any necessary changes in dates and places of meetings previously set. Should action regarding date or place of meeting become necessary at a time when the General Assembly is not in session, this committee is empowered to fix a new date or place of meeting.

Presbytery Invitations

b. The host body for any session of the General Assembly shall be a presbytery(s) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Any presbytery that desires to invite the General Assembly to meet within its bounds shall forward an invitation to the Stated Clerk no later than May 1 of the year that is seven years prior to the earliest effective date of the invitation.

Criteria

c. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall determine the criteria that render a place an eligible site for a meeting of the General Assembly, including the requirement that all meeting arrangements shall be made to facilitate full participation by persons with disabilities. These criteria may be obtained from the Office of the General Assembly.

Rotating the Place of the Meeting

d. In order to distribute the benefits experienced from hosting a General Assembly meeting throughout the church, the place of meeting shall be rotated among the following four areas (unless prevented by financial or other practical considerations):

- Area A: Synod of Alaska/Northwest, Synod of the Pacific, Synod of Southern California and Hawaii, Synod of the Rocky Mountains, Synod of the Southwest;
- Area B: Synod of the Sun, Synod of Lakes and Prairies, Synod of Mid-America;
- Area C: Synod of Living Waters, Synod of Lincoln Trails, Synod of the Covenant;
- Area D: Synod of South Atlantic, Synod of Puerto Rico, Synod of the Northeast, Synod of the Trinity, Synod of the Mid-Atlantic.

2. Meeting Arrangements

Arrangements and Housing

a. The Stated Clerk shall oversee all arrangements for the meeting and housing of the General Assembly, including: the assignment of time and place for all special events and public meetings connected with or scheduled at the time of the General Assembly; the assignment of time and place for exhibits at the General Assembly; and the assignment of commissioners, advisory delegates, and others to hotels and other accommodations.

Assembly Assistants

b. The Stated Clerk shall appoint persons to serve as assembly assistants for the duration of the General Assembly. Persons appointed shall not be commissioners to the General Assembly or staff members of entities of the General Assembly. Assembly assistants shall be assigned to particular tasks to facilitate the work of the General Assembly. The appointments shall be made in accordance with *Book of Order*, F-1.0403.

Simultaneous Interpretation

c. The Stated Clerk shall arrange for the simultaneous interpretation of proceedings into Spanish and Korean languages for any participant during plenary meetings of the General Assembly. This service shall also be provided during assembly committee meetings, services of worship, and other events during the assembly for commissioners, advisory delegates, ecumenical guests, and, when possible, for other participants.

Sponsorship of Event

d. An event scheduled before, during, or immediately following a session of the General Assembly and extending an invitation to any or all participants of the assembly shall clearly identify the sponsor or sponsoring organization(s) in any invitations, announcements, or other publicity about the event.

3. Reimbursing Commissioner Expenses

Reimbursement/ Per Diem

a. The approved reimbursement for the travel expenses, food, lodging, and other approved expenses of commissioners at the sessions of the General Assembly shall be paid by the treasurer or the treasurer's designee. The treasurer shall have the authority to deposit funds for such purposes in a bank or trust company where the General Assembly is to be in session. Commissioners shall be reimbursed by means of individual checks upon receipt of a voucher on a form provided by the treasurer. The Stated Clerk shall recommend to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly the amount of any per diem. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall set the per diem, and the Stated Clerk shall publish such per diem in the materials (print or electronic) provided to the commissioners. The treasurer shall determine the manner in which such checks shall be distributed and shall announce the place or places where such checks may be cashed.

Reimbursement for Alternate Commissioner

b. The Office of the General Assembly shall reimburse an alternate commissioner for cost of meals (as specified in the per diem expenses for the particular session of the assembly to which the person is commissioned) during the period in which the alternate is actually seated as a commissioner. The total of the payments to the two persons shall not be larger than payment to a single commissioner attending the full assembly. The Office of the General Assembly shall reimburse either the original commissioner or the alternate who replaced the original commissioner for the costs of transportation and other approved expenses, but not both. It shall be the responsibility of the two individuals, with the assistance of the presbytery that elected them, to determine an appropriate division of the costs, whether reimbursement was in cash or a prepaid ticket was provided. Both persons shall be listed in the *Journal* as commissioners, with an indication of the period during which they served.

4. Assembly Meeting Work Group

Membership

a. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall establish a work group on assembly arrangements to be composed of designated members from the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, the Stated Clerk, the Moderator of the General Assembly, and the Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. The moderator of the Committee on Local Arrangements, and the moderator and vice moderator of the Assembly

STANDING RULES

Committee on Bills and Overtures (when selected) shall be nonvoting members of the committee at all meetings in which matters will be considered that affect their particular work. This work group shall be assigned responsibilities (1) through (10) in this Standing Rule I.4.b.

Responsibilities

b. Responsibilities

- (1) Review the evaluation of each General Assembly session secured by the Stated Clerk.
- (2) Outline the programs for future General Assemblies sufficiently in advance to ensure an orderly progression of themes and emphases and to ensure the appointment of significant speakers and other program participants.
- (3) Review and present to the Assembly Committee on Business Referral a recommendation regarding the Stated Clerk's proposed docket for the next session of the General Assembly.
- (4) Review and present to the Assembly Committee on Business Referral a recommendation regarding the Stated Clerk's proposed referral of each item of business to an appropriate assembly committee.
- (5) Assist the Moderator regarding the appointment of a commissioner to be the moderator of each assembly committee and a commissioner to serve as vice moderator of each assembly committee.
- (6) Consult with the Moderator regarding the planning of all worship at the General Assembly.
- (7) Coordinate the programmatic aspects of each General Assembly session, ensuring that adequate time is provided for the business that must be transacted.
- (8) Review requests from entities of the General Assembly, councils, other entities related to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in any way, or coalitions in which this denomination or any of its entities participate to schedule meetings, briefings, hearings, or other events of any kind during those hours when the General Assembly or its committees are in session.
- (9) Prepare a report, including recommendations on the docket and the referral of assembly business, to be printed and distributed with other materials provided to commissioners.
- (10) Review and present to the General Assembly for its action the date and place of meeting six years hence and any changes in dates and places of meetings previously set.



Special Meetings of the General Assembly

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| <p>1. Method of Calling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Petition's Subject Matter b. Resolution Form c. Not Called for Discussion Only d. Resolved in 1 or 2 Days e. Full Text on Each Page of Petition f. Consult with Assembly Committee on Bills & Overtures g. 120-day Requirement | <p>2. Signatures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Verification of PC(USA) Membership b. Verification of Signature c. Removal Request d. Failure to Reply e. Verification Process Report <p>3. Date and Location</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Report of Decision to Call Meeting b. COGA Sets Date and Place c. Expense Plan d. Letter of Notification |
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1. Method of Calling

The *Book of Order* permits the calling of special meetings of the General Assembly (G-3.0503). The method of calling a special meeting is the required number of commissioners submitting a petition with the full text of the resolution to the Moderator of the General Assembly.

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| Petition's Subject Matter | a. A special meeting may be called providing the petition's subject matter falls within the General Assembly's responsibilities. (G-3.0501). |
| Resolution Form | b. The urgent matter shall be brought in the form of a resolution or resolutions, stating the specific action proposed to be taken by the commissioners at the special meeting and shall include the reasons for proposing the decision to be made. |
| Not Called for Discussion Only | c. A special meeting may not be called for the purpose of discussion only. |
| Resolved in 1 or 2 Days | d. The matters should be able to be resolved in a session of one or two days. |
| Full Text on Each Page of Petition | e. The full text of the resolution shall appear on each page of the signed petitions. |
| Consult with Assembly Committee on Bills & Overtures | f. The Moderator may consult with the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures to determine any questions concerning whether the resolution meets the criteria for a called meeting or concerning the specific actions in the proposed resolution. This may take place by conference call. |
| 120-day Requirement | g. Resolutions requiring or proposing constitutional interpretation are subject to the 120-day requirement in G-6.02. The 120-day requirement begins upon receipt of the petition by the Moderator. The Moderator may consult with the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC) to determine any questions concerning whether the resolution requires a constitutional interpretation. |

2. Signatures

The *Book of Order* establishes the minimum number of signatures to require a called meeting. The Moderator, upon receipt of the petition, shall ask the Stated Clerk to complete the following within thirty days:

Verification of PC(USA) Membership

a. Send each presbytery stated clerk or clerk of session a letter verifying the current Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) membership of the individual signatory to the petition.

Verification of Signature

b. Send each signatory to the petition a letter of verification asking the commissioner to verify the signature on the petition and if the commissioner concurs with the purpose of the request as stated in the resolution.

Removal Request

c. During the verification process, a commissioner may request removal of his or her name from the petition by notifying the Stated Clerk.

Failure to Reply

d. After all reasonable efforts to establish contact have been made, the name of a commissioner failing to reply to the letter of verification shall be removed from the petition.

Verification Process Report

e. The Stated Clerk shall report to the Moderator the results of the verification process.

3. Date and Location

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly has the responsibility to fix the date and place of a meeting of the General Assembly when the General Assembly is not in session.

Report of Decision to Call Meeting

a. Upon receiving certification from the Stated Clerk that the petition has met the requirements of the *Book of Order* and the Standing Rules of the General Assembly, the Moderator shall report to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) the decision to call the meeting.

COGA Sets Date and Place Expense Plan

b. The COGA shall set the date and place of a called meeting.

c. The COGA shall submit to the called meeting a plan to pay for its expenses. This plan shall be considered to be part of the business of the special meeting.

Letter of Notification

d. The letter of notification of the called meeting will be mailed to the commissioners no later than sixty days before the start of the meeting.



Commissions, Special Committees, and Special Administrative Review

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| <p>1. Commissions and Special Committees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Purpose b. Considerations for Creating c. Appointed by Moderator d. Length of Existence and Reports e. Review f. Representation at General Assembly and Funding g. Coordination | <p>2. Special Administrative Review of Synods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Three Ways to Review b. Written Request for Review |
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1. Commissions and Special Committees

Purpose

a. The General Assembly may establish special committees and commissions to carry out decisions of the assembly or make recommendations to the assembly on matters that cannot be undertaken or accomplished by an existing entity. (*Book of Order*, G-3.0109)

Considerations for Creating

b. In considering the creation of a special committee or commission the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures shall hear from relevant agencies, a representative from the General Assembly Nominating Committee, a representative from the General Assembly Committee on Representation, as well as from the assembly committee considering the proposal. Financial implications of special committees or commissions shall accompany any recommendation to the assembly.

Appointed by Moderator

c. The Moderator of the General Assembly appoints members of special committees or commissions, unless otherwise designated, in collaboration with the General Assembly Nominating Committee and the General Assembly Committee on Representation. The Moderator is authorized to fill any vacancies that may occur. No person appointed may serve on more than one committee or commission unless otherwise designated by the assembly.

Length of Existence and Reports

d. Special committees or commissions shall normally complete their work within two years. Requests for an extension of work shall be referred to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. An extension shall require a two-thirds vote of the assembly.

Review

e. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall review the work of each special committee or commission.

Representation at General Assembly and Funding

f. When the report of the special committee or commission is presented, its moderator shall serve as a corresponding member of the assembly and may be accompanied by one other member of the committee or commission. The expenses of these authorized representatives shall be reimbursed through the committee or commission's budget.

In the event of a minority report, a designated member of the minority shall also be invited to attend the assembly. The expenses of this member shall be reimbursed through the committee or commission's budget.

Other members of special committees or commissions may be reimbursed for attendance at the assembly only if they are required to be involved in hearings or for other official purposes.

Coordination

g. The Stated Clerk shall provide staff services and other assistance to special committees and commissions. The work of the special committees and commissions shall be funded through the per capita budget of the Office of the General Assembly.

2. Special Administrative Review of Synods**Three Ways to Review**

a. The General Assembly has authority to undertake special administrative review of synods (*Book of Order*, G-3.0502c). There are three ways the General Assembly could be requested to consider such review:

(1) by an overture from a presbytery or synod (G-3.0302d; G-3.0402; Standing Rule A.3.;

(2) by request from one of the General Assembly entities (Standing Rule A.2.);
or

(3) By a commissioners' resolution (Standing Rule A.6.). If such overture, request, or resolution is acted on favorably by the General Assembly, the General Assembly could undertake Special Administrative Review (G-3.0108b) through commission or special committee as provided for in Standing Rule K.1. and G-3.0109.

Written Request for Review

b. Special administrative review of an alleged synod irregularity or delinquency may occur when a written request for such review is received by the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly from another synod or a presbytery within the synod of the alleged irregularity or delinquency. If the request relates to an alleged delinquency, the request can only be filed with the Stated Clerk after the failure or refusal of the synod to cure the alleged delinquency at its next meeting, having been requested to do so in writing prior to the meeting. When the request for special administrative review is received, the Stated Clerk shall convene a meeting of the Moderator of the General Assembly, the moderator of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and the moderator of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. If the request is in order and all the moderators agree that for the good of the church the special administrative review needs to be undertaken before the next meeting of the General Assembly (when the request could be considered by the whole General Assembly), the Moderator of the General Assembly shall appoint a special committee (Standing Rule K.1.) to conduct a special administrative review in accordance with G-3.0108b and report its findings and recommendations to the next General Assembly.



Amendment or Suspension of the Standing Rules

1. **Recommending Amendments to the Standing Rules**
2. **Amending the Standing Rules**
3. **Suspending the Standing Rules**

Recommending Amendments to the Standing Rules

1. In consultation with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, the Stated Clerk shall recommend to the next session of the General Assembly any changes in the Standing Rules of the General Assembly deemed necessary. The Stated Clerk shall consult with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly before proposing to the General Assembly any amendment to the standing rules.

Amending the Standing Rules

2. The Standing Rules of the General Assembly may be amended by a majority vote of the commissioners present and voting. A motion to amend the rules is debatable.

Suspending the Standing Rules

3. A motion to suspend the standing rules is not debatable and shall require a two-thirds vote of the total enrollment of the commissioners.

MODERATORS AND CLERKS

MODERATORS AND CLERKS

1. (OLD SCHOOL BRANCH)

1838-1869

A↓SUCCESSION OF MODERATORS

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

1789-1837

A.D.	NAME	PRESBYTERY	PLACE
1789	*John Witherspoon, D.D., LL.D.	New Brunswick	Philadelphia, Pa.
1789	*John Rodgers, D.D.	New York	Philadelphia, Pa.
1790	*Robert Smith, D.D.	New Castle	Philadelphia, Pa.
1791	*John Woodhull, D.D.	New Brunswick	Philadelphia, Pa.
1792	*John King, D.D.	Carlisle	Carlisle, Pa.
1793	*James Latta, D.D.	New Castle	Philadelphia, Pa.
1794	*Alexander McWhorter, D.D.	New York	Philadelphia, Pa.
1795	*John McKnight, D.D.	New York	Carlisle, Pa.
1796	*Robert Davidson, D.D.	Carlisle	Philadelphia, Pa.
1797	*William Mackay Tennent, D.D.	Philadelphia	Philadelphia, Pa.
1798	*John Blair Smith, D.D.	Albany	Philadelphia, Pa.
1799	*S. Stanhope Smith, D.D., LL.D.	New Brunswick	Winchester, Va.
1800	*Joseph Clark, D.D.	New Brunswick	Philadelphia, Pa.
1801	*Nathaniel Irwin	Philadelphia	Philadelphia, Pa.
1802	*Azel Roe, D.D.	New York	Philadelphia, Pa.
1803	*James Hall, D.D.	Concord	Philadelphia, Pa.
1804	*James Francis Armstrong	New Brunswick	Philadelphia, Pa.
1805	*James Richards, D.D.	New York	Philadelphia, Pa.
1806	*Samuel Miller, D.D., LL.D.	New York	Philadelphia, Pa.
1807	*Archibald Alexander, D.D.	Philadelphia	Philadelphia, Pa.
1808	*Philip Milledoler, D.D.	New York	Philadelphia, Pa.
1809	*Drury Lacy	Hanover	Philadelphia, Pa.
1810	*John Brodhead Romeyn, D.D.	New York	Philadelphia, Pa.
1811	*Eliphalet Nott, D.D., LL.D.	Albany	Philadelphia, Pa.
1812	*Andrew Flinn, D.D.	Harmony	Philadelphia, Pa.
1813	*Samuel Blatchford, D.D.	Columbia	Philadelphia, Pa.
1814	*James Inglis, D.D.	Baltimore	Philadelphia, Pa.
1815	*William Neill, D.D.	Albany	Philadelphia, Pa.
1816	*James Blythe, D.D.	W. Lexington	Philadelphia, Pa.
1817	*Jonas Coe, D.D.	Columbia	Philadelphia, Pa.
1818	*Jacob Jones Janeway, D.D.	Philadelphia	Philadelphia, Pa.
1819	*John Holt Rice, D.D.	Hanover	Philadelphia, Pa.
1820	*John McDowell, D.D.	Jersey	Philadelphia, Pa.
1821	*William Hill, D.D.	Winchester	Philadelphia, Pa.
1822	*Obadiah Jennings, D.D.	Steubenville	Philadelphia, Pa.
1823	*John Chester, D.D.	Albany	Philadelphia, Pa.
1824	*Ashbel Green, D.D., LL.D.	Philadelphia	Philadelphia, Pa.
1825	*Stephen N. Rowan, D.D.	New York	Philadelphia, Pa.
1826	*Thomas McAuley, D.D., LL.D.	New York	Philadelphia, Pa.
1827	*Francis Herron, D.D.	Ohio	Philadelphia, Pa.
1828	*Ezra Stiles Ely, D.D.	Philadelphia	Philadelphia, Pa.
1829	*Benjamin Holt Rice, D.D.	Hanover	Philadelphia, Pa.
1830	*Ezra Fisk, D.D.	Hudson	Philadelphia, Pa.
1831	*Nathan S.S. Beman, D.D., LL.D.	Troy	Philadelphia, Pa.
1832	*James Hoge, D.D.	Columbus	Philadelphia, Pa.
1833	*William Anderson McDowell, D.D.	Charleston	Philadelphia, Pa.
1834	*Philip Lindsley, D.D.	W. Tennessee	Philadelphia, Pa.
1835	*William Wirt Phillips, D.D.	New York	Pittsburgh, Pa.
1836	*John Witherspoon, D.D., LL.D.	Harmony	Pittsburgh, Pa.
1837	*David Elliott, D.D., LL.D.	Ohio	Philadelphia, Pa.

A.D.	NAME	PRESBYTERY	PLACE
1838	*Wm. Swan Plumer, D.D., LL.D.	East Hanover	Philadelphia, Pa.
1839	*Joshua Lacy Wilson, D.D.	Cincinnati	Philadelphia, Pa.
1840	*William Morrison Engles, D.D.	Philadelphia	Philadelphia, Pa.
1841	*Robt. J. Breckenridge, DD, LLD	Baltimore	Philadelphia, Pa.
1842	*John Todd Edgar, D.D.	Nashville	Philadelphia, Pa.
1843	*Gardiner Spring, D.D., LL.D.	New York	Philadelphia, Pa.
1844	*George Junkin, D.D., LL.D.	Oxford	Louisville, Ky.
1845	*John Michael Krebs, D.D.	New York	Cincinnati, Ohio
1846	*Charles Hodge, D.D., LL.D.	New Brunswick	Philadelphia, Pa.
1847	*Jas. H. Thornwell, D.D., LL.D.	Charleston	Richmond, Va.
1848	*Alexander T. McGill, DD, L&D	Ohio	Baltimore, Md.
1849	*Nicholas Murray, D.D.	Elizabethtown	Pittsburgh, Pa.
1850	*Aaron W. Leland, D.D.	Charleston	Cincinnati, Ohio
1851	*Edward P. Humphrey, D.D., LL.D.	Louisville	St. Louis, Mo.
1852	*John Chase Lord, D.D.	Buffalo City	Charleston, S.C.
1853	*John Clark Young, D.D.	Transylvania	Philadelphia, Pa.
1854	*Henry Augustus Boardman, D.D.	Philadelphia	Buffalo, N.Y.
1855	*Nathan Lewis Rice, D.D.	St. Louis	Nashville, Tenn.
1856	*Francis McFarland, D.D.	Lexington	New York, N.Y.
1857	*Cortlandt Van Rensselaer, D.D.	Burlington	Lexington, Ky.
1858	*Wm. Anderson Scott, D.D., LL.D.	California	New Orleans, La.
1859	*William L. Breckenridge, D.D.	Louisville	Indianapolis, Ind.
1860	*John Williams Yeomans, D.D.	Northumberland	Rochester, N.Y.
1861	*Jno. Chester Backus, D.D., LL.D.	Baltimore	Philadelphia, Pa.
1862	*Charles C. Beatty, D.D., LL.D.	Steubenville	Columbus, Ohio
1863	*John Hunter Morrison, D.D.	Lodiana	Peoria, Ill.
1864	*James Wood, D.D.	Madison	Newark, N.J.
1865	*John Cameron Lowrie, D.D.	New York	Pittsburgh, Pa.
1866	*Robert Livingstone Stanton, D.D.	Chillicothe	St. Louis, Mo.
1867	*Phineas Densmore Gurley, D.D.	Potomac	Cincinnati, Ohio
1868	*George W. Musgrave, D.D., LL.D.	Phila. Central	Albany, N.Y.
1869	*M.W. Jacobus, D.D., LL.D.	Ohio	New York, N.Y.
1869	*M.W. Jacobus, D.D., LL.D.	Ohio (Nov. 12)	Pittsburgh, Pa.

2. (NEW SCHOOL BRANCH)

1838	*Samuel Fisher, D.D.	Newark	Philadelphia, Pa.
1839	*Baster Dickinson, D.D.	Cincinnati	Philadelphia, Pa.
1840	*William Wisner, D.D.	Cincinnati	Philadelphia, Pa.
1843	*Ansel Doan Eddy, D.D.	Newark	Philadelphia, Pa.
1846	*Samuel Hanson Cox, D.D., LL.D.	Brooklyn	Philadelphia, Pa.
1849	*Philip Courtlandt Hay, D.D.	Tioga	Philadelphia, Pa.
1850	*David H. Riddle, D.D., LL.D.	Pittsburgh	Detroit, Mich.
1851	*Albert Barnes	Philadelphia, 4th	Utica, N.Y.
1852	*William Adams, D.D., LL.D.	New York, 4th	Washington, D.C.
1853	*Diarca Howe Allen, D.D.	Cincinnati	Buffalo, N.Y.
1854	*Thomas H. Skinner, D.D., LL.D.	New York, 3rd	Philadelphia, Pa.
1855	*William Carpenter Wisner, D.D.	Niagara	St. Louis, Mo.
1856	*Laurens P. Hickok, D.D., LL.D.	Troy	New York, N.Y.
1857	*Samuel W. Fisher, D.D., LL.D.	Cincinnati	Cleveland, Ohio
1858	*Matthew L. P. Thompson, D.D.	Buffalo	Chicago, Ill.
1859	*Robert Wilson Patterson, D.D.	Chicago	Wilmington, Del.
1860	*Thornton Anthony Mills, D.D.	Indianapolis	Pittsburgh, Pa.
1861	*Jonathan Bailey Condit, D.D.	Cayuga	Syracuse, N.Y.
1862	*George Duffield, D.D.	Detroit	Cincinnati, Ohio
1863	*Henry B. Smith, D.D., LL.D.	N. York, 4th	Philadelphia, Pa.
1864	*Thomas Brainerd, D.D.	Philadelphia, 4th	Dayton, Ohio
1865	*James Boylan Shaw, D.D.	Rochester	Brooklyn, N.Y.

* Deceased
‡ Ruling Elder

MODERATORS AND CLERKS

A.D.	NAME	PRESBYTERY	PLACE	A.D.	NAME	PRESBYTERY	PLACE
1866	*Samuel Miles Hopkins, D.D.	Cayuga	St. Louis, Mo.	1926	*William O. Thompson, D.D., LL.D.	Columbus	Baltimore, Md.
1867	*Henry Addison Nelson, D.D.	St. Louis	Rochester, N.Y.	1927	‡*Robert E. Speer, D.D., LL.D.	Jersey City	San Francisco, Calif.
1868	*Jonathan French Stearns, D.D.	Newark	Harrisburg, Pa.	1928	*Hugh Kelso Walker, D.D., LL.D.	Los Angeles	Tulsa, Okla.
1869	*Philemon Halsted Fowler, D.D.	Utica	New York, N.Y.	1929	*Cleland Boyd McAfee, D.D., LL.D.	Chicago	St. Paul, Minn.
1869	*Philemon Halsted Fowler, D.D.	Utica (Nov. 12)	Pittsburgh, Pa.	1930	*Hugh Thomson Kerr, D.D., LL.D.	Pittsburgh	Cincinnati, Ohio

REUNITED OLD AND NEW SCHOOLS

1870–1958

1870	*J. Trumbull Backus, DD., LL.D.	Albany	Philadelphia, Pa.	1932	*Charles William Kerr, D.D.	Tulsa	Denver, Co.
1871	*Zephaniah Moore Humphrey, D.D.	Philadelphia	Chicago, Ill.	1933	*John McDowell, D.D., LL.D.	Baltimore	Columbus, Ohio
1872	*Samuel J. Niccolls, D.D., LL.D.	St. Louis	Detroit, Mich.	1934	*William Chalmers Covert, D.D., LL.D.		Chicago Cleveland, Ohio
1873	*Howard Crosby, D.D., LL.D.	New York	Baltimore, Md.	1935	*Joseph Anderson Vance, D.D., LL.D.	Detroit	Cincinnati, Ohio
1874	*Samuel J. Wilson, D.D., LL.D.	Pittsburgh	St. Louis, Mo.	1936	*Henry Buck Master, D.D., LL.D., Litt.D.	Fort Wayne	Syracuse, N.Y.
1875	*Edward D. Morris, D.D., LL.D.	Cincinnati	Cleveland, Ohio	1937	*William Hiram Foulkes, D.D., LL.D.	Newark	Columbus, Ohio
1876	*Henry Jackson Van Dyke, D.D.	Brooklyn	Brooklyn, N.Y.	1938	*Charles Whitefield Welch, D.D.	Louisville	Philadelphia, Pa.
1877	*James Eells, D.D., LL.D.	San Francisco	Chicago, Ill.	1939	‡*Sam Higginbottom, LL.D., Philan.D.	Cleveland	Cleveland, Ohio
1878	*Francis L. Patton, D.D., LL.D.	Chicago	Pittsburgh, Pa.	1940	*William Lindsay Young, D.D., LL.D.	Kansas City	Rochester, N.Y.
1879	*Henry Harris Jessup, D.D.	Lackawanna	Saratoga, N.Y.	1941	*Herbert Booth Smith, D.D., LL.D.	Los Angeles	St. Louis, Mo.
1880	*William M. Paxton, D.D., LL.D.	New York	Madison, Wis.	1942	*Stuart Nye Hutchison, D.D., LL.D.	Pittsburgh	Milwaukee, Wis.
1881	*Henry Darling, D.D., LL.D.	Albany	Buffalo, N.Y.	1943	*Henry Sloane Coffin, D.D., Litt.D., LL.D.	New York	Detroit, Mich.
1882	*Herrick Johnson, D.D., LL.D.	Chicago	Springfield, Ill.	1944	*Roy Ewing Vale, D.D., LL.D.	Indianapolis	Chicago, Ill.
1883	*Edwin Francis Hatfield, D.D.	New York	Saratoga, N.Y.	1945	*William Blakeman Lampe, D.D.	St. Louis	Minneapolis, Minn.
1884	*George P. Hays, D.D., LL.D.	Denver	Saratoga, N.Y.	1946	*Frederick W. Evans, D.D.	Troy	Atlantic City, N.J.
1885	*Elijah R. Craven, D.D., LL.D.	Newark	Cincinnati, Ohio	1947	‡*Wilbur LaRoe Jr., LL.D.	Washington City	Grand Rapids, Mich.
1886	*David C. Marquis, D.D., LL.D.	St. Louis	Minneapolis, Minn.	1948	*Jese Hays Baird, D.D., LL.D.	San Francisco	Seattle, Wash.
1887	*Joseph T. Smith, D.D., LL.D.	Baltimore	Omaha, Neb.	1949	*Clifford E. Barbour, Ph.D., D.D., LL.D.		Union Buffalo, N.Y.
1888	*Charles L. Thompson, D.D., LL.D.	Kansas City	Philadelphia, Pa.	1950	*Hugh Ivans Evans, D.D., S.T.D.	Dayton	Cincinnati, Ohio
1889	*William Chas. Roberts, D.D., LL.D.	Chicago	New York, N.Y.	1951	*H. Ray Anderson, S.T.D., LL.D.	Chicago	Cincinnati, Ohio
1890	*William Eves Moore, D.D., LL.D.	Columbus	Saratoga, N.Y.	1952	*Hermann Nelson Morse, D.D., LL.D.	Brooklyn-Nassau	New York, N.Y.
1891	*W. Henry Green, D.D., LL.D.	New Brunswick	Detroit, Mich.	1953	*John Alexander Mackay, D.D., LL.D., Litt.D., L.H.D.	New Brunswick	Minneapolis, Minn.
1892	*William C. Young, D.D., LL.D.	Transylvania	Portland, Ore.	1954	*Ralph Waldo Lloyd, DD, LLD, Litt.D.		Union Detroit, Mich.
1893	*Willis Greer Craig, D.D., LL.D.	Iowa	Washington, D.C.	1955	*Paul S. Wright, D.D., L.H.D.	Portland	Los Angeles, Calif.
1894	*S. A. Mutchmore, D.D., LL.D.	Philadelphia	Saratoga, N.Y.	1956	‡*David W. Proffitt, LL.D.	Union	Philadelphia, Pa.
1895	*Robert Russell Booth, D.D., LL.D.	New York	Pittsburgh, Pa.	1957	*Harold R. Martin, D.D., LL.D.	Bloomington	Omaha, Neb.
1896	*John Lindsay Withrow, D.D., LL.D.		Chicago Saratoga, N.Y.	1958	*Harold R. Martin, D.D., LL.D.	Bloomington	Pittsburgh, Pa.
1897	*Sheldon Jackson, D.D., LL.D.	Alaska	Winona Lake, Ind.				
1898	*Wallace Radcliffe, D.D., LL.D.	Washington City	Winona Lake, Ind.				
1899	*Robert F. Sample, D.D., LL.D.	New York	Minneapolis, Minn.				
1900	*Charles A. Dickey, D.D., LL.D.	Philadelphia	St. Louis, Mo.				
1901	*Henry Collin Minton, D.D., LL.D.	San Francisco	Philadelphia, Pa.				
1902	*Henry van Dyke, D.D., LL.D.	New Brunswick	New York, N.Y.				
1903	*Robert F. Coyle, D.D., LL.D.	Denver	Los Angeles, Calif.	1829	*Thomas Calhoun	Lebanon	Princeton, Ky.
1904	*J. Addison Henry, D.D., LL.D.	Philadelphia	Buffalo, N.Y.	1830	*James B. Porter	Elk	Princeton, Ky.
1905	*James D. Moffat, D.D., LL.D.	Washington	Winona Lake, Ind.	1831	*Alexander Chapman	Logan	Princeton, Ky.
1906	*Hunter Corbett, D.D., LL.D.	Shantung	Des Moines, Iowa	1832	*Samuel King	Barnett	Nashville, Tenn.
1907	*William H. Roberts, D.D., LL.D.	Philadelphia	Columbus, Ohio	1833	*Thomas Calhoun	Lebanon	Nashville, Tenn.
1908	*Baxter P. Fullerton, D.D., LL.D.	St. Louis	Kans. City, Mo.	1834	*F.R. Cossitt, D.D.	Princeton	Nashville, Tenn.
1909	*James M. Barkley, D.D., LL.D.	Detroit	Denver, Colo.	1835	*Samuel King	Lexington	Princeton, Ky.
1910	*Charles Little, D.D., LL.D.	Muncie	Atl. City, N.J.	1836	*Reuben Burrow	Forked Deer	Nashville, Tenn.
1911	*John F. Carson, D.D., LL.D.	Brooklyn	Atl. City, N.J.	1837	*Robert Donnell	Tennessee	Princeton, Ky.
1912	*Mark A. Matthews, D.D., LL.D.	Seattle	Louisville, Ky.	1838	*Hiram A. Hunter	Indiana	Lebanon, Tenn.
1913	*John Timothy Stone, D.D., LL.D.	Chicago	Atlanta, Ga.	1840	*Reuben Burrow, D.D.	Union	Elkton, Ky.
1914	*Maitland Alexander, D.D., LL.D.	Pittsburgh	Chicago, Ill.	1841	*William Ralston	Richland	Owensboro, Ky.
1915	*J. Ross Stevenson, D.D., LL.D.	Baltimore	Rochester, N.Y.	1842	*Milton Bird, D.D.	Union	Owensboro, Ky.
1916	*John Abner Marquis, D.D., LL.D.	Cedar Rapids	Atl. City, N.J.	1843	*A.M. Bryan, D.D.	Pennsylvania	Owensboro, Ky.
1917	*J. Wilbur Chapman, D.D., LL.D.	New York	Dallas, Tex.	1845	*Richard Beard, D.D.	Princeton	Lebanon, Tenn.
1918	*J. Frank Smith, D.D.	Dallas	Columbus, Ohio	1846	*M.H. Bone, D.D.	Tennessee	Owensboro, Ky.
1919	‡*John Willis Baer, LL.D., Litt.D.	Los Angeles	St. Louis, Mo.	1847	*Hiram A. Hunter, D.D.	Ohio	Lebanon, Ohio
1920	*Samuel S. Palmer, D.D.	Columbus	Philadelphia, Pa.	1848	*Milton Bird, D.D.	Morgan	Memphis, Tenn.
1921	*Henry C. Swearingen, DD, LL.D.	St. Paul	Winona Lake, Ind.	1849	*John L. Smith	Nashville	Princeton, Ky.
1922	*Calvin C. Hays, D.D., LL.D.	Blairsville	Des Moines, Iowa	1850	*Reuben Burrow, D.D.	Madison	Clarksville, Tenn.
1923	*Charles F. Wishart, D.D., LL.D.	Wooster	Indianapolis, Ind.				
1924	*Clarence Edward Macartney, DD.	Philadelphia	Grand Rapids, Mich.				
1925	*Charles R. Erdman, D.D., LL.D.	New Brunswick	Columbus, Ohio				

CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

1829–1906

* Deceased
‡ Ruling Elder

MODERATORS AND CLERKS

A.D.	NAME	PRESBYTERY	PLACE
1851	*Milton Bird, D.D.	Kentucky	Pittsburgh, Pa.
1852	*David Lowry	Chapman	Nashville, Tenn.
1853	*H.S. Porter, D.D.	Memphis	Princeton, Ky.
1854	*Isaac Shook	Elk	Memphis, Tenn.
1855	*M.H. Bone, D.D.	Nashville	Lebanon, Tenn.
1856	*Milton Bird, D.D.	Princeton	Louisville, Ky.
1857	*Carson P. Reed	Richland	Lexington, Mo.
1858	*Felix Johnson, D.D.	McGreedy	Huntsville, Ala.
1859	*T.B. Wilson	Marshall	Evansville, Ind.
1860	*S.G. Burney, D.D.	Oxford	Nashville, Tenn.
1861	*A.E. Cooper	Hopewell	St. Louis, Mo.
1862	*P.G. Rea	New Lebanon	Owensboro, Ky.
1863	*Milton Bird, D.D.	Morgan	Alton, Ill.
1864	*Jesse Anderson	Ohio	Lebanon, Ohio
1865	*Hiram Douglass	Georgia	Evansville, Ind.
1866	*Richard Beard, D.D.	Lebanon	Owensboro, Ky.
1867	*J.B. Mitchell, D.D.	McGee	Memphis, Tenn.
1868	*G.W. Mitchell	Richland	Lincoln, Ill.
1869	*S.T. Anderson, D.D.	Miami	Murfreesboro, Tenn.
1870	*J.C. Provine, D.D.	Nashville	Warrensburg, Mo.
1871	*J.B. Logan, D.D.	Vandalia	Nashville, Tenn.
1872	*C.H. Bell, D.D.	Oxford	Evansville, Ind.
1873	*J.W. Poindexter, D.D.	Ohio	Huntsville, Ala.
1874	*T.C. Blake, D.D.	Nashville	Springfield, Mo.
1875	*W.S. Campbell, D.D.	Rushville	Jefferson, Tex.
1876	*J.M. Gill, D.D.	Davis	Bowling Green, Ky.
1877	*A.B. Miller, D.D.	Pennsylvania	Lincoln, Ill.
1878	*D.E. Bushnell, D.D.	California	Lebanon, Tenn.
1879	*J.S. Grider, D.D.	Logan	Memphis, Tenn.
1880	*A. Templeton, D.D.	Kirkpatrick	Evansville, Ind.
1881	*W.J. Darby, D.D., LL.D.	Indiana	Austin, Tex.
1882	*S.H. Buchanan, D.D.	Searcy	Huntsville, Ala.
1883	*A.J. McGlumphy, D.D.	Mackinaw	Nashville, Tenn.
1884	‡*John Frizzell	Lebanon	McKeesport, Pa.
1885	*G.T. Stainback, D.D.	McMinnville	Bentonville, Ark.
1886	*E.B. Crisman, D.D.	Kirkpatrick	Sedalia, Mo.
1887	‡*Nathan Green	Lebanon	Covington, Ohio
1888	*W.H. Black, D.D., LL.D.	St. Louis	Waco, Tex.
1889	*J.M. Hubbert, D.D.	Lebanon	Kansas City, Mo.
1890	*E.G. McLean, D.D.	Walla Walla	Union City, Tenn.
1891	‡*E.E. Beard	Lebanon	Owensboro, Ky.
1892	*W.S. Danley, D.D.	Mackinaw	Memphis, Tenn.
1893	*W.T. Ferguson, D.D.	Sangamon	Little Rock, Ark.
1894	*F.R. Earle, D.D.	Arkansas	Eugene, Ore.
1895	*M.B. DeWitt, D.D.	Springfield	Meridian, Miss.
1896	*A.W. Hawkins	Decatur	Birmingham, Ala.
1897	*H.S. Williams, D.D.	Memphis	Chicago, Ill.
1898	‡*H.H. Norman	McMinnville	Marshall, Mo.
1899	*J.M. Halsell, D.D.	San Jacinto	Denver, Colo.
1900	*H.C. Bird, D.D.	Union	Chattanooga, Tenn.
1901	*E.E. Morris, D.D.	New Lebanon	West Point, Miss.
1902	*S.M. Templeton, D.D.	Red River	Springfield, Mo.
1903	*R.M. Tinnon, D.D.	Rocky Mtn.	Nashville, Tenn.
1904	‡*W.E. Settle	Logan	Dallas, Tex.
1905	*J.B. Hail, D.D.	Pennsylvania	Fresno, Calif.
1906	*Ira Landrith, D.D., LL.D.	Lebanon	Decatur, Ill.

**CALVINISTIC METHODIST CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES
1869–1920**

1869	*William Hughes	Racine, Wis.	Columbus, Ohio
1870	*William Roberts	Scranton, Pa.	Pittsburgh, Pa.
1871	*William Roberts	Scranton, Pa.	New York, N.Y.
1873	*Howell Powell	Cincinnati, Ohio	Racine, Wis.
1875	*William Roberts	Scranton, Pa.	Hyde Park, Pa.

A.D.	NAME	PRESBYTERY	PLACE
1877	*Rees Evans	Cambria, Wis.	Chicago, Ill.
1880	*Thomas Roberts	Newark, Ohio	Utica, N.Y.
1883	*G.H. Humphrey	Humphreys, NY	Oak Hill, Ohio
1886	*T.J. Phillips	Plymouth, Pa.	Milwaukee, Wis.
1889	*T.C. Davis	Pittsburgh, Pa.	Wilkes-Barre, Pa.
1892	*Joseph Roberts	Minneapolis, Minn.	Utica, N.Y.
1895	*J.R. Daniel	Engedi, Wis.	Minneapolis, Minn.
1899	*John R. Jones	Columbus, Wis.	Columbus, Ohio
1901	*Hugh Davis	Scranton, Pa.	Cambria, Wis.
1904	*W.R. Evans	Peniel, Ohio	Venedocia, Ohio
1907	*Daniel Thomas	Wild Rose, Wis.	Wilkes-Barre, Pa.
1910	‡*T. Solomon Griffith	Utica, N.Y.	Cotter, Iowa
1913	*John C. Jones	Chicago, Ill.	Utica, N.Y.
1916	*W.E. Evans	Mankato, Minn.	Lake Crystal, Minn.
1919	*John Hammond	Scranton, Pa.	Racine, Wis.
1920	*John Hammond	Scranton, Pa.	Columbus, Ohio

UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF NORTH AMERICA

1858–1958

1858	*John T. Pressly, D.D.	Allegheny	Pittsburgh, Pa.
1859	*Peter Bullions, D.D.	Albany	Xenia, Ohio
1860	*Joseph Clokey, D.D.	Xenia	Philadelphia, Pa.
1861	*R.D. Harper, D.D.	Xenia	Monmouth, Ill.
1862	*J.T. Cooper, D.D., LL.D.	Philadelphia	Pittsburgh, Pa.
1863	*A. Young, D.D., LL.D.	Monmouth	Xenia, Ohio
1864	*D.A. Wallace, D.D., LL.D.	Monmouth	Philadelphia, Pa.
1865	*John B. Clark, D.D.	Allegheny	Washington, Iowa
1866	*David R. Kerr, D.D., LL.D.	Monongahela	Allegheny, Pa.
1867	*John B. Dales, D.D., LL.D.	Philadelphia	Xenia, Ohio
1868	*James Harper, D.D., LL.D.	First N.Y.	Argyle, N.Y.
1869	*R.A. Browne, D.D., LL.D.	Mercer	Monmouth, Ill.
1870	*T.S. Kendall, D.D.	Oregon	Pittsburgh, Pa.
1871	*R.A. McAyeal, D.D.	Des Moines	Xenia, Ohio
1872	*John S. Easton, D.D.	Westmoreland	Washington, Iowa
1873	*John Y. Scouller, D.D.	First Ohio	Philadelphia, Pa.
1874	*John G. Brown, D.D.	Monongahela	Monmouth, Ill.
1875	*W.W. Barr, D.D.	Philadelphia	Wooster, Ohio
1876	*James Brown, D.D.	Keokuk	Philadelphia, Pa.
1877	*Robert B. Ewing, D.D.	Monongahela	Sparta, Ill.
1878	*S.G. Irvine, D.D.	Oregon	Cambridge, Ohio
1879	*William Bruce, D.D.	Xenia	New Wilmington, Pa.
1880	*E.T. Jeffers, D.D., LL.D.	Mercer	Xenia, Ohio
1881	*David W. Carson, D.D.	Frankfort	Allegheny, Pa.
1882	*David Paul, D.D.	Muskingum	Monmouth, Ill.
1883	*W.H. McMilan, D.D., LL.D.	Allegheny	Pittsburgh, Pa.
1884	*William H. French, D.D.	First Ohio	St. Louis, Mo.
1885	*William Johnston, D.D.	College Springs	Topeka, Kans.
1886	*John T. Brownlee, D.D.	Chartiers	Hamilton, Ohio
1887	*Matthew M. Gibson, D.D.	San Francisco	Philadelphia, Pa.
1888	*Wm. T. Meloy, D.D., LL.D.	Chicago	Cedar Rapids, Iowa
1889	*E.S. McKittrick, D.D.	Allegheny	Springfield, Ohio
1890	*Andrew Watson, D.D., LL.D.	Egypt	Buffalo, N.Y.
1891	*Thos. J. Kennedy, D.D.	College Springs	Princeton, Ind.
1892	*David MacDill, D.D., LL.D.	Xenia	Allegheny, Pa.
1893	*James Bruce, D.D.	Delaware	Monmouth, Ill.
1894	*John A. Wilson, D.D., LL.D.	Mansfield	Albany, Ore.
1895	*J.B. McMichael, D.D.	Monmouth	Pittsburgh, Pa.
1896	*James White, D.D.	Kansas City	Xenia, Ohio
1897	*Thomas H. Hanna, D.D.	Monmouth	Rock Island, Ill.
1898	*R.G. Ferguson, D.D., LL.D.	Mercer	Omaha, Nebr.

* Deceased
‡ Ruling Elder

MODERATORS AND CLERKS

A.D.	NAME	PRESBYTERY	PLACE
1899	*Wm. J. Robinson, D.D., LL.D.	Allegheny	Philadelphia, Pa.
1900	*James P. Sankey, D.D.	Caledonia	Chicago, Ill.
1901	*J.A. Thompson, L.H.D., LL.D.	College Springs	Des Moines, Iowa
1902	*James C. Wilson, D.D., LL.D.	Lake	Allegheny, Pa.
1903	*James P. Cowan, D.D.	Indiana	Tarkio, Mo.
1904	*James W. Witherspoon, D.D.	Allegheny	Greenville, Pa.
1905	*Wm. C. Williamson, D.D., LL.D.	Keokuk	Washington, Iowa
1906	*J.K. McClurkin, D.D., LL.D.	Monongahela	Richmond, Ind.
1907	*William T. Campbell, D.D.	Monmouth	Denver, Colo.
1908	*James G. Carson, D.D., LL.D.	Xenia	Pittsburgh, Pa.
1909	*D.A. McClenahan, D.D., LL.D.	Allegheny	Knoxville, Tenn.
1910	*James D. Rankin, D.D., LL.D.	Colorado	Philadelphia, Pa.
1911	*John C. Scouller, D.D.	Philadelphia	Washington, Pa.
1912	*Hugh H. Bell, D.D.	San Francisco	Seattle, Wash.
1913	*R.M. Russell, D.D., LL.D.	Monongahela	Atlanta, Ga.
1914	*Joseph Kyle, D.D., LL.D.	Xenia	New Castle, Pa.
1915	*T.H. McMichael, D.D., LL.D.	Monmouth	Loveland, Colo.
1916	*W.B. Smiley, D.D.	Chartiers	Cleveland, Ohio
1917	*W.E. McCulloch, D.D.	Monongahela	Boston, Mass.
1918	*W.M. Anderson, D.D.	Philadelphia	Pittsburgh, Pa.
1919	*James T. McCrory, D.D.	Monongahela	Monmouth, Ill.
1920	*F.M. Spencer, D.D., LL.D.	Ark. Valley	Sterling, Kans.
1921	*A.F. Kirkpatrick, D.D.	Puget Sound	Philadelphia, Pa.
1922	*J. Kelly Giffen, D.D.	The Sudan	Cambridge, Ohio
1923	*W.R. Sawhill, D.D.	Puget Sound	Buffalo, N.Y.
1924	*Charles H. Robinson, D.D.	Wheeling	Richmond, Ind.
1925	*W.I. Wishart, D.D.	Allegheny	Topeka, Kans.
1926	*R.A. Hutchison, D.D., LL.D.	Conemaugh	Sharon, Pa.
1927	*M.G. Kyle, D.D., LL.D.	Philadelphia	Washington, D.C.
1928	*Wm. A. Spalding, D.D.	Oregon	St. Louis, Mo.
1929	*John McNaugher, DD, LLD, Litt.D.	Allegheny	Pittsburgh, Pa.
1930	*T.C. Atchison, D.D.	Boston	Des Moines, Iowa
1931	*J. Knox Montgomery, DD, LL.D.	Muskingum	Youngstown, Ohio
1932	*Chas. S. Cleland, D.D.	Philadelphia	Beaver, Pa.
1933	*W.B. Anderson, D.D., LL.D.	Philadelphia	Pittsburgh, Pa.
1934	*J. Alvin Orr, D.D., LL.D.	Allegheny	Oxford, Ohio
1935	*E.C. McCown, D.D.	Monongahela	Akron, Ohio
1936	*Robert W. Thompson, DD, LL.D.	Wisconsin	Pittsburg, Kans.
1937	*A.R. Robinson, D.D., LL.D.	Monongahela	Oak Park, Ill.
1938	*Ralph Atkinson, D.D.	Los Angeles	Cleveland, Ohio
1939	‡*Hon. H. Walton Mitchell, LL.D.	Monongahela	Philadelphia, Pa.
1940	*Homer B. Henderson, D.D.	Butler	Buffalo, N.Y.
1941	*R.L. Lanning, D.D., LL.D.	Beaver Valley	Indianapolis, Ind.
1942	*Thomas C. Pollock, D.D.	Philadelphia	Columbus, Ohio
1943	*W. Bruce Wilson, D.D.	Monongahela	New Wilmington, Pa.
1944	*James H. Grier, D.D., LL.D.	Monmouth	New Concord, Ohio
1945	*James M. Ferguson, D.D.	Allegheny	Monmouth, Ill.
1946	*Lytle Rodgers Free, D.D.	Philadelphia	Tarkio, Mo.
1947	‡*Samuel A. Fulton, LL.D.	Wisconsin	Sterling, Kans.
1948	*Albert H. Baldinger, D.D.	Butler	New Wilmington, Pa.
1949	‡*Tim J. Campbell, LL.D.	Des Moines	Buck Hill Falls, Pa.
1950	*J. Lowrie Anderson, D.D.	Upper Nile	New Concord, Ohio
1951	‡*W. Kyle George, LL.D.	Cleveland	Des Moines, Iowa
1952	*James Leon Kelso, D.D., ThD, LL.D.	Monongahela	Albany, Oregon
1953	*Samuel C. Weir, D.D.	Detroit	Carlisle, Pa.
1954	*Albert E. Kelly, D.D., LL.D.	Los Angeles	Akron, Ohio
1955	*George A. Long, D.D., LL.D., Litt.D.	Monongahela	Monmouth, Ill.
1956	*Robert W. Gibson, D.D., LL.D.	Monmouth	Knoxville, Tenn.
1957	*Robert N. Montgomery, D.D., LL.D.	Muskingum	New Concord, Ohio
1958	*Robert N. Montgomery, D.D., LL.D.	Muskingum	Pittsburgh, Pa.

THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE U.S.A.

1958	*Theophilus M. Taylor, PhD., D.D.	Vermont	Pittsburgh, Pa.
1959	*Arthur L. Miller, D.D., LL.D.	Denver	Indianapolis, Ind.

A.D.	NAME	PRESBYTERY	PLACE
1960	*Herman Lee Turner, D.D., LL.D.	Chattanooga	Cleveland, Ohio
1961	‡*Paul D. McKelvey	Los Angeles	Buffalo, N.Y.
1962	*Marshal L. Scott, Ed.D., D.D., LL.D.	Chicago	Denver, Colo.
1963	*Silas G. Kessler, D.D., LL.D.	Platte	Des Moines, Iowa
1964	*Elder G. Hawkins, D.D.	New York City	Oklahoma City, Okla.
1965	‡William P. Thompson, J.D., J.C.D., LL.D.	Wichita	Columbus, Ohio
1966	*Ganse Little, D.D., LL.D., S.T.D.	Los Angeles	Boston, Mass.
1967	*Eugene Smathers, D.D.	St. Andrew	Portland, Ore.
1968	*John Coventry Smith, D.D.	Pittsburgh	Minneapolis, Minn.
1969	*George E. Sweazey, Ph.D.	St. Louis	San Antonio, Tex.
1970	*William R. Laws Jr., D.D.	Indianapolis	Chicago, Ill.
1971	‡*Lois H. Stair, L.H.D.	Milwaukee	Rochester, N.Y.
1972	‡C. Willard Heckel, LL.D.	Newark	Denver, Colo.
1973	Clinton M. Marsh, D.D.	Omaha	Omaha, Neb.
1974	Robert C. Lamar, D.D.	Albany	Louisville, Ky.
1975	*William F. Keesecker, D.D., LL.D.	Southern Kansas	Cincinnati, Ohio
1976	‡Thelma C.D. Adair, Ed.D.	New York City	Baltimore, Md.
1977	*John T. Conner	Cascades	Philadelphia, Pa.
1978	*William P. Lytle, D.D.	Alamo	San Diego, Calif.
1979	*Howard L. Rice Jr.	San Francisco	Kansas City, Mo.
1980	*Charles A. Hammond, D.D.	Wabash Valley	Detroit, Mich.
1981	*Robert M. Davidson	New York City	Houston, Tex.
1982	James H. Costen, D.D.	Georgia	Hartford, Conn.
1983	James H. Costen, D.D.	Georgia	Atlanta, Ga.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES

1861-1983

1861	*Benj. M. Palmer	New Orleans	Augusta
1862	*J.L. Kirkpatrick	Concord	Montgomery
1863	*James A. Lyon	Tombeckbee	Columbia
1864	*John S. Wilson	Flint River	Charlotte
1865	*George Howe	Charleston	Macon
1866	*Andrew Hart Kerr	Memphis	Memphis
1867	*Thos. Verner Moore	East Hanover	Nashville
1868	*John N. Waddel	Chickasaw	Baltimore
1869	*Stuart Robinson	Louisville	Mobile
1870	*Robert L. Dabney	West Hanover	Louisville
1871	*William S. Plumer	Harmony	Huntsville, Ala.
1872	*Thomas R. Welch	Arkansas	Richmond
1873	*Henry Martyn Smith	New Orleans	Little Rock
1874	*John L. Girardeau	Charleston	Columbus, Miss.
1875	*Moses D. Hoge	East Hanover	St. Louis
1876	*Benjamin M. Smith	West Hanover	Savannah
1877	*C.A. Stillman	Tuscaloosa	New Orleans
1878	*T.E. Peck	Roanoke	Knoxville
1879	*Joseph R. Wilson	Wilmington	Louisville
1880	*T.A. Hoyt	Nashville	Charleston, S.C.
1881	*Robert P. Farris	St. Louis	Staunton
1882	*R.K. Smoot	Central Texas	Atlanta
1883	*T. Pryor	East Hanover	Lexington, Ky.
1884	*T.D. Witherspoon	Louisville	Vicksburg
1885	*H.R. Raymond	Tuscaloosa	Houston
1886	*J.H. Bryson	N. Alabama	Augusta
1887	*G.B. Strickler	Atlanta	St. Louis
1888	*J.J. Bullock	Maryland	Baltimore
1889	*H.G. Hill	Fayetteville	Chattanooga
1890	*James Park	Knoxville	Asheville
1891	*Hampden C. DuBose	Pee Dee	Birmingham
1892	*Samuel A. King	Central Texas	Hot Springs
1893	‡*J.W. Lapsley	N. Alabama	Macon

* Deceased

‡ Ruling Elder

MODERATORS AND CLERKS

A.D.	NAME	PRESBYTERY	PLACE	A.D.	NAME	PRESBYTERY	PLACE
1894	*James R. Graham	Winchester	Nashville	1963	*William H. McCorkle	Holston	Huntington
1895	*C.R. Hemphill	Louisville	Dallas	1964	*Felix B. Gear, Ph.D.	Westminster	Montreat
1896	*R.Q. Mallard	New Orleans	Memphis	1965	‡*Samuel J. Patterson	John Knox	Montreat
1897	*Geo. T. Goetchius	Cherokee	Charlotte	1966	*F.H. Caldwell, Ph.D.	Louisville	Montreat
1898	*E.M. Green	Transylvania	New Orleans	1967	*Marshall C. Dendy	St. Johns	Bristol
1899	*John F. Cannon	St. Louis	Richmond	1968	*P.D. Miller	Atlanta	Montreat
1900	‡*Jos. W. Martin	Arkansas	Atlanta	1969	*R. Matthew Lynn	The Southwest	Mobile, Ala.
1901	*Neander M. Woods	Memphis	Little Rock	1970	*William A. Benfield Jr.	Kanawha	Memphis, Tenn.
1902	*William T. Hall	Bethel	Jackson, Miss.	1971	*Ben Lacy Rose	Wilmington	Massanetta Springs, Va.
1903	*Abner C. Hopkins	Winchester	Lexington, Va.	1972	‡*L. Nelson Bell	Asheville	Montreat, N.C.
1904	*S.M. Neel	Upper Missouri	Mobile	1973	*Charles E.S. Kraemer	Mecklenburg	Fort Worth, Tex.
1905	*J.T. Plunkett	Augusta	Fort Worth	1974	*Lawrence W. Bottoms	Atlanta	Louisville, Ky.
1906	‡*Allen G. Hall	Nashville	Greenville, S.C.	1975	*Paul M. Edris	St. Johns	Charlotte, N.C.
1907	*J.R. Howerton	Asheville	Birmingham	1976	‡Jule C. Spach	Concord	Tuscaloosa, Ala.
1908	*W.M. Moore	West Hanover	Greensboro	1977	*Harvard A. Anderson	St. Johns	Nashville, Tenn.
1909	*William E. Boggs	Suwannee	Savannah	1978	‡*Sara Bernice Moseley	Covenant	Shreveport, La.
1910	*J.W. Bachman	Knoxville	Lewisburg, W. Va.	1979	*Albert C. Winn	Hanover	Kansas City, Mo.
1911	*Russell Cecil	East Hanover	Louisville	1980	*David L. Stitt	Brazos	MyrtleBeach, SC
1912	*Thos. S. Clyce	Dallas	Bristol	1981	‡*Dorothy G. Barnard	Southeast Missouri	Houston, Tex.
1913	*J.S. Lyons	Louisville	Atlanta	1982	*John F. Anderson Jr., D.D.	Grace Union	Columbus, Ga.
1914	‡*W.J. Martin	Concord	Kansas City	1983	*John F. Anderson Jr., D.D.	Grace Union	Atlanta, Ga.
1915	*W. McF. Alexander	New Orleans	Newport News	PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)			
1916	*C.W. Grafton	Mississippi	Orlando	1983—			
1917	*Jno. M. Wills, Ph.D.	Wilmington	Birmingham	1983	*J. Randolph Taylor, DD, LL.D., Ph.d.	Mecklenburg	Atlanta, Ga.
1918	*Jas. I. Vance	Nashville	Durant	1984	‡Harriet Nelson, L.H.D.	Redwoods	Phoenix, Ariz.
1919	*A.M. Fraser	Lexington	New Orleans	1985	*William H. Wilson	Mission	Indianapolis, Ind.
1920	*W.L. Lingle	Concord	Charlotte	1986	*Benjamin M. Weir	San Francisco	Minneapolis, Minn.
1921	*A.B. Curry	Memphis	St. Louis	1987	‡Isabel Wood Rogers	Hanover	Biloxi, Miss.
1922	*R.C. Reed	Atlanta	Charleston, W. Va.	1988	C. Kenneth Hall	Beaver-Butler	St. Louis, Mo.
1923	*Alexander Spunt	Charleston	Montreat	1989	*Joan SalmonCampbell	Philadelphia	Philadelphia, Pa.
1924	*Thornton Whaling	N. Alabama	San Antonio	1990	‡Price H. Gwynn III	Charlotte	Salt Lake City, Utah
1925	*Georgia Summey	New Orleans	Lexington, Ky.	1991	Herbert D. Valentine	Baltimore	Baltimore, Md.
1926	*J.W. Skinner	West. Texas	Pensacola	1992	John M. Fife	de Cristo	Milwaukee, Wis.
1927	*R.F. Campbell	Asheville	El Dorado	1993	David Lee Dobler	Yukon	Orlando, Fla.
1928	*Harris E. Kirk	Potomac	Atlanta	1994	Robert Wayne Bohl	Grace	Wichita, Kans.
1929	*W.R. Dobyns	Birmingham	Montreat	1995	*‡Marj Carpenter	Tres Rios	Cincinnati, Ohio
1930	*Thos. W. Currie	Central Texas	Charlottesville	1996	John M. Buchanan	Chicago	Albuquerque, N.Mex.
1931	‡*R.A. Dunn	Mecklenburg	Montreat	1997	‡Patricia G. Brown	Cincinnati	Syracuse, N.Y.
1932	*William Crowe	St. Louis	Montreat	1998	Douglas W. Oldenburg	Greater Atlta	Charlotte, N.C.
1933	*Ernest Thompson	Kanawha	Montreat	1999	*‡Freda Gardner	New Brunswick	Fort Worth, Tex.
1934	‡*Samuel Hale Sibley	Cherokee	Montreat	2000	*Syngman Rhee	Atl. Kor. Amer.	Long Beach, Calif.
1935	*Henry H. Sweets	Louisville	Montreat	2001	*Jack Rogers	San Gabriel	Louisville, Ky.
1936	*P. Frank Price	Montgomery	Augusta	2002	Fahed Abu-Akel	Greater Atlanta	Columbus, Ohio
1937	*D. Clay Lilly	Winston-Salem	Montreat	2003	Susan R. Andrews	National Calpital	Denver, Colo.
1938	‡*Willis M. Everett	Atlanta	Meridian	2004	‡ Rick Ufford-Chase	De Christo	Richmond, Va.
1939	*Edward Mack, Ph.D.	East Hanover	Montreat	2006	Joan S. Gray	Greater Atlanta	Birmingham, Ala.
1940	*Frank C. Brown	Dallas	Chattanooga	2008	Bruce Reyes-Chow	San Francisco	San Jose, Calif.
1941	*Chas. E. Diehl	Nashville	Montreat	2010	‡*Cynthia Bolbach	National Capital	Minneapolis, Minn.
1942	‡*Chas. G. Rose	Fayetteville	Knoxville	2012	Neal D. Presa	Elizabeth	Pittsburgh, Pa.
1943	*Donald W. Richardson	Asheville	Montreat	2014	‡Heath K. Rada	West. N. Carolina	Detroit, Mich.
1944	*Charles L. King	Brazos	Montreat	§2016	Denise Anderson	National Capital	Portland, Oreg.
1945	*Thomas K. Young	Memphis	Montreat	§2016	Jan Edmiston	Chicago	Portland, Oreg.
1946	*J.B. Green	Meridian	Montreat	§2018	‡Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri	Tropical Florida	St. Louis, Mo.
1947	*John R. Cunningham	Winston-Salem	Montreat	§2018	Cindy Kohlmann	Boston	St. Louis, Mo.
1948	*C. Darby Fulton	Enoree	Atlanta	§2020	Gregory J. Bentley	North Alabama	Baltimore, Md.
1949	‡*W.E. Price	Mecklenburg	Montreat	§2020	‡Elona Street-Stewart	Twin Cities Area	Baltimore, Md.
1950	*Ben R. Lacy Jr.	Granville	Massanetta	↓SUCCESSION OF STATED CLERKS			
1951	‡*James Ross McCain, Ph.D.	Atlanta	Orlando	PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE			
1952	*W.A. Alexander Jr.	Red River	Charleston, W. Va.	UNITED STATES OF AMERICA			
1953	*Frank W. Price, Ph.D.	Lexington	Montreat	1789—1837			
1954	*Wade H. Boggs	Red River	Montreat	A.D. NAME			
1955	*J. McDowell Richards	Atlanta	Richmond	1789	*George Duffield, D.D.		
1956	*W. Taliaferro Thompson	Orange	Montreat	1790	*Ashbel Green, D.D., LL.D.		
1957	*W.M. Elliott Jr., Ph.D.	Dallas	Birmingham	1803	*Philip Milledoler, D.D.		
1958	‡*Philip F. Howerton	Mecklenburg	Charlotte				
1959	*Ernest Trice Thompson	Hanover	Atlanta				
1960	Marion A. Boggs	Washburn	Jacksonville				
1961	*Wallace M. Alston, Th.D.	Atlanta	Dallas				
1962	‡*Edward D. Grant	Louisiana	Winston-Salem				

§ Co-Moderator
* Deceased
‡ Ruling Elder

MODERATORS AND CLERKS

A.D. NAME

1806 *Nathaniel Irwin
1807 *Jacob Jones Janeway, D.D.
1817 *William Neill, D.D.
1825 *Ezra Stiles Ely, D.D.
1836 *John McDowell, D.D.

1839–1869

1. (OLD SCHOOL BRANCH)

1838 *John McDowell, D.D.
1840 *Wm. Morrison Engels, D.D.
1846 *Willis Lord, D.D., LL.D.
1850 *John Leyburn, D.D.
1862 *Alex T. McGill, D.D., LL.D.

2. (NEW SCHOOL BRANCH)

1838 *Erskine Mason, D.D.
1846 *Edwin Francis Hatfield, D.D.

(REUNITED OLD AND NEW SCHOOLS)

1870–1958

1870 *Edwin Francis Hatfield, D.D.
1884 *Wm. H. Roberts, D.D., LL.D.
1921 *Lewis S. Mudge, D.D., LL.D.
1938 *William Barrow Pugh, D.D., LL.D., Litt.D.
1951 *Eugene Carson Blake, D.D. HH.D., LL.D., Litt.,D., D.Cn.L.

CLERKS

CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

1829–1906

1829 *F.R. Cossitt
1834 *James Smith
1841 *C.G. McPherson
1850 *Milton Bird
1872 †*John Frizzell
1883 *T.C. Blake, D.D.
1896 *J.M. Hubbert, D.D.

CALVINISTIC METHODIST CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES

1869–1920

1869 *M.A. Ellis
1870 *J.P. Morgan
1871 †*T.L. Hughes
1873 *M.A. Ellis
1875 *M.A. Ellis
1877 *T.C. Davis
1880 *James Jarrett
1883 *H.P. Howell
1886 *W. Machno Jones

A.D. NAME

1889 *John R. Jones
1892 *Edward Roberts
1895 *John Hammond
1898 *David Edwards
1901 *Joshua T. Evans
1904 *J.R. Johns
1907 *W.E. Evans
1910 *John E. Jones
1913 *W.O. Williams
1916 *R.E. Williams
1919 *J.O. Parry
1920 *J.O. Parry

UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF NORTH AMERICA

1858–1958

1858 *Samuel Wilson, D.D.
1859 *James Prestley, D.D.
1863 *Jos. T. Cooper, D.D., LL.D.
1875 *Wm. J. Reid, D.D., LL.D.
1903 *David F. McGill, D.D., LL.D.
1931 *O.H. Milligan, D.D., LL.D.
1954 *Samuel W. Shane, D.D.

THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

1958–1983

1958 *Eugene Carson Blake, DD., HH.D., LL.D., Litt.D., D.Cn.L.
1966 †*William P. Thompson, J.D., J.C.D., LL.D.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES

1861–1983

1861 *John N. Waddel
1865 *Joseph R. Wilson
1898 *William A. Alexander
1910 *Thos. H. Law
1922 *J.D. Leslie
1935 *E.C. Scott (Acting 1935B36)
1959 *James A. Millard Jr., Th.D.
1973 *James E. Andrews

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

1983–

1983 †*William P. Thompson (Interim Co-Stated Clerk)
*James E. Andrews (Interim Co-Stated Clerk)

1984 *James E. Andrews
1988 *James E. Andrews
1992 *James E. Andrews
1996 Clifton Kirkpatrick
2000 Clifton Kirkpatrick
2004 Clifton Kirkpatrick
2008 Gradye Parsons
2012 Gradye Parsons
2016 Dr. J. Herbert Nelson II
2020 Dr. J. Herbert Nelson II

* Deceased

† Ruling Elder

MODERATORS AND CLERKS

↓ SUCCESSION OF
ASSOCIATE STATED CLERKS

THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
1958–1983

A.D. Name

- 1958 †*Henry Barraclough, LL.D. (Emeritus, 1961)
- 1958 *Samuel W. Shane, D.D. (Emeritus, 1974)
- 1972 †Otto K. Finkbeiner
- 1972 Robert F. Stevenson, D.D.
- 1973 *Robert Pierre Johnson, D.D.
- 1975 Robert T. Newbold Jr.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES
1861–1983

- 1974 †*Donald A. Speck
- 1978 Flynn V. Long Jr.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)
1983–

- 1983 †Otto K. Finkbeiner
- 1983 Flynn V. Long Jr.
- 1983 Robert T. Newbold Jr.
- 1983 Robert F. Stevenson
- 1987 Margrethe B.J. Brown
- 1988 William B. Miller
- 1989 †Catherine McCorquodale Phillippe
- 1993 *C. Fred Jenkins
- 1993 J. Scott Schaefer
- 1993 Eugene G. Turner
- 1997 †Frederick J. Heuser
- 1997 Janet M. De Vries
- 2001 †Loyda Puig Aja
- 2001 Kerry Clements
- 2001 Gradye Parsons
- 2001 Mark Tammen
- 2001 Gary Torrens
- 2001 Robina Winbush
- 2008 Jill Hudson
- 2008 Marcia Myers
- 2010 Thomas Hay
- 2012 Andrew Black
- 2014 Sue Davis Krummel
- 2014 Joyce Lieberman
- 2014 Kerry Rice
- 2016 Beth Hessel
- 2018 Tricia Dykers-Koenig
- 2018 C. Laurie Griffith
- 2020 Jihyun Oh

↓ SUCCESSION OF
ASSISTANT STATED CLERKS

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
1907–1921, 1953–1958

- 1907 †*James M. Hubbert, D.D.
- 1953 †*Henry Barraclough, LL.D.

UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF NORTHAMERICA
1868–1913, 1952–1958

- 1868 ↓
- 1913 *A.G. Wallace, D.D., LL.D.
- 1914 Office discontinued

A.D. Name

- 1952 *Samuel W. Shane, D.D.
- 1954 *John M. Bald, Ph.D.
- 1956 *J.Y. Jackson, D.D.

THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
1967–1972, 1981–1983

- 1967 †Otto K. Finkbeiner
- 1967 Robert F. Stevenson, D.D.
- 1981 †Mildred L. Wager

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES
1861–1983

- 1930 *E.C. Scott
- 1949 P.J. Garrison Jr.
- 1979 Joyce C. Tucker
- 1975 Flynn V. Long Jr.
- 1980 Ms. Lucille Scott Hicks
- 1980 Ms. Catherine M. Shipley
- 1982 Eugene D. Witherspoon Jr.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)
1983–

- 1983 Ms. Lucille S. Hicks
- 1983 †Ms. Catherine McCorquodale Phillippe
- 1983 †Ms. Mildred L. Wager
- 1983 Eugene D. Witherspoon Jr.
- 1987 Mrs. Juanita H. Granady
- 1990 Paul M. Thompson
- 1995 Ms. Maggie Houston
- 1995 Ms. Deborah Davies
- 1995 Kerry Clements
- 2001 Zane Buxton
- 2001 Dennis Cobb
- 2001 Jerry Houchens
- 2001 Carlos Malavé
- 2001 †Joan Richardson
- 2001 †Margery Sly
- 2001 †Valerie Kiriishi Izumi
- 2002 †C. Laurie Griffith
- 2002 †Doska Ross Radebaugh
- 2003 Lesley A. Davies
- 2006 †Chris Nicholas
- 2006 Julia Thorne
- 2006 Sharon Youngs
- 2007 †Kerry Rice
- 2008 Evelyn Hwang
- 2008 †Jewel McKae
- 2008 Joyce Lieberman
- 2008 †Martha Miller
- 2012 Molly Casteel
- 2012 Kay Moore
- 2012 Kris Valerius
- 2014 SanDawna G. Ashley
- 2014 Timothy Cargal
- 2014 Melissa G. Davis
- 2014 Toya Richards
- 2014 Teresa Waggener
- 2016 Nancy Taylor
- 2018 Luke Choi
- 2018 Amanda Craft
- 2018 Laura Polk
- 2018 Flor Velez-Diaz
- 2020 Cora Brown
- 2020 DeAmber Clopton
- 2020 †Julia Henderson
- 2020 Rick Jones
- 2020 Manuel Silva
- 2020 Dianna Wright

MODERATORS AND CLERKS

E↓SUCCESSION OF
PERMANENT CLERKS

**PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
1789–1837**

1802 *Nathaniel Irwin
1807 *John Ewing Latta
1825 *John McDowell, D.D.
1837 *John Michael Krebs, D.D.

**1. (OLD SCHOOL BRANCH)
1838–1869**

A.D. Name

1838 *John Michael Krebs, D.D.
1845 *Robert Davidson, D.D.
1850 *Alex T. McGill, D.D., LL.D.
1862 *Wm. Edward Schenck, D.D.

2. (NEW SCHOOL BRANCH)

1838 *Eliphalet W. Gilbert, D.D.
1854 *Henry Darling, D.D., LL.D.
1864 *J. Glentworth Butler, D.D.

**REUNITED OLD AND NEW SCHOOLS
1870–1921**

1870 *Cyrus Dickson, D.D.
1882 *Wm. H. Roberts, D.D., LL.D.
1884 *Wm. Eves Moore, D.D., LL.D.
1900 *Wm. Brown Noble, D.D., LL.D.
1916 *Edward Leroy Warren, D.D. I

**PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES
1861–1983**

1861 *Joseph R. Wilson
1866 *William Brown
1885 *Robert P. Farris
1905 *Thomas H. Law
1910 *J.D. Leslie

F↓SUCCESSION OF
RECORDING CLERKS

**PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

1951 ‡*Henry Barraclough, L.L.D.
(Elected for this one General Assembly)

* Deceased
‡ Ruling Elder

Persons Serving on General Assembly Level Entities as of September 4, 2020

Key: column after member's name: first letter is racial and ethnic identification followed by gender and ordination status

Racial Ethnic Designation:

A-Asian American|Pacific Islander
 B-Black|African-American|African
 H-Hispanic|Latinx
 M-Middle Eastern
 N-Indigenous|Native American
 O-Biracial|Mulitracial
 W-White

Gender and Ordination designation:

FT-Female Teaching Elder
 FR-Female Ruling Elder
 FL-Female Church Member
 FC-Female Minister (Non-Presbyterian)
 MT-Male Teaching Elder
 MR-Male Ruling Elder
 ML-Male Church Member
 MC-Male Minister (Non-Presbyterian)

Last Column: Synod

ANW-Alaska-Northwest	NE-Northeast
BPR-Borinquen de Puerto Rico	PAC-Pacific
COV-Covenant	ROC-Rocky Mountains
LAK-Lakes and Prairies	SA-South Atlantic
LIN-Lincoln Trails	SCH-Southern California and Hawaii
LW-Living Waters	SUN-Sun
MAM-Mid America	SW-Southwest
MAT-Mid-Atlantic	TRI-Trinity

Advisory Committee on Litigation

Class of 2022	Jeana Lungwitz	WFR	Mission	SUN
	Michael E. Williams	WMR	San Diego	SCH
Class of 2024	Jay Summerville	WMT	Giddings Lovejoy	MAM
	Judy L. Woods	WFR	Whitewater Valley	LIN
Class of 2026	Bennet McConaughy	WMR	Seattle	ANW
	vacancy			

Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy

Class of 2022	Jacob Douylliez	WMT	Western North Carolina	MAT
	Erica Nelson	WFR	Utah	ROC
	Rick Nutt	WMT	Scioto Valley	COV
	Susan Smith	WFR	Monmouth	NE
	Robert Trawick	WMR	Hudson River	NE
	Steven B. Webb	WMR	National Capital	MAT
Class of 2024	Beverly Brewster	WFT	Redwoods	PAC
	Yenny Delgado	H/NFR	National Capital	MAT
	Jeff DeYoe	WMT	Peace River	SA
	Mark Douglas	WMT	Greater Atlanta	SA

MEMBERS OF ENTITIES ELECTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Jeromey Howard	N/WMT	Hudson River	NE
Sue Trigger	WFT	Heartland	MAM

Advisory Committee on the Constitution

Class of 2022	Forrest Claassen	WMT	Los Ranchos	SCH
	Catherine Ulrich	WFT	Eastminster	COV
	Judy L. Woods	WFR	Whitewater Valley	LIN
Class of 2024	Carla Campbell	WFR	Pittsburgh	TRI
	Greg Goodwiller	WMT	St. Andrew	LW
	Daniel Saperstein	WMT	Lake Huron	COV
Class of 2026	Christian Boyd	WMT	Milwaukee	LAK
	Barbara Bundick	WFT	Chicago	LIN
	Paige McRight	WFT	Central Florida	SA

Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns

Class of 2021	Joy Durrant	WFR	Mission	SUN
Class of 2022	Cecilia Armstrong	BFT	Charleston Atlantic	SA
	Floretta L. Barbee-Watkins	BFT	Detroit	COV
	Jeanne Choy Tate	WFR	San Francisco	PAC
	Madison McKinney	NFR	Northern Kansas	MAM
	Raquel Ramirez Torres	HFL	Noroeste	BPR
	JoAnne Sharpe	WFR	Pueblo	ROC
Class of 2024	Kamal Hassan	BMT	San Francisco	PAC
	Hailey V. Malcolm	W/NFT	Tres Rios	SUN
	James Potts	WMT	Middle Tennessee	LW
	Iris Santoni	HFT	Noroeste	BPR
	Courtney Steininger	WFD	National Capital	MAT

Board of Pensions

Class of 2022	Philip D. Amoa	BML	Philadelphia	TRI
	Fredric Joseph Bold, Jr.	WML	Greater Atlanta	SA
	Richard R. Clark	WMR	Milwaukee	LAK
	Gordon Enderle	WMR	John Knox	LAK
	Arlene W. Gordon	BFT	San Francisco	PAC
	George Hauptfuhrer	WMR	Greater Atlanta	SA
	Andrew Junkin	WML	Denver	ROC
	Charles (Bill) Keith	WMR	Charlotte	MAT
	Cindy Levering	WFD	Baltimore	MAT
	John D. Mitchell	WML	Grace	SUN
	Roger L. Myers	WML	Detroit	COV
	Larry Palmer	BMR	The James	MAT
	Stan Reid	WMT	Foothills	SA
	Fernando Rodriguez	HMT	Detroit	COV

MEMBERS OF ENTITIES ELECTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Class of 2024	Joshua Power Stevens	WMR	San Francisco	PAC
	Patsy Smith	BFR	Indian Nations	SUN
	Paul Vikner	WML	Lehigh	TRI
	Amy Williams Fowler	WFT	Genesee Valley	NE
	Wick Alexander	WMR	Mission	SUN
	Isaac Baah	BMR	Philadelphia	TRI
	Jerry Cannon	BMT	Charlotte	MAT
	Adam Ceteznik	WMR	Seattle	ANW
	Catherine Cuellar	H/WFR	Grace	SUN
	Margaret Fox	WFO	Mackinac	COV
	David McBride	WMO	New Castle	MAT
	Gladys Nwabah	BFT	Grace	SUN
	S. Bradley Perkins	WMR	San Francisco	PAC
	Gregory Slonaker	WMR	New Brunswick	NE
	Suzanne Welsh	WFR	Philadelphia	TRI
Floyd White	BMT	West Jersey	NE	

Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment

Class of 2022	Kerri Allen	OFT	Chicago	LIN	
	Noha Khoury-Bailey	MFT	West Virginia	TRI	
	Regina Meester	WFR	Homestead	LAK	
	Sandra Moon	AFT	Mid-Kentucky	LW	
	Gregory Simpson	BMR	New York City	NE	
	Brenton Thompson	WMT	Philadelphia	TRI	
	Richard H. White	WMT	New Brunswick	NE	
	Class of 2024	Lindley DeGarmo	WMT	Hudson River	NE
		Mark Douglas	WMT	Greater Atlanta	SA
		Elizabeth Hinson-Hasty	WFT	Mid-Kentucky	LW
Samuel D. Muse		WMR	Whitewater Valley	LIN	
Fairfax Fair	WFT	New Covenant	SUN		

Committee on the Office of the General Assembly

Class of 2022	Samuel Bonner	BMR	New Brunswick	NE
	Luci S Duckson-Bramble	BFR	Long Island	NE
	Wilson Kennedy	WMD	St. Augustine	SA
	Nigel Leon Lovell-Martin	BMT	Tropical Florida	SA
	Leanne Masters	WFT	Homestead	LAK
	Luis Ocasio Torres	HMT	Florida	SA
	Elona Street-Stewart	NFR	Twin Cities Area	LAK
Class of 2024	Sallie Watson	WFT	Mission	SUN
	Stephanie Anthony	WFT	Blackhawk	LIN
	David Davis	WMT	New Brunswick	NE
	Lynn Hargrove	WFT	New Covenant	SUN

MEMBERS OF ENTITIES ELECTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

	Clayton (Andy) James	WMT	New Hope	MAT
	Blythe Kieffer	WFT	Great Rivers	LIN
	Eliana Maxim	HFT	Seattle	ANW
	Robin J. Pugh	WFR	San Francisco	PAC
Committee on Theological Education				
Class of 2022	April Davis Campbell	WFT	Twin Cities Area	LAK
	Nicholas Piccolo	WMR	Lake Huron	COV
	Sandra Tracy	WFR	Ohio Valley	LIN
Class of 2024	Jodi Craiglow	WFR	Chicago	IL
	Annie Vanessa Hawkins	BFT	New Hope	MAT
	Katherine Smith	WFT	New Hope	LW
	Michael Williams	WMT	Northeast Georgia	SA
Educator Certification Committee				
Class of 2022	Jenna Campbell	WFR	Indian Nations	SUN
	Denise Kennedy	BFT	Newark	NE
	Gregg Neel	WMT	Cascades	PAC
	H. Carson Rhyne	WMT	The James	MAT
Class of 2024	Brett Foote	WMT	Northern Waters	LAK
	Sarah Hegar	WFT	East Iowa	LAK
	Marilyn Johns	WFR	The James	MAT
	Jennifer Pattee	WFT	The John Knox	LAK
	Mary Taneti	AFL	New Hope	MAT
General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations				
Class of 2022	Amantha L. Barbee	BFT	Charlotte	MAT
	Heidi Hadsell de Nascimento	WFL	Greater Atlanta	SA
	Paul Janssen	WFC	RCA	
	Mary Newbern-Williams	BFT	Eastern Virginia	MAT
	Christopher D. Olkiewicz	WMC	ELCA	
	Brian Paulson	WMT	Chicago	LIN
	Anne Weirich	WFT	Muskingum Valley	COV
	Whitney Wilkinson-Arreche	WFT	Grace	SUN
Class of 2024	Nanette Cagney	WFR	South Louisiana	SUN
	Christian Choi	AMT	Great Rivers	LIN
	Hyo-Jung Kim	AMC	UCC	
	Amariah McIntosh	BFC	CME	
	Nigel Leon Lovell-Martin	BMT	Tropical Florida	SA
	Brian Merritt	WMT	Newton	NE
	Daniel Morales	HMT	Tropical Florida	SA
	Scott Prouty	WMT	Minnesota Valley	LAK
	Sabrina Slater	OFT	Geneva	NE

MEMBERS OF ENTITIES ELECTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

K. Nicholas Yoda	AMT	Cincinnati	COV
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General Assembly Committee on Representation

Class of 2022	Maribeth Culpepper	W/NFRD	Santa Fe	SW
	Ajah Hales	BFL	Western Reserve	COV
	Michael Hauser	WMR	Southern Kansas	MAM
	Anna Kendig	H/MFT	Twin Cities Area	LAK
	Larissa Kwong Abazia	AFT	Monmouth	NE
	Treena Parvello	NFL	deCristo	SW
	Oghene'tega Swann	BFT	Beaver-Butler	TRI
Class of 2024	William Yoo	AMT	Cherokee	SA
	Edward (Byron) Elam	BML	Mid-South	LW
	Catherine (Cat) Knott	WFT	Ohio Valley	LIN
	Jamie Fiorino	WFT	Plains and Peaks	ROC
	David Rue	AMR	Sacramento	PAC
	Adolfo Santana	HMT	San Juan	BPR
	Eric Thomas	BMT	New York City	NE
	vacancy			
vacancy				

General Assembly Nominating Committee

Class of 2022	Gregory G. Bolt	WMT	Twin Cities Area	LAK
	Craig M. Howard	BMT	Giddings-Lovejoy	SCH
	Douglas Howard	BMR	New York City	SUN
	Mary Lynn Walters	WFR	Grand Canyon	BPR
	Will Zandler	WMD	Plains and Peaks	LW
Class of 2024	Megan Acedo	H/WFR	Philadelphia	LAK
	Shawna Bowman	WFT	Chicago	MAM
	Daris Bultena	WMT	Tropical Florida	NE
	Il Kim	AMR	The Redwods	SW
	Sonya McAuley-Allen	BFT	Charlotte	ROC
Class of 2026	Annabel (Abbie) Watters	WFR	Olympia	TRI
	Charon A. Barconey	BFR	Detroit	LIN
	Alfred Graise	MMT	Riverside	SA
	Satoe Soga	AFT	Grace	PAC
	Arenys A. Torres-Vélez	HFR	Noroeste	MAT
Lilia Ramirez	HFT	Middle Tennessee	ANW	

General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission

Class of 2022	Paul Hooker	WMT	New Covenant	SUN
	Jean Kennedy	BFR	Pittsburgh	TRI
	June Lorenzo	NFR	Santa Fe	SW
	Susan McGhee	WFT	Ohio Valley	LIN

MEMBERS OF ENTITIES ELECTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Class of 2024	Leah Ntuala	WFT	Geneva	NE
	Brian Ellison	WMT	Heartland	MAM
	Dave Goss	WMR	Denver	ROC
	Linda (Windy) Johnston	WFR	Tropical Florida	SA
	Diana Moore	WFT	Holston	LW
Class of 2026	James Pak	AMR	Atlantic Korean	MAT
	Scott Clark	WMT	Redwoods	PAC
	Mari Gonzalez	HFR	San Juan	BPR
	Larry Hollar	WMR	Miami Valley	COV
	Wendy Tajima	AFT	San Gabriel	SCH
	Vince Thomas vacancy	BMR	Twin Cities Area	LAK ANW

Mission Development Resources Committee

Class of 2022	Ron Fong	AMR	San Francisco	PAC
	Bethany Fox	WFT	Pacific	SCH
	Marilyn Gamm	WFT	Missouri Union	MAM
	Linda Jones	WFR	S. Dakota	LAK
	Calik (Tito) Rivera	HMR	Kendall	PAC
Class of 2024	Arthur Canada	BMT	Charlotte	MAT
	Cecilia Moran	HFR	Stockton	PAC
	Perzavia Praylow	BFT	National Capital	MAT
	Karen Rohrer	WFT	Pittsburgh	TRI
	David Zimmerman	WMR	San Francisco	PAC

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation

Class of 2022	Samuel Bonner	BMR	New Brunswick	NE
	Cynthia M. Campbell	WFT	Mid-Kentucky	LW
	Sinthia Hernandez-Diaz	HFR	Tropical Florida	SA
	JoAnne Sharp	WFR	Pueblo	ROC
	William Teng	AMT	Peace River	SA
	Carol Winkler	WFR	Cincinnati	COV
Class of 2024	Bridget-Anne Hampden	BFR	Charlotte	MAT
	Heidi Bolt	WFT	Twin Cities Area	LAK
	Mark Lu	AML	Los Ranchos	SCH
	Thomas McNeill	BMR	Southern New England	NE
	Christopher Mason	WMR	New York City	NE
	Jason Micheli	WMT	Los Ranchos	SCH
Joyce Rarumangkay	AFR	National Capital	MAT	

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation

Class of 2022	Victor Aloyo	HMT	Elizabeth	NE
	Jason Ko	AMT	Los Ranchos	SCH

MEMBERS OF ENTITIES ELECTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Class of 2024	Gregory McCoy	WMR	Grace	SUN
	Samuel D. Muse	WMR	Whitewater Valley	LIN
	John M. Nelsen	WMT	Tres Rios	SUN
	Robert Olcott	WML	National Capital	MAT
	Terry Allison Rappuhn	WFR	Middle Tennessee	LW
	Ruth F. Santana-Grace	HFT	Philadelphia	TRI
	Kathy Trott	WFR	Sacramento	PAC
	David Zimmerman	WMR	San Francisco	PAC
	Aeschbacher Steven	WMT	Utah	ROC
	Wonjae Choi	AFT	Philadelphia	TRI
	Bridget-Anne Hamden	BFL	Charlotte	MAT
	George Philips	AMR	Giddings-Lovejoy	MAM
	Eric Osborne	WMR	Mid-South	LW
	Neal Presa	AMT	San Diego	SCH
	Paul Roberts	BMT	Greater Atlanta	SA
Susan Rose	WFL	Grand Canyon	SW	
Corey Schlosser-Hall	WMR	Northwest Coast	ANW	

Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People

Class of 2022	Delores Adams Henderson	BFR	Ohio Valley	LIN
	Samantha Davis	BFD	Pittsburgh	TRI
	Tracey Dace	BML	Southeast Illinois	LIN
	Rebecca Davis	WML	Charlotte	MAT
	Richard (Rick) Morrow	WFR	Philadelphia	TRI
	Gail Porter Nelson	BFT	National Capital	MAT
	John Osoinach	WMR	Palo Duro	SUN
	Elizabeth Swee	WFR	Northern Plains	LAK
	Phil Tom	AMT	New York City	NE
	Wesley Woo	AMT	San Francisco	PAC
Class of 2024	Karen Brown	BFT	Baltimore	MAT
	Susan Dobkins	WFO	Tacoma, Washington	NP
	Phyllis Edwards	BFL	Detroit, Michigan	NP
	Maria Marroquin	HF	San Francisco, California	NP
	Phyllis Sanders	BFR	Trinity	SA
	Wayne Steele	BMT	Mid-Kentucky	LW

Presbyterian Council for Chaplains and Military Personnel

Class of 2022	Leslie R. Hyder	WMT	San Joaquin	PAC
	Joanne Martindale	WFT	The Redwoods	PAC
	Barbara Sherer	WFT	Heartland	MAM
Class of 2024	Dale Barber	WMR	Lackawanna	TRI
	Anders Pedersen	WMT	Northern New York	NE
	Kelly Wadsworth	WFT	Seattle	ANW

MEMBERS OF ENTITIES ELECTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Advisory Committee

Class of 2022	John R. Buchanan	WMR	Chicago	LIN
	Dagmary Fornes	HFR	Noroeste	BPR
	Zandra L. Maffett	BFR	Philadelphia	TRI
Class of 2024	Laura Mariko Cheifetz	AFT	Middle Tennessee	LW
	Karen Finney	BFR	Santa Fe	SW
	Jerrold Lowry	BMT	Coastal Carolina	MAT
	Kenneth G. Page	WMT	Grand Canyon	SW

Presbyterian Hunger Program Advisory Committee

Class of 2022	Ryan Atkinson	BMR	Charlotte	MAT
	Eric Dillenbeck	WMT	Western Reserve	COV
	Abigail Mohaupt	WFT	San Francisco	PAC
	Alexander A. Peterson	WML	Central Nebraska	LAK
Class of 2024	Neddy Astudillo	HFT	Tampa Bay	SA
	Eileen Best	WFR	Lake Michigan	COV
	Frank Dew	WMT	Salem	MAT
	Sun (Sunny) Kang	AMT	Pacific	SCH
	Vince Patton	BMR	Mid-Kentucky	LW

Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program Board

Class of 2022	Nathan Anderson	WMR	Salem	MAT
	Greg Chan	AMT	San Francisco	PAC
	Sharon Core	WFT	Western Reserve	COV
	Margaret Cyrus	BFR	Pacific	SCH
	James Parks	BMT	Baltimore	MAT
	Stephen Rhoades	WMR	Santa Fe	SW
	Richard H. White	WMR	New Brunswick	NE
	Don Wingate	WMR	Central Florida	SA
Class of 2024	Steven Bass	WMR	Seattle	ANW
	Jesse Hite	WMR	Twin Cities Area	LAK
	Thomas McNeill	BMR	Southern New England	NE
	Rafael Medina	HMR	Suroeste	BPR
	Olivia Smith	BFT	Denver	ROC
	Y. Nicholas Yoda	AMT	Cincinnati	COV
	vacancy			

Presbyterian Mission Agency Board

Class of 2021	Jyungin Lee	AFR	New Brunswick	NE
Class of 2022	Sallie Watson	WFT	Mission	SUN
	Adolfo (Bong) Bringas	AMR	San Gabriel	SCH
	Kenneth H. Godshall	WMT	Western Kentucky	LW

MEMBERS OF ENTITIES ELECTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

	Sinthia Hernandez-Diaz	HFR	Tropical Florida	SA
	Warren Lesane	BMT	Charlotte	MAT
	Charles (Chip) Low	WMT	Hudson River	NE
	Kathy Maurer	WFR	Lake Huron	COV
	James Parks	BMR	Baltimore	MAT
	Patsy Smith	BFR	Indian Nations	SUN
	Brenton Thompson	WMT	Philadelphia	TRI
	Floretta L. Barbee-Watkins	BFT	Detroit	COV
	Judith Wellington	NFT	Grand Canyon	SW
	Tamara Williams	BFR	Charlotte	MAT
	K. Nicholas Yoda	AMT	Cincinnati	COV
Class of 2024	Rola Al Ashkar	MFL	Sacramento	PAC
	SanDawna Ashley	BFT	Minnesota Valleys	LAK
	Beverly Brewster	WFT	Redwoods	PAC
	Dee Cooper	WFT	Heartland	MAM
	Mary Jane Gordon	BFR	San Francisco	PAC
	Michele Hwang	AFT	Blackhawk	LIN
	Kevin Johnson	BMT	Detroit	COV
	Kate Murphy	WFR	Charlotte	MAT
	Shannan Vance-Ocampo	WFT	Southern New England	NE
Presbyterian Mortgage Corporation				
Class of 2020	Margaret Jorgensen	WFT	Western Reserve	COV
	Linda D. Scholl	WFR	Mid-South	LW
	J. Jay Wilkinson	WMR	Twin Cities Area	LAK
Presbyterian Publishing Corporation				
Class of 2022	Cynthia M. Campbell	WFT	Mid-Kentucky	LW
	Christine Chakoian	W/MFTD	Pacific	SCH
	Lloyd Culbertson	WMR	Chicago	LIN
	Cathy Caldwell Hoop	WFT	Sheppards and Lapsley	LW
	LaVert W. Jones	BMR	Cherokee	SA
	Rebecca Kirkpatrick	WFT	Philadelphia	TRI
	Cynthia L. Rigby	WFT	Cimarron	SUN
Class of 2024	Rebecca Davis	WFR	National Capital	MAT
	Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri	HFR	Tropical Florida	SA
	Angela Cowser	BFT	Mid-Kentucky	LW
	Sunghee (Joanna) Kim	A/HFL	Grace	SUN
	David Maltby	WMR	Giddings-Lovejoy	MAM
Presbyteries Cooperative Committee on Exams				
Class of 2022	Peter C. deVries	WMT	Beaver-Butler	TRI
	Trent Hancock	WMT	Pittsburgh	TRI

MEMBERS OF ENTITIES ELECTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

	Sandra Luciano-Andujar	HFT	Central Florida	SA
	Robert Lowry	WMT	Mississippi	LW
	Jean Olson	WFR	Boston	NE
	Jung Sook Kim	AFT	Atlantic Korean	MAT
Class of 2024	Dave Bush	WMR	Mid-Kentucky	LW
	Christianne Chase	WFR	Cimarron	SUN
	James Davis	WMT	Albany	NE
	R. Ward Holder	WMT	Boston	NE
	Leeann Scarbrough	WFT	Sheppards and Lapsley	LW
	Linda Steele	WFR	Homestead	LAK
Racial Equity Advocacy Committee				
Class of 2022	Antonio Aja-Torréns	HMT	Santa Fe	SW
	Ashley DeTar Birt	BFT	New York City	NE
	Eun Sung Cho	AMT	Midwest Hanmi	LIN
	Fern Cloud	NFR	Dakota	LAK
	Michelle Hwang	AFT	Blackhawk	LIN
	Noha Khoury-Bailey	MFT	West Virginia	TRI
Class of 2024	Jorge Abdala	HMT	San Francisco	PAC
	Holly Haile Thompson	NFT	Long Island	NE
	Sarang Kang	AFL	Detroit	SW
	Sameh Shaker	MMT	Philadelphia	TRI
	Adebisi Shofu	OFR	New Brunswick	NE
	Flora Wilson Bridges	BFT	New York City	NE

MEMBERS OF ENTITIES ELECTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Membership of Special Entities Approved by the 223rd General Assembly (2018) and continuing to the 225th General Assembly (2022)**2020 Vision Team**

Joshua T. Andrzejewski (YA)	WMT	The James	MAT
DéAnn Cunningham	BFR	Charlotte	MAT
Doris Evans	BFR	Western Reserve	COV
Michael Fagans	WMR	St. Andrews	LW
Judith Ferguson	WFR	Mission	SUN
Debbie G. Foster	WFT	Foothills	SA
Joshua Henry Narcisse	BMR	New York City	NE
Salvador D. Gavalda Corchado	HMR	San Juan	BPR
Jerrod B. Lowry	BMT	Coastal Carolina	MAT
Lisa Juica Perkins	HFT	Grace	SUN
Karen Sapio	WFT	San Gabriel	SCH
Sabrina Slater	OFT	Geneva	NE
Rebecca Snedeker-Meier	WFL	Maumee Valley	COV

Administrative Commission to Address Issues in the Synod of the Covenant

Michelle Johnson	BFR	Tropical Florida	SA
Patrice Hatley	WFR	Tampa Bay	SA
Susan Krummel	WFT	Chicago	LIN
Adel Malek	MMT	Los Ranchos	SCH
Bennet McConaughy	WMR	Seattle	ANW
Brady Radford	BMT	Greater Atlanta	SA
Elona Street-Stewart	NFR	Twin Cities Area	LAK
Richard Rojas-Banuchi	HMT	San Juan	BPR

Disparities Experienced by Black Women and Girls Task Force

Kerri N. Allen	B/WFT	Chicago	LIN
Carmen J. Alexander	BFL	Pittsburgh	TRI
Ashley DeTar Birt	BFT	New York City	NE
Lakesha S. Bradshaw Easter	BFT	New Hope	MAT
Samantha Paige Davis	BFD	Pittsburgh	TRI

Family Leave Task Force

Heidi Bolt	WFT	Twin Cities Area	LAK
Contina Lundy	BFR	Philadelphia	TRI
Tito Colon Ramos	HMR	Noroeste	BPR
Hailey V. Malcolm	W/NFT	Tres Rios	SUN
Paul Volker	WMR	North Central Iowa	LAK
Landon Whitsitt	WMT	Heartland	MAM

Jarvie Commonweal Endowment Reconciliation Team

Terry Dunning	WFR	Utah	ROC
Roxie Holder	BFR	Eastern Virginia	MAT
Kimo Kim	AMR	Detroit	COV
Oscar McCloud	BMT	New York City	NE
José Olagues	HMT	Grand Canyon	SW
Samuel Stone	AMT	Palisades	NE
Kathy Westmoreland	WFT	Santa Fe	SW

MEMBERS OF ENTITIES ELECTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Moving Forward Implementation Special Committee

Madeline Alvarez	HFT (D)	Noroeste	BPR
Jacqueline Cummings	BFR	South Louisiana	SUN
Larryetta Ellis	BFT	West Virginia	TRI
Rachel Sutphin	WFR	The Peaks	MAT
Debra Avery	WFT	Great Rivers	LIN
Eric Beene	WMT	Savannah	SA
Marco Grimaldo	HMR	National Capital	MAT
James Tse	AMR	New York City	NE
Mathew Eardley	WMR	Boise	PAC
Cliff Lyda	WMT	St. Augustine	SA
Adan Mairena	HMT	Philadelphia	TRI

Rules of Discipline Task Force

Barbara Bundick	WFT	Chicago	LIN
Greg Goodwiller	WMT	St. Andrews	LW
Therese Howell	WFR	Middle Tennessee	LW
Paige McRight	WFT	Central Florida	SA
Doska Ross	WFR	Los Ranchos	SCH
Donna Wells	WFT	Greater Atlanta	SA

Special Committee on Per-Capita Based Funding and National Church Financial Sustainability

Laura Cheifetz	A/WFT	Middle Tennessee	LW
Carmen Janira Colón	HFR	Central Florida	SA
Debi Davis	WFR	Tropical Florida	SA
Paul Helphinstine	WMT	Holston	LW
Mark Hong	AMT	Los Ranchos	SCH
Diane Kenning	WFR	Plains and Peaks	ROC
Scott Lumsden	WMT	Seattle	ANW
Sarah Moore-Nokes	WFT	Winnebago	LAK
Timothy N. Ngare	BMR	Detroit	COV
Joseph A. Ngalle	BMR	Coastal Carolina	MAT
Jeanne Radak	WFT	Newton	NE
José Rosa-Rivera	HMR	San Juan	BPR
Audrey Toombs	BFR	Mid-South	LW
Kevin Veldhuisen	WMT	South Dakota	LAK
Valerie Young	WFR	Grace	SUN

Special Committee on Racism, Truth, and Reconciliation

Stanley Bhasker	AMT	Geneva	NE
Amy Busse Stoker	WFT	Middle Tennessee	LW
Kathryn Jones Calone	WFT	Long Island	NE
Joanna Hipp	WFT	Coastal Carolina	MAT
Ryan James Landino	WMT	Great Rivers	LIN
Fran Lane Lawrence	WFT	Lake Michigan	COV
Hiram Perez-Cordes	O/HMR	Greater Atlanta	SA
Pamela Tajima Praeger	AFR	Inland Northwest	ANW
Marta Pumroy	HFR	East Iowa	LAK
Miguel Rosa Morales	HML	San Juan	BPR
Angela Ryo	AFT	Detroit	COV
Joseph F. Scrivner	BMT	Sheppards and Lapsley	LW
Byron Wade	BMT	Western North Carolina	MAT
Stella Webster	NFR	Santa Fe	SW

MEMBERS OF ENTITIES ELECTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Special Committee to Study the Reformed Perspective of Christian Education in the 21st Century

Sung Hee Chang	AFT	New Hope	MAT
Theresa E. Cho	AFT	San Francisco	PAC
Emily Katharine Chudy	WFT	Donegal	TRI
Becky D'Angelo-Veitch	WFL	Genesee Valley	NE
John W. Johnson	WMT	Salem	MAT
Melissa Kirkpatrick	WFR	National Capital	MAT
Charlotte Nance-Allbright	WFL	Salem	MAT
Matthew Rhodes	WMT	New Brunswick	NE
Ruth Román-Meza	HFR	Grace	SUN

Survivors of Sexual Misconduct Task Force

Margaret Hodges	BFR	East Tennessee	LW
Carol Howard Merritt	WFT	East Tennessee	LW
Kris Schondelmeyer	WMT	Philadelphia	TRI
James Splitt	WMT	Homestead	LAK
Leah Holder Wyman	WFL	Western Reserve	COV

Task Force to Investigate the Need for a LGBTQIA+ Advocacy Committee

Daniel Hammer	WML	Seattle	ANW
Quantisha Mason	BFL	Chicago	LIN
M. Shea McGinnis	WGQT	Boston	NE
Nathan Sobers	WMR	Riverside	SCH
Julianna Whitson	AFL	Arkansas	SUN

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