



# The Synod of the Covenant

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

The Annual Meeting of the Assembly of the Synod of the Covenant and Corporation  
Maumee Bay Lodge and Confer4nce Center  
1750 Park Road  
Oregon, Ohio 43616  
October 22, 2022

## CONVENING OF THE ASSEMBLY AND QUORUM

The Rev. Deb Uchtman (Cincinnati), moderator, opened the meeting with prayer at 8:35 a.m. A quorum was present. Rev. Uchtman welcomed guests and visitors.

## APPROVAL OF THE DOCKET

A motion prevailed to approve the docket as presented.

## APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

A motion prevailed to approve the consent agenda, including the Clerk's Report, as follows:

**Synod of the Covenant  
Annual Assembly  
Consent Agenda and Clerk's Report  
October 22, 2022**

1. **To seat** as corresponding members the following executive presbyters, general presbyters, presbytery leaders, and stated clerks in attendance at this meet: CRE Charon Barconey (Detroit), Rev. Fran Lane-Lawrence (Lake Michigan), Rev. Lynn Bova (Miami Valley).

ATTACHMENT A

2. **To excuse** the following commissioners at their request: James Bennett (Eastminster), Michael March (Mackinac), Sandy Seaton Todd (Western Reserve), and Diane Ziegler (Miami Valley).

ATTACHMENT A

3. **To seat** as corresponding members guest teaching elders and ruling elders from congregations within the Synod of the Covenant in attendance at this meeting as follows: Elder Jeanne Gay, and Michael Barconey (Detroit).

ATTACHMENT A

4. **To approve** the Minutes of the Assembly of the Synod of the Covenant of May 3, 2021.
5. **To receive** the report of the Trustees (Finance Committee) regarding actions taken on behalf of the Synod since the last Synod Assembly ATTACHMENT B
6. **To receive** the Report of the Stated Clerk for today as follows:

**Report of the Stated Clerk  
Fran Lane-Lawrence  
October 22, 2022**

1. **REVIEWS OF 2021 PRESBYTERY MINUTES:** A review of the 2021 Minutes has been completed. The minutes of the following presbyteries were approved without exception: Cincinnati, Detroit, Eastminster, Lake Huron, Lake Mackinac, Lake Michigan, Miami Valley, and Muskingum Valley.

The minutes of the Presbytery of Western Reserve were reviewed with the following exceptions requiring corrective actions:

- a. The commission and scope of AC need to be written in the minutes, not just in the Call Letter.
- b. The moderator declares a quorum.
- c. There needs to be consistency in referring to members (Rev. RE, TE, Stated Clerk, Moderator, etc.) If a woman is referred to as Ms., Men need to be referred to as Mr.
- d. Acronyms need to be spelled out when used for the first time (C)OO/BOT)
- e. Typos:
  - a. Pg 12 Racial Equity Education Grant
  - b. Pg 29 Bread for the World (first reference, it is correct in other parts of the paragraph).
  - c. Pg 30 Min Adv with Homeless, Last sentence, to not ~~to~~ schedule . . .
  - d. Pg 31 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph, last word chaplain
  - e. Pg 35 AC list in Consent Agenda does not match COM AC listed on pg 38

Minutes for Maumee Valley and Scioto Valley were not submitted for review.

2. **225<sup>TH</sup> GENERAL ASSEMBLY REVIEW OF 2020 SYNOD OF THE COVENANT MINUTES:** The minutes of the Synod of the Covenant for 2020 were reviewed, and the following are the results. The 2020 Minutes of the Synod of the Covenant were approved by the 225<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (2022) with no exceptions or comments. ATTACHMENT C
3. **225<sup>TH</sup> GENERAL ASSEMBLY REVIEW OF 2021 SYNOD OF THE COVENANT MINUTES:** The 2021 Minutes of the Synod of the Covenant were approved by the 225<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (2022) with the following exceptions: ATTACHMENT D

2021Exceptions

1. According to checklist item 8, a quorum was not until October 7-9, 2021. The AC/Synod met six times in 2021.

2. According to checklist item 9 and the minutes, the Lord's Supper was not observed.
3. According to checklist item 10 and the minutes, there was no report of the Committee on Representation to the Assembly.
4. According to checklist item 15 and the minutes, there was no record that the presbyteries' minutes were reviewed.
5. According to checklist item 20 and the minutes, there is no indication that synod minutes were reviewed and approved by their own process.
6. According to checklist item 22a and the minutes, there is no indication of the list of SPJC members who have rotated off the commission.
7. According to checklist items 22b and the minutes, there is no indication of property and liability insurance carried by the synod.

Comments:

The 2021 Minutes Book for the Synod of the Covenant has been reviewed and consideration given to the administrative clerks encountering illness and not available to fully carry out their duties.

4. **DECISION OF THE SYNOD OF THE COVENANT PERMANENT JUDICIAL COMMISSION IN DISCIPLINARY CASE 221-01, PRESBYTERY OF LAKE HURON V. REV. DR. DANIEL SAPERSTEIN:** The Rev. Dan Saperstein pled guilty to the following charges according to the signed Alternative Form of Resolution approved on June 23, 2022:

1. Rev. Saperstein acted in a manner that violated Scripture and the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and misused his position as Executive Presbyter of the Presbytery of Lake Huron by:
  - a. Engaging in sexual misconduct with a subordinate employee while in a supervisory relationship with said employee, through misuse of ordered ministry of position and,
  - b. Failing to serve as a friend among his colleagues in ministry to further the peace, unity, and purity of the church.

In response to these charges, Rev. Saperstein has agreed to plead guilty and accept the censure of “temporary exclusion from the exercise of ordered ministry” for a period of ninety days.

ATTACHMENT E

5. Former members for the last six years of the **Synod of the Covenant Permanent Judicial Commission** who may be called upon when necessary to constitute a quorum (D-5.0206b).

**Class of 2022:** Lori Schmidt, Stefanie Lewis, Sung Yang

**Class of 2020:** Catherine Borchart, Richard Mickley, Rhonda O'Reilly

**Class of 2018:** Fred Bohse, Russell Brandt, Norma Carnahan, Greg Gibson

**Class of 2016:** Doyll H. Andrews, Jr, Beverly Esterly, Inkyu Park

6. **INVESTIGATING COMMITTEE:** In response to the written statement of offense received by the stated clerk of the Presbytery of Detroit, and for which the Synod of the Covenant assumed jurisdiction, the Investigating Committee has determined, in accordance with G-3.0102 and D-2.0203b, that there are no probable grounds or cause to believe an offense was committed by the accused. All parties were informed of the

decision. This matter is closed.

7. **COMPLAINT – McCafferty v Presbytery of Lake Michigan:** The Synod of the Covenant Permanent Judicial Commission issued the following decision and order on August 3, 2022, in response to the Complaint of Delinquency filed by the Rev. Tiffany McCafferty v Presbytery of Lake Michigan. ATTACHMENT F

**Finding**

Upon examination of the Complaint and all supporting papers, as required by D-6.0305, this Commission finds that it has jurisdiction over this matter and that the Complainant has standing to bring the Complaint. However, this Commission finds that it was not timely filed in that no irregularity or discrepancy is alleged by the Complaint to have occurred within the requisite time period. Moreover, this Commission finds that the Complaint, assuming all facts as alleged by Complainant, fails to state a claim upon which relief can be granted. Because two of the requirements of D-6.0305 have not been met, this Commission is required to dismiss this case pursuant to D-6.0306(c).

**Order**

**IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED pursuant to the requirements of D-6.0305 and D-6.0306(c); the Complaint is hereby dismissed.**

7. **LEADERWISE BOUNDARY AND ETHICS TRAINING for 2022:**

- *Introduction to Boundaries*, November 16-17, 2022, from 6:00 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.

The deadline for Registration is November 7, 2022, for November. Participants must be present for all 5 hours of training to receive credit. The cost is fully paid by the Synod and Presbyteries.

8. **MEETINGS OF THE SYNOD ASSEMBLY:** The dates for Synod Assemblies in 2023 are as follows:

- a. Tuesday, January 31, 2023, at 4:30 p.m. via Zoom
- b. Tuesday, May 2, 2023, at 4:30 p.m. via Zoom
- c. Friday – Saturday, October 20-21, 2023 Retreat and Annual Meeting - TBD

Executive and General Presbyters, Stated Clerks and any other interested parties are welcome to attend.

9. Rev. Tom James (Maumee Valley) has been appointed to serve on the Ohio Council of Church – Faith and Order Commission for the class of 2022-2023 on behalf of the Synod of the Covenant.

***THIS ENDS THE CONSENT AGENDA AND REPORT OF THE STATED CLERK***

**TREASURER’S REPORT**

Elder Martha Blenman (Detroit), Treasurer, presented the treasurer’s report, which included the reviewed financial statements for 2020 and 2021. ATTACHMENTS E

**FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Elder Frank Walburg (Scioto Valley), moderator of the Finance Committee, presented the report of the

The Finance Committee has reviewed the adequacy of the insurance and found that it was sufficient.

Elder Walburg recommended that the Proposed 2023 Budget for the Synod of the Covenant be approved by the Assembly.

**A motion prevailed** to add \$14,000 be added to the Scholarship Fund (5125) for a total of \$35,000.

**A motion prevailed** to lower the housing allowance for the Rev. Charles B. Hardwick, Synod Executive, from \$50,000 to \$35,000. There was no change to the total effective salary.

**A motion prevailed** to approve the amended proposed budget for 2023. The budget, as amended, is attached to these minutes. ATTACHMENT F

### GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Elder Andy Thorburn (Lake Michigan), moderator of the Governance Committee, presented an overview of the draft of the bylaws for the Synod of the Covenant. After a time of discussion, **a motion prevailed** that the bylaws be considered at a called meeting of the Synod of the Covenant before the end of the year and that the Leadership Committee be empowered to establish the date of the meeting.

### HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Rev. Mary Jane Knapp (Muskingum Valley), moderator of the Human Resources Committee, presented a report on behalf of the Committee. **A motion prevailed** to approve a four percent (4%) salary increase for staff members Heather Johnston, Office Manager, and Fran Lane-Lawrence, Stated Clerk, effective January 1, 2023. **A motion prevailed** to grant the Synod Executive an additional day of vacation in lieu of a salary increase effective January 1, 2023.

### NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Elder Lora Manon (Maumee Valley), moderator of the Nominating Committee, presented the report on behalf of the Committee.

**A motion prevailed** to elect the following Officers:

Elder Adrienne Adams (Detroit) as Moderator for 2023

Rev. Sandy Seaton-Todd (Western Reserve) as Vice Moderator for 2023.

**A motion prevailed** to elect the following to serve on the Permanent Judicial Commission:

Rev. Marianne Grano (Detroit) Class of 2028

Elder Jim Wilson, (Scioto Valley), Class of 2028

**A motion prevailed** to elect the following to serve on the Finance Committee:

Elder Ted Fines (Mackinac), 2024

Rev. Garrett Mostowski (Detroit), Class of 2024

Elder Joseph Salvato (Cincinnati), Class of 2023

Rev. Aaron Meadows, (Eastminster), Class of 2023

**A motion prevailed** to elect the following to serve as Committee Moderators:

Elder Thorburn (Lake Michigan), Governance, 2023

Rev. Mary Jean Knapp (Muskingum), Human Resources, 2023

## **BREAK**

Rev. Deb Uchtman (Cincinnati), Moderator, recessed the meeting for a 15-minute break at 9:45 a.m. The meeting reconvened at 10:00 a.m.

**A motion prevailed** by a 2/3 vote to limit debate to 2 minutes.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSION FOR THE PRESBYTERY OF DETROIT**

Rev. Jeanne Gay, moderator of the Administrative Commission, presented the report and recommendation of the Administrative Commission. ATTACHMENT G

There was a time of discussion. Elder Charon Barconey, CRE (Detroit), addressed her concerns about the report to the Assembly. The Assembly allowed her extra time to share her concerns.

Michael Barconey (Detroit) also shared his concerns about the report. Although the Assembly allowed extra time for Mx Barconey to share his concerns, he refused to yield the floor in a timely manner as required by parliamentary procedure. He stated his contempt for the process and continued speaking even though his time for debate had elapsed. The Assembly heard Mx Barconey's concerns and responded by expressing their compassion for both Elder Barconey and Mx Barconey.

During his discussion, Mx Barconey called on the stated clerk to release the contents of an Investigating Committee report. The stated clerk, Rev. Fran Lane-Lawrence, clarified by offering the provision found in D-10.0303 from the PC(U.S.A.) *Book of Order*. Rev. Lane-Lawrence also clarified that the only report she had received was the one that appear in the Consent Agenda that had been received earlier in the Assembly meeting. The Report of the Investigating Committee states that no charges are to be filed and that the parties had been notified.

**A motion prevailed** to approve the following amended recommendation.

The Administrative Commission recommends that the Synod of the Covenant expand the purpose, scope, and authority of the AC to include:

### **Purpose**

- Inquiring into and settling disorder that exists throughout the structure of the Presbytery of Detroit by working across all ministry teams/committees/leaders to:
  - Review and clearly define the tasks and authority of each ministry team/committee and how they relate to other ministry teams/committees and the Presbytery as a whole
  - Review position descriptions of each member of staff and revise as needed as soon as possible
  - Review the bylaws, manual of operations, and staff structure, and revise as needed so the documents are consistent with one another and add further clarity as to roles and authorities of ministry teams/committees, staff, and elected leaders
  - Explore the use of power, processes, and procedures in deliberative and decision-making processes and provide education from outside trainers and coaches about appropriate uses of the same. Expenses for these services if needed, are to be paid by the Presbytery of Detroit.
  - Address issues of mistrust, lack of transparency, and conflicts of interest between leaders and members of the presbytery.

## **Scope and Authority**

Affirming the Administrative Commission's authority as follows:

- That the Administrative Commission has the full authority of the Synod of the Covenant, except where limited by provisions of the PC(USA) Book of Order, only in matters pertaining to the Presbytery of Detroit to address personnel matters, boundaries, authority, process, mistrust issues, misuse of power, systemic and structural disorder that exists in the Presbytery of Detroit and among Presbytery leaders and some members.
- If it is determined by the Administrative Commission that the Presbytery of Detroit is unable or unwilling to manage wisely its affairs, the Administrative Commission may, after a thorough investigation and full opportunity to be heard has been accorded to the presbytery, recommend to the Synod that it assume original jurisdiction of the presbytery, which shall cease to act until such time the Synod shall otherwise direct (G-3.0303e)

## **REPORT OF THE SYNOD EXECUTIVE**

The Rev. Dr. Charles B. Hardwick presented the report of the Synod Executive. Rev. Hardwick's report included information about grants and scholarships approved and distributed in 2022 and educational opportunities available to members of the Synod in 2023.

## **WORSHIP**

The Rev. Deb Uchtman (Cincinnati), moderator, led the Assembly in a time of worship. Her sermon was based on Ezekiel 37:1-14 and 2 Corinthians 5:16-20. During the meeting, Elder Adrienne Adams (Detroit) was installed as the moderator of the Synod of the Covenant; her term begins January 1, 2023. The Assembly celebrated the Lord's Supper during worship.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned in prayer at 12:10 p.m. by Elder Adrienne Adams (Detroit), Moderator-elect.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Fran Lane-Lawrence  
Stated Clerk

Attachment A – Synod Rolls

Attachment B – Report of Trustee Actions

Attachment C – PCUSA General Assembly Review of 2020 SOC Minutes

Attachment D – PCUSA General Assembly Review of 2021 SOC Minutes

Attachment E – Review Financial Statements for 2020 and 2021 by Demarco

Attachment F – Approved Amended Budget for 2023

Attachment G – Report of the Administrative Commission for Detroit

**The Next Synod Assembly is scheduled for  
Tuesday, January 31, 2022, at 4:30 p.m. via Zoom**

