



The Synod of the Covenant

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

**Synod Assembly
Minutes
February 4, 2025
Via Zoom. 4:30 p.m.**

CALL TO ORDER, OPENING PRAYER, QUORUM

Elder Andy Thorburn (Lake Michigan), moderator, called the Assembly to order at 4:35 p.m. and opened the meeting with prayer. A quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF THE DOCKET

A motion prevailed to approve the docket.

APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

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

Synod of the Covenant Consent Agenda and Clerk's Report February 04, 2025

1. **SEATING OF CORRESPONDING MEMBERS:** To seat as corresponding members Rev. Leslie Mott (TEP-Detroit), Rev. Melissa Allison (SC-Detroit), and Kay Morrill (SC-Mackinac).
2. **EXCUSED ABSENCES:** There were no requests for excused absences.
3. **APPROVAL OF ASSEMBLY MINUTES:** To approve the Minutes of the Synod of the Covenant Assembly and Annual Meeting of the Corporation of November 1 and 2, 2024.
4. **RECOMMENDATION TO APPROVE THE LOCATION FOR THE ANNUAL SYNOD RETREAT AND ANNUAL ASSEMBLY IN 2025.** To approve the Weber Center in Adrian, MI, as the location for the Synod of the Covenant Assembly and Annual Meeting of the Corporation in 2025.
5. To receive the Report of the Stated Clerk for today as follows:

**Report of the Stated Clerk
Fran Lane-Lawrence
February 4, 2025**

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

Class of 2024: William Rayment, Tim Dyck, Dale Riley

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

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

2. Report of the Administrative Commission for the Presbytery of Detroit

**Report to the Synod of the Covenant
Administrative Commission of the Presbytery of Detroit
February 4, 2025**

Context

This report summarizes major events and activities since the Administrative Commission's report dated October 8, 2024.

AC Personnel Change

The Rev. Calvin Bremer submitted his resignation as of January 7, 2025, due to health reasons. The AC now has only four members. (See recommendation on page 8.)

Overview

The Synod of the Covenant's Presbytery of Detroit Administrative Commission (AC) previously asserted, in its request for Original Jurisdiction approved by the Synod of the Covenant, that "...the disorder within the Presbytery of Detroit (PoD) is pervasive, intertwined, and appears to affect virtually every aspect of the PoD. The disorder affects the body in multiple ways". The AC also noted that evidence of disorder has been present for many years within the PoD.

We are seeing some tentative improvements in a few limited areas, and we recognize some members are quite anxious that jurisdiction be returned. Still, the embeddedness of the disorder means that the AC needs to not only restructure several leadership areas, but more clearly define their work and relationships with other leadership areas, and populate them. There is still a lot of work to do, and even more when the need to support the healing of past wounds is considered.

Activities of the Administrative Commission Since October

January Discerning Major Areas to be Addressed

At its November 10-11, 2014 workshop retreat, facilitated by the Rev. Dr. Barbara Wilson (Associate Executive Presbyter of the Chicago Presbytery and Professional Certified Coach with CAST: Coach Approach Skill Training)¹, the Synod AC determined that before jurisdiction can be returned to the presbytery, the following must be addressed/resolved.

1. Issues with Trustees/overall financial management
2. Racial justice work
3. Presbytery Structure and Staffing¹

¹ Note: Barbara Wilson has been working with/coaching Stated Clerk Melissa Alison and TEP Leslie Mott for the last several months.

4. By-Laws, Policies and Procedures

Trustees/Financial Management

After more than a year working with the existing trustee structure for the Presbytery of Detroit, the Administrative Commission determined that a reorganization was necessary to create the space for a structure consistent with the Administrative Commission's goals or returning original jurisdiction to the Presbytery. In early November, the AC dissolved the Board and created four committees to deal with the financial work of the presbyteries:

- Budget and Finance
- Property and Loans
- Investments
- Grants

Each of these committees has been staffed with two people from outside the Presbytery of Detroit but from within the Synod of the Covenant, who will help the committees envision their work differently and more effectively than the POD's entrenched models. Rev. Dr. Chip Hardwick was instrumental in helping to identify these people, who were asked for a six-month commitment to this work. The remainder of the members of each committee are former trustees and others from within the POD, identified through self-nominations and by Leslie Mott in consultation with Melissa Allison.

The first of these committees—Grants—has just begun their work. In the meantime, the AC is functioning as the Board of Trustees for the presbytery.

Racial Justice Work

We are in the process of contracting with the Center for Jubilee Practice, run by Rick Ufford-Chase and Ashley DeTar Birt, to work with the Presbytery of Detroit on the racial aspects of the disorders therein.

Presbytery Structure and Staffing

The Presbytery of Detroit was aware for some time that its structure was not helpful in running the presbytery. Stated Clerk Melissa Allison and TEP Leslie Mott have been working on ideas for a new structure, which they will present to the AC within the next few weeks.

In the meantime, the AC has elected two POD members to serve as 2025 Moderator—Ruling Elder Mary Lloyd—and Vice-Moderator—Ruling Elder Sharon Moore. Both are Black women and were nominated by the presbyter’s Anti-Racism Committee. Sharon Mook of that committee included the following in her November 26, 2024 email to the AC supporting these nominations:

I know that there is some precedent for having the Moderator and the Vice-Moderator of differing racial/ethnic/cultural backgrounds. However, as we have had two white persons in these positions for nearly two years, two very qualified persons of color serving in these positions would provide some corrective balance and much-needed perspective at this time in the life of the presbytery.

I also know that there is some precedent for having these positions occupied by different gender identities. However, the Presbytery of Detroit certainly has had two men, even two white men, in these positions at the same time in the past. We strongly urge that serious consideration be given to these two nominees.

Further, I know that there is some precedent for having one of these positions held by a Minister of Word and Sacrament and the other by a Ruling Elder. In this presbytery, rigidly following this precedent can further disproportionately limit opportunities for persons of color to serve in these important leadership positions. Again, we strongly urge that serious consideration be given to these two nominees.

At the AC’s January 16, 2025, meeting with Elder Mary Lloyd and Elder Sharon Moore, members were impressed with their visions for the future of the presbytery, and the AC looks forward to including them in some of our work in the POD over the next months.

By-Laws, Policies and Procedures

The Administrative Commission has approved new by-laws for the Presbytery, which will be shared within the Presbytery for feedback before coming into effect. The drafting of a manual of operations and related policies is underway.

Ongoing Work; Ongoing Issues

TEP Leslie Mott and Stated Clerk Melissa Allison continue to be actively involved with churches, pastors and other leaders, and committees/commissions within the presbytery. They bring listening ears and open hearts to their interactions within the

presbytery, not least by putting together opportunities for people within the presbytery to gather in person for worship, education, and fellowship. These gatherings, including the one on Nov. 16, 2024, have been very well received. The next one is scheduled for April 5, 2025.

Sacred Pause

The “Sacred Pause,” instituted by the AC in March of 2024, continues. Those groups meeting regularly are as follows:

- Commission on Ministry
- Commission on Preparation for Ministry
- Presbytery of Detroit Administrative Commission for Examination for Ordination and Installation of Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Examination of Commissioned Pastors
- Anti-Racism Committee
- Michigan Black Presbyterian Caucus
- A number of Administrative Commissions (out of the Commission on Ministry) working directly in POD churches.

Nominating

Because there is no Presbytery Nominating Committee at present, the AC has tasked the Commission on Ministry and Commission on Preparation for Ministry with finding nominees for their commissions, who are then approved by the AC. This admittedly puts more pressure on these commissions, but they have done well in finding appropriately diverse slates of people to serve.

Personnel

The Synod AC received the resignation of Unah Matu-Ngare, the presbytery’s Hunger Action Enabler, at the end of October 2024. For now, TEP Leslie Mott is facilitating that group.

EEOC Charge of Discrimination

On January 13, 2025, the Synod AC received notice of an Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) Charge of Discrimination filed by Charon Barconey. The AC is working closely with our attorney, Faith Whitaker of Dinsmore Shohl, to respond to this claim. Note that there is some confusion as to whether this charge is against the presbytery or the synod, or both.

The AC has agreed to propose mediation by the EEOC as a first step in resolving this dispute.

Actions Passed by the Administrative Commission

October 3, 2024

The following motion was approved: Having original jurisdiction, the Synod of the Covenant Administrative Commission for the Presbytery of Detroit is removing the current Board of Trustees for the Presbytery of Detroit effective Tuesday, October 8, 2024. The tasks of the Trustees will be assigned to a restructure of four subcommittees: Budget and Finance, Property and Loans, Investments, and Grants. The AC, acting as the Trustees, will make decisions based upon the recommendations of the subcommittees.

Motions Approved:

- to remove Elder Karen Strandholm as President of the Presbytery of Detroit Inc. and upon her removal, elect Rev. Jeanne Gay as Corporate President
- to remove Elder Ben Beale as Vice- President of the Presbyter of Detroit Inc. and upon his removal, elect Elder Jim Wilson as Corporate Vice-President

Motion Approved: to accept the Report to the Synod of the Covenant

October 17, 2024

Motion Approved: Ratification of the changes made to AC's Report to the Synod of the Covenant. Motion Approved: Following the October 4, 2024 opportunity for all members who would be affected by the decision fair notice and an opportunity to be heard, the Administrative Commission for St. James Presbyterian Church of Redford, Michigan at their meeting on October 11, 2024 determined the session is not able to wisely conduct its affairs and recommend the administrative commission have original jurisdiction. The motion to grant original jurisdiction was approved.

Motion to authorize Stated Clerk Melissa Allison to provide the names of potential members of a to serve on an Investigation Committee in the event that allegations are filed, so that the IC can be properly trained to conduct their work. The motion was approved.

November 7, 2024

Motion Approved: to maintain per capita for the Presbytery of Detroit at \$22.85

Motion Approved: Loan request from Orchard Lake Presbyterian Church to Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program for the amount of \$100,000

Motion Approved: to adopt the Administrative Leave Policy "if the way be clear" with an affirmative vote on the Commission on Ministry.

Motion Approved (from CPM): The list of potential ordination exam readers was submitted. Motion for CPM to confer with the Michigan Presbyterian Black Caucus and Anti-Racism to prepare a final list prior to confirmation.

Motion Approved: Accept the "Anti-Harassment Policy" with the proposed changes to

“Appendix A”.

November 21, 2024

Motions Approved (from TEP):

- Vacation: 11/25-11/29 (Thanksgiving week) 12/23- 27 (Christmas Week).
- Study leave: 12/30-1/3/25 (between Christmas and New Year’s).
- Requesting to carry over one week of study leave into 2025.

Motion to permit Northminster Presbyterian Church of Troy to enter into a lease agreement effective December 1, 2024 for a two-year period, with option for renewal, with the Congregational Church of Birmingham (UCC) to include use of the sanctuary was approved.

Motion to permit Hope Presbyterian Church of Detroit to engage in the process of the sale of their building was approved.

Milford Presbyterian Church called a special congregational meeting on November 17, 2024 to request permission to sell a portion of their property (restaurant and parking lot) was approved.

December 5, 2024

From Administrative Commission for St. James Redford 11.22.24. The following items

were moved for action by the Administrative Commission for St. James Redford:

1. To Request from the Presbytery of Detroit financial support to secure property and contents insurance for the St. James Church was approved. In speaking with the principals in this matter, The St. James AC understands the building, grounds, and contents are uninsured. According to their review of the present finances of the church, there is insufficient money available from the Church to provide insurance. Hence, the St. Jame AC requests that the POD provide insurance coverage as soon as possible.
2. To Request funding from the Presbytery of Detroit to change the locks on the St. James Church was approved. By changing the locks, the AC for St. James will be certain that unwanted entry is not gained by any person under investigation. A key to the changed lock will be issued to the POD, the Session, and the Rainbow Daycare Director.
3. To Request that Pastor Paul Bousquette, Treasurer Kathy Anderson, and Clerk of Session Marilyn Compton meet with the AC at the Church’s local bank to install the AC as signatories on the St. James Church bank account, while removing their names from the church accounts.
4. To Request that the Synod AC place Pastor Paul Bousquette on Administrative Leave. Process has been initiated.

Motion Approved (from CPM): request the Synod of the Covenant Administrative Commission approve an alternate assessment of the ordination exams for Minister of Word and Sacrament to evaluate Dwight Walker's understanding of Worship, Polity and Reformed Theology that has been prepared for Commission Ruling Elders by the Commission on Preparation for Ministry in the Presbytery of Detroit

Motion Approved (from CPM): To elect the following persons:
Class of 2027—Rev. Anders Edstrom (White, Male, Greenfield), requesting renewal for another term); Rev. Darin Nettleton (White, Male, Milford); Rev. Bre Ryan (White, Female, First Congregational UCC, New Baltimore); Elder Lynne Lande (White, Female, Ann Arbor First) Class of 2025—Rev. Tom James (White, Male, FPC Dearborn) Election of the slate was approved.

Motion Approved (from Presbyterian Youth Triennium): To disperse \$15,000 for the purpose of youth to attend Triennium in the Presbytery of Detroit
Temporary Executive Presbyter and Stated Clerk Position descriptions were adopted.
2025.02.04 Consent Agenda and Clerk's Report Page 8 of 9

December 19, 2024

Motion Approved: to receive the Management Representation Letter for the 2023 audit submitted by Elder Ben Beale

Motion Approved: Invoices submitted by Barbara Wilson (Wilson Coaching LLC) dated December 15, 2024 for \$5,770

Motion Approved (from COM): To carry over the remainder of the 2024 Commission on Ministry budget to be allocated toward Health Care Grants for clergy

Motion Approved (from CPM): Confirm email vote taken on December 5 approving Ordination Exam Readers for February 2025 Exam Reading

Motions Approved:

- Request for the Stated Clerk to carry over two weeks unused Study Leave to 2025.
- Request for Stated Clerk to utilize remaining Professional and Study Leave reimbursed expenses on a new laptop computer
- Request permission to retain ownership of the laptop post employment Review and approve following insurance documents:
- Approved: 2024/25 Renewal Comparison Notice of Conditional Renewal - contains changes to policy after the Howell Nature Center tragedy
- Approved: 2025 Renewal MOI (policy)

Motion Approved: Following review of a draft Management Representation Letter sent by the Temporary Executive Presbytery on December 15 email

January 2, 2025

Motion Approved: for Stated Clerk to engage in conversation with Hope Presbyterian Church and the Hope Administrative commission regarding Hope Presbyterian Church holding a congregational meeting to vote on the intention of selling the property and then provide minutes from that meeting, then the Synod AC will proceed with approvals

Commission on Ministry nominations were approved.

- Rev. John Bak (Assoc. Pastor Korean Presbyterian Church of Metro Detroit)
- Rev. Charles Sadler (Interim Pastor, People's Church, Milan)
- Rev. Beth Delaney (Interim Pastor Southminster Presbyterian Taylor)
- Rev. Esther Lee (Associate Pastor, Korean Presbyterian Church of Metro Detroit)
- Elder Gary Gallo (Kirk in the Hills)
- Elder Sean Eaton (Westminster Ann Arbor)
- Renewal to Serve another 3- year term
- Rev. Ashley Ashley (Associate Pastor Plymouth)
- Rev. Teresa Peterson (Interim Pastor Cherry Hill Dearborn)

January 16, 2025

Motion Approved: to nominate Ruling Elder Sharon Moore as Moderator and Ruling Elder Mary Lloyd as Vice-Moderator

Motion Approved: to sell the property known as Hope Presbyterian Church, the land situated at 15340 Meyers Road in the City of Detroit in the County of Wayne in the State of Michigan ... for the amount of \$350,000 to Marcellis Smith, Lead Pastor of Detroit Church

Motion Approved: to nominate the following persons to the Commission on Preparation for Ministry for the Class of 2027: Commissioned Ruling Elder Elizabeth Ngare, Rev. Hannah Lundberg.

Motion Approved: for the expenditure of 2025 routine bills for the Presbytery of Detroit.

Motion Approved: to add a line item to the 2025 budget for Permanent Judicial Commission Expenses

Recommendation

Cal Bremer's resignation left the Administrative Commission with only four members. We are currently waiting for the Synod moderator to appoint an additional member, so we will be back at full capacity. The Synod stated clerk has advised the Administrative

Commission that we are able to request the Synod Assembly approve the appointment of additional members.

The Synod Administrative Commission for the Presbytery of Detroit recommends that the Synod Assembly approve two additional members be appointed to the Administrative Commission. This will allow the Administrative Commission to have 5-7 members.

We thank you for and continue to solicit your prayers for discernment and wisdom,
Jeanne Gay, Moderator Alice McCollum
Robert Sullivan Jim Wilson

This is the end of the consent agenda and clerk's report

WELCOME

Elder Thorburn welcomed new commissioners, Elder Ben Shaw (Cincinnati) and Elder Andrew Miller (Lake Huron). Elder Lee Lorr, Moderator of the Synod of the Covenant Presbytery Women, was, by consensus, given voice for the meeting. Elder Thorburn also welcomed Rev. Leslie Mott (Detroit), Rev. Melissa Allison (Detroit), and Brittany Hoyer (Controller-Elect) to the Assembly.

DEVOTION

Elder Thorburn invited Rev. Mike Wakeland (Miami Valley) shared several passages of Scripture and led the Assembly in a time of devotion.

STAFF REPORTS

Elder Thorburn recognized Matthew J. Aragon Bruce, Director of the Cultivating the Gifts of Preaching Initiative; Elder Tim Pollock (Muskingum), CRE Coordinator; and Rev. Charles B. Hardwick (Miami Valley), Synod Executive. They presented the following reports.

Cultivating the Gifts of Preaching Initiative (CGPI) Report of Matthew J. Aragon Bruce, Director February 4, 2025

What is CGPI?

If you are unaware of what CGPI is (perhaps you are a new commissioner!) – CGPI is the “Cultivating the Gift of Preaching Initiative.” CGPI is funded by a Lilly Compelling Preaching Grant of 1.25 million dollars for five years. This is a new ministry of the Synod, beginning in January of 2024.

The aim of CGPI is to train 140 lay preachers from across the Synod and in all 11 presbyteries. We have a rather serious lack of trained preachers (albeit different from presbytery to presbytery) in the Synod. Not only are pulpit supply lists rather terse in many presbyteries, but of the ~650 churches in the Synod, nearly 200 are presently without an installed TE or CRE.

The cost of CGPI is about \$11,000 per participant. The grant covers the bulk of this. We ask that each participant pay \$250 personally and that their churches and/or presbyteries pay \$1000 for the entire 18-month program. Scholarships are available.

One of the most important things that I have found needs to be said about CGPI is this: When I first started this position as the CGPI director just over a year ago now, I viewed the purpose of CGPI to be something of an emergency stop gap, i.e., as a way to put warm bodies in pulpits while we figured out what to do (whether that be find new ways to train and recruit pastors for the Synod's presbyteries, merge or close congregations, etc.). In sum our problem was a lack of people called to proclaim the Good News. It only took a few months of traveling across the synod (physically and digitally), to realize that we have no shortage of called people, but rather a lack of means to train and form them as preachers, and a lack of means to connect them where there is need. In sum, what I have found is that we have no shortage of REs and congregation members in our churches that are gifted and called to preach, what they need is some formal training in homiletics, exegesis, and reformed theology. CGPI serves to meet these needs.

2024 Statistics

In 2024 we admitted 21 participants into CGPI. These participants come from nine of the Synod's eleven presbyteries and seven participants are BIPOC. One participant dropped out of the program, but she was our lone college student and dropped out because, in part due to her experience in CGPI, she plans to attend Seminary this Fall (I regard this as a win for all parties!).

The 20 current participants meet monthly in four different cohorts. Three of these cohorts are geographical (one for Michigan, one each for Eastern and Western Ohio, and one cohort which we call the "African Diaspora" has all the members are either African American or first-generation immigrants from an African nation; this cohort was made at the request of the participants). These cohorts are led by mentors (installed, seminary-trained TEs with significant experience as the regular preacher in a congregational setting) – three mentors come from the Synod and one (who leads the African Diaspora cohort) is a faculty member at Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary (JCSTS) in Atlanta (though he lives and pastors a church presently in NYC).

The major event of 2024 was the Alma Preaching Conference which kicked-off the program in June. This five day conference (Thursday afternoon – Monday morning) included a series of plenary lectures from Paul Roberts, President of JCSTS, and workshops from Alma College and JCSTS Faculty, and Synod staff (Chip Hardwick and Matt Bruce), and sermons from Rev. Roberts and our CGPI mentors. This conference will be an annual event and will be the start of the program for each "class." 2025 Goals

Our goals for 2025 are:

- 35-38 new participants in five cohorts
- Participants from all eleven presbyteries (ideally at least three from each)

- Mentors from presently unrepresented presbyteries (current mentors come from Lake Huron, Scioto Valley, and Maumee Valley)
- To continue and deepen our ministry partnerships with Alma College and Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary.
- To “graduate” our first “class”
- To develop connections between CGPI and CRE/CP training

Present Activities (since the November Synod Assembly)

The major occurrence for present participants since November is the first in-person meeting since the June Conference. In January, each of the cohorts will gather in person for between 24-48 hours and have an intensive meeting (one group met in mid-December due to their schedules, one the second weekend in January, and the remaining two will meet the last weekend of January).

The application for the next “class” (we call this the Beta Cycle in house) has been open since mid-December. We are requesting that applications be submitted by March 1 (though we are able to take later applications). We are presently recruiting new participants and mentors (some of you may already have received a phone call and/or emails from me).

Looking Forward and Miscellaneous Items

- The 2025 Alma Conference will take place June 12-16.
- In the present cycle (2024-2025, Alpha) and the next (2025-2026, Beta) we are prioritizing admitting participants who have little to no formal training in preaching and will accept CREs/CPs only if there is space. However, going forward we are considering opening CGPI to CREs/CPs who may benefit from additional homiletical, exegetical, and theological formation.
- One of the added benefits of CGPI to the greater Synod is that our instructional preaching videos are available to the entire synod through our YouTube page.

Commissioned Ruling Elder/Commissioned Pastor Coordinator Report February 4, 2025

- The CRE/CP Coordinator is continuing to support CREs within the bounds of the Synod with monthly “Brown Bag” gatherings on Zoom. This is a program started in 2024 and continues into 2025
- The CRE/CP Coordinator is piloting continuing education opportunities for CREs this year. There are 6 scheduled workshops for 2025, each running approximately 3 hours via Zoom. The workshops cover three broad topics: Leadership, Emotional Intelligence, and Small Group Communication. Each workshop will cover a particular aspect of one of the broad topics. The schedule is as follows:
 - February 12: Leadership with Dr. Robert McManus
 - March 12: Emotional Intelligence with Rev. Kimberly Secrist Ashby
 - May 14: Small Group Communication and Dynamics with Tim Pollock

- June 11: Leadership with Dr. Robbert McManus
- September 10: Small Group Communion and Dynamics with Tim Pollock
- October 8: Emotional Intelligence with Rev. Kimberly Secrist Ashby
- The CRE/CP is developing conversation sessions with Presbytery Leaders to possibly develop a core curriculum for CREs to be offered by the Synod in partnership with our Presbyteries.
- The CRE/CP is drafting an overture to amend the supervision section for CRE/CPs G-2.1004 and also drafting a website page to be included on the Synod of the Covenant website.

Rev. Hardwick gave an update on the overall ministries of the Synod. He invited members of the Synod to contact him for further information.

REPORT OF THE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Rev. Jon Carlisle (Scioto Valley), Moderator of the Governance Committee, invited Rev. Fran Lane-Lawrence (Lake Michigan), Stated Clerk, who presented the following amendments to the bylaws for a first-read. Sections to be stricken appear with a strike-through. Sections to be added appear in italics. Commissioners were asked to direct any questions and comments they might have to Rev. Lane-Lawrence.

40:50 Treasurer

- A. The Treasurer shall be a ruling elder or teaching elder ~~elected at the last yearly synod assembly and take office on January 1 of the next year.~~ *actively serving on the Synod Finance Committee. The Treasurer shall be nominated to the Synod Assembly by the Leadership Committee at the annual meeting in October. The Treasurer cannot serve concurrently as Moderator of the Finance Committee.*
- B. ~~The Treasurer shall serve for three (3) years or until a successor has been elected and shall receive and disburse all funds of the Synod. The Treasurer may serve multiple terms.~~
The treasurer shall serve for (1) year or until a successor has been elected, except in the case of resignation or removal, and shall effectuate Synod corporate financial documents as approved by the Assembly. The Treasurer may serve multiple terms.
- C. The Treasurer shall be ~~an ex-officio member, with voice but without vote of the Finance Committee~~ the Treasurer of the Corporation.
- D. The Treasurer is responsible to the Synod Assembly ~~through the Head of Staff.~~
- E. The Treasurer is a volunteer position.
- F. The Treasurer shall be reimbursed for professional expenses incurred in the discharge of the office.
- G. The treasurer shall be bonded at the expense of the Synod.
- H. ~~The Treasurer shall provide monthly reports to the appropriate executive staff members, the stated clerk, and the Finance Committee.~~

I. *The Treasurer shall provide a report at each Synod Assembly.*

50:10

The Synod shall cause a corporation to be formed and maintained under the laws of the state of Ohio. Meetings of the Assembly constitute meetings of the Corporation. The Corporation cannot act apart from the Assembly (G-4.101)

a. Membership (G-4.0202)

1. The membership of the corporation shall be those persons elected to the Synod Assembly as commissioners and officers of designated organizations.
2. The Moderator of the Synod Assembly, Vice-Moderator of the Synod Assembly, Stated Clerk, and Treasurer shall serve as the President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer of the Corporation.
3. *A member of the Finance Committee nominated annually to the Synod Assembly by the Leadership Committee for election shall serve as the Treasurer of the Corporation.*
4. The Synod Executive and Stated Clerk shall be Resident Agents of the Corporation in the state where they reside.
5. Resident Agents shall be appointed for each state in which the Synod operates.

70:41

The moderator of the Finance Committee shall be elected by the Synod at its last yearly meeting and begin service on January 1 of the next year. The Synod Executive shall be an ex officio member of the Finance Committee, with voice but without vote. The Stated Clerk shall be an ex officio member of the Finance Committee with voice but without vote. The ~~Treasurer~~ *Controller* of the Synod shall be an ex officio member of the Finance Committee, with voice but without vote, and shall be responsible for maintaining all financial records. The moderator of the Finance Committee shall be elected for a one-year term, but there is no limit to the number of terms. The Finance Committee shall appoint one of its members as a recording clerk to keep minutes of its meetings.

REPORT OF THE LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE

On behalf of the Synod of the Covenant Leadership Committee and Nominating Committee, Elder Thorburn recommended that Elder Joseph A. Salvato (Cincinnati) be placed in nomination for election as Synod of the Covenant Corporate Treasurer, Class of 2025). **A motion prevailed** to approve the recommendation.

Elder Thorburn reported that the Synod of the Covenant Leadership will be calling a special meeting of the Synod Assembly sometime in March so Commissioners should be watching for notification.

REPORT OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Elder Mary Ann Bromley (Eastminster), moderator of the Human Resources Committee, presented the Position Description for the Synod of the Covenant Controller. A motion prevailed to approve the Position Description as follows:

Position Description: Controller (Staff)

Purpose

The purpose of the Synod of the Covenant's Controller is to analyze and report on the Synod's financial condition and provide financial analysis and accurate and timely financial statements so that the Synod can carry out its operations and mission. The Controller works closely with the Treasurer, who provides approvals and financial oversight. The Controller is a paid member of staff and has a fiduciary responsibility to the Synod. This is a paid staff position of approximately ten hours a week.

Responsibilities

- Ensure that all transactions are reported to the Bookkeeping Service in a timely manner, ensuring accurate monthly financial statements.
- Review monthly statements to ensure completeness and accuracy and report monthly actual income and expenses, those budgeted and year-to-date, to staff, the Leadership Team, and the Finance Committee.
- Approve payments.
- Facilitate deposits, transfers, and withdrawals from bank and investment accounts under the direction of the Finance Committee and the Synod Assembly
- Report monthly financial position, including income, expense, and balance sheet, to the Finance Committee and report the same quarterly to the Synod Assembly.
- Provide a detailed current financial report to staff and committees as requested.
- Provide financial forecasting reports as requested.
- Oversee accounts payable and receivable.
- Ensure that reconciliation of ledger and bank account are done monthly.
- Calculate and facilitate payments to Campus Ministry partners.
- Facilitate scholarship and grant distributions.
- Participate with the Finance Committee in annual budget creation and provide oversight for compliance with the SOC budget.
- Consult and offer banking and investment input to the Finance Committee.
- Ensure that SOC complies with banking regulations.
- Consult with SOC accounting firm to facilitate annual financial review.
- Work with the Finance Committee to implement all of the auditor's recommendations.

Relationships

The Controller will be the primary liaison to the Finance Committee, its subcommittees, external service providers, payroll service, and auditors. The Controller will provide letters of engagement where required, as approved by the Assembly. The Controller will provide appropriate documents for the approval and signature of the Corporate Treasurer when necessary. The Controller is a paid Synod staff member and an ex officio member of the Finance Committee with voice but no vote.

Accountability

The Controller is accountable to the Synod Assembly through the Synod Executive/Head of Staff.

Meetings

The Controller shall ordinarily be present at Synod assemblies and other committee/team meetings when requested. Travel expenses will be paid by the Synod.

Desired Qualifications

- Accounting degree, CPA, or equivalent professional experience
- Ability to interpret and oversee information in QuickBooks.

Salary and Benefits

Salary and Benefit through the Memo of Understanding.

Resources

- The Synod will provide access to phone and email systems, along with access to QuickBooks and other resources relevant to the role.
- The Controller will work out of their home or office in their own locale, with very infrequent trips to the Synod office.
- The Controller shall be bonded at the expense of the Synod.

Elder Bromley introduced Brittany Hoyer. **A motion prevailed** to hire Mx Hoyer as the Controller effective February 5, 2025.

Elder Bromley introduced Elder Adrienne Adams (Detroit), Moderator of the Search Committee for the Synod Associate for Racial Justice. Elder Adams provided that the Committee had conducted interviews and had narrowed the candidates to nine persons. The Committee is discerning what candidates should be invited for in person interviews.

REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Rev. Aaron Meadows (Eastminster), moderator of the Finance Committee, invited Elder Joseph Salvato (Cincinnati) to give the Quarterly Financial Report of December 31, 2024 and the Preliminary Finance Report Year-to-Date as of December 31, 2024. (See Attached).

The Financa Committee made the following recommendations.

JP Morgan Chase

That Lyle Andrew Thorburn, Jr. (Corporate President of the Synod of the Covenant); Aaron Meadows (Moderator of the Synod of the Covenant Finance Committee); and Joseph A. Salvato (Corporate Treasurer for the Synod of the Covenant) be approved as signers on all JP Morgan Chase checking and savings accounts. **A motion prevailed** to approve the recommendation.

That Joseph A. Salvato, Corporate Treasurer for the Synod of the Covenant, be designated as the Authorizing Representative for all JP Morgan Chase checking, savings, and credit card accounts. **A motion prevailed** to approve the recommendation.

That Martha Blenman and Frank Walburg be removed as signers of all JP Morgan Chase accounts. **A motion prevailed** to approve the recommendation.

PNC

That Lyle Andrew Thorburn, Jr. (Corporate President of the Synod of the Covenant); Aaron Meadows (Moderator of the Synod of the Covenant Finance Committee); and Joseph A. Salvato (Corporate Treasurer for the Synod of the Covenant) to be authorized as signers on all PNC checking, savings, and investment accounts. **A motion prevailed** to approve the recommendation.

That Joseph A. Salvato, Corporate Treasurer for the Synod of the Covenant, be designated as the Controlling Party, SuperUser, and Program Administrator for all PNC Bank checking, savings, investment, and credit card accounts. **A motion prevailed** to approve the recommendation.

To remove Martha Blenman, Frank Walburg, Charles B. Hardwick, and Matthew James Bruce as signers from the PNC Bank checking, savings, investment, and credit card accounts. **A motion prevailed** to approve the recommendation

To remove Martha Blenman as the Controlling Party, SuperUser, and Program Administrator for all PNC Bank checking, savings, investment, and credit card accounts. **A motion prevailed** to approve the recommendation.

Data Service Center, Inc.

To approve Brittany Elise Hoyer (Controller) and Joseph A. Salvato (Corporate Treasurer) as the primary contacts between the Synod of the Covenant and Data Service Center, Inc. **A motion prevailed** to approve the recommendation.

Skillman

To approve Lyle Andrew Thorburn, Jr. (Corporate President of the Synod of the Covenant); Aaron Meadows (Moderator of the Synod of the Covenant Finance Committee); and Joseph A. Salvato (Corporate Treasurer for the Synod of the Covenant) as authorized signers for Synod business transactions. **A motion prevailed** to approve the recommendation.

To approve Joseph A. Salvato (Corporate Treasurer) and Brittany Hoyer (Controller) as the primary contacts for Skillman. **A motion prevailed** to approve the recommendation.

Sculati Wealth Management

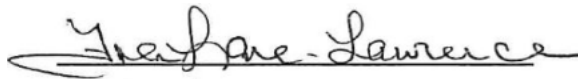
To approve Joseph A. Salvato (Corporate Treasurer) and Brittany Hoyer (Controller) as the primary contacts for Sculati Wealth Management. **A motion prevailed** to approve the recommendation.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting of the Synod of the Covenant Assembly was adjourned at 5:57 p.m. Elder Andy Thorburn closed the meeting with prayer.

Respectfully Submitted and Attested,

Rev. Dr. Fran Lane-Lawrence

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Fran Lane-Lawrence", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Stated Clerk/Corporate Secretary
Synod of the Covenant