

**Minutes of the Commission to Unify  
the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency  
Online  
December 17, 2022**

Opening Prayer      Cristi Scott-Ligon, co-moderator of the Commission to Unify the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency (Unification Commission), called the meeting to order with prayer at 3:00 p.m. EST. By common consent the draft agenda was adopted.

Roll                      The roll was formed:

Commissioners (as appointed by the Co-Moderators of the 225<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (2022); criteria and demographics included for the record):

Felipe N. Martínez, Co-Moderator, Teaching Elder, Presbytery of Ohio Valley; Commissioner, 225th General Assembly (2022)

Cristi Scott Ligon, Co-Moderator, Ruling Elder, Presbytery of Middle Tennessee; Commissioner, 225th General Assembly (2022)

Debra Avery, Teaching Elder, Presbytery of Great Rivers; Moving Forward Implementation Special Committee

Carson Brown, Ruling Elder, Presbytery of Peace River; Young Adult Advisory Delegate, 225th General Assembly (2022)

Dee Cooper, Teaching Elder, Presbytery of Denver; Presbyterian Mission Agency Board

David Davis, Teaching Elder, Presbytery of the Coastlands; Committee on the Office of the General Assembly

Frances Lin, Ruling Elder, Presbytery of San Diego; At-Large

Scott Lumsden, Teaching Elder, Presbytery of Seattle; Per Capita and Financial Sustainability Special Committee

Emily Martin, Ruling Elder, Presbytery of North Central California; Young Adult Advisory Delegate, 225th General Assembly (2022)

José Rosa-Rivera, Ruling Elder, Presbiterio de San Juan; Per Capita and Financial Sustainability Special Committee

Bill Teng, Teaching Elder, Presbytery of Peace River; Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation Board

Kris Thompson, Ruling Elder, Presbytery of National Capital; At-Large

Ex-Officio:

Ruth Faith Santana-Grace, Co-Moderator, 225th General Assembly (2022)

Shavon Starling-Louis, Co Moderator, 225th General Assembly (2022)

Staff:

Barry Creech, Deputy Executive Director for Administration, Presbyterian Mission Agency

Kathy Lueckert, President, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation

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

Press:

Mike Ferguson, Presbyterian News Service,


Leslie Scanlon (Presbyterian Outlook)

**Unification Commission**  
**December 17, 2022**

Land Acknowledgement	Kathy Lueckert provided the land acknowledgment for the greater Louisville, Ky. area, including the Osage and Shawnee Nations.
Greetings	Ruth Faith Santana-Grace and Shavon Starling-Louis brought greetings to the Commission and expressed their deep gratitude for commission members. (Recorder's Note: in the GA Co-Moderators announcement of the commission roster on the November 21, 2022, special words of gratitude were provided to staff shepherd and leadership of, Ruling Elder valerie izumi, Assistant Stated Clerk, as well as the supportive consultations and contributions from the Rev. Anna Kendig Flores and the Rev. Dr. Eric A. Thomas, co-moderators of the General Assembly Committee on Representation, and the Rev. Dr. Daris Bultena, moderator of the General Assembly Nominating Committee.)
Executive Session	There is a General Assembly tradition for smaller bodies to begin their work with a closed session for purposes of team building. Felipe Martínez made a motion to enter executive session. Upon second, discussion, and action, the Commission entered executive session. Ruth Faith Santana-Grace and Shavon Starling-Louis (ex-officio), and Barry Creech, Kathy Lueckert, and Kerry Rice (staff), were invited to participate.
Rising from Executive Session	Upon rising from Executive Session, Cristi Scott Ligon noted no actions were taken. Press rejoined the meeting.
Commission Charge and Powers	Kerry Rice provided an overview ( <i>Attachment I</i> ) of the charge to the Unification Commission from the 225 <sup>th</sup> GA (2022), and outlined its powers and responsibilities, including determining mission priorities for the denomination. It was shared Raymond Bonwell, previous corporate secretary for the Board of Pensions, may be providing administrative support to the Commission. An overview of timelines, including the 120-day deadline for reports to the General Assembly, was provided.
Open Discussion	Staff shared a common document site would be established in early 2023, with resources to include organizational charts.  Felipe Martínez and Cristi Scott Ligon asked all future questions and requests be directed to them, in their role as co-moderators.
Future Meetings	By common consent, it was agreed the next meeting of the Unification Commission will be Saturday, January 21, 2023, from 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. EST, online. The Unification Commission will meet in person (with an online option) in Louisville, Ky. on March 9 – 11, 2023. More information will be forthcoming in early 2023.
Closing Prayer	By common consent, the meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m. with a closing prayer offered by Felipe Martínez.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Kathy Lueckert  
Acting Recorder

A stack of three smooth, grey stones is positioned in the upper right quadrant of the page, partially overlapping the top edge of the central text box.

A Commission to oversee and facilitate  
the unification of the Office of the  
General Assembly and the Presbyterian  
Mission Agency

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*a.k.a The Unification Commission*

# What is a commission?

- G-3.0109 – “A commission is empowered to consider and conclude matters referred to it by a council. The designating council shall state specifically the scope of the commission’s powers and any restrictions on those powers.”
- G-3.0109b – “A commission of presbytery, synod, or General Assembly shall be composed of ruling elders and ministers of the Word and Sacrament in numbers as nearly equal as possible and sufficient to accomplish their work. A quorum of any commission shall be established by the designating council or councils but in no case shall be less than a majority of its members”

# What is a commission?

- G-3.0109b – “A commission shall keep a full record of its proceedings and shall submit that record to the council or councils for incorporation into its records. Actions of a commission shall be regarded as actions of the council or councils that created it. A commission may be assigned additional duties as a committee, which duties shall be reported and handled as the report of a committee.”
- “The decisions of an administrative commission shall be reported to the clerk of the designating council, who shall report it to the council at its next stated meeting. A council may rescind or amend an action of its administrative commission in the same way actions of the council are modified.



# The Unification Commission

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What is the commission charged to do?



Who must be consulted?



What powers do you have?



What can't you do?



Who is on the Commission?



Form a commission to:

- Unify the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency
- Revise the Organization for Mission
- Work to align the GA entities toward long-term faithfulness and financial sustainability

The Commission shall:

- Establish missional and ecclesial coordination
- Determine strategies and priorities to accomplish General Assembly goals
- Provide governance for and have the authority to assume all governance functions of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly



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The commission will consult with:

- representatives from OGA, PMA, and all other agencies, committees, staff, and PC(USA) entities and their boards
- advocacy and advisory committees
- mid councils.

Additionally, the executive leadership of PMA and OGA shall participate as requested.





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The commission will have the authority to :

- review, adapt, align as necessary, and organize
  - the role(s) and relationships of “those committees of the General Assembly, entities, boards, committees and constituent bodies that are not explicitly established in the Book of Order” toward long-term faithfulness, financial sustainability, and a unified new structure.
  - the financial agreements including per capita, restricted, and unrestricted funds, among the Foundation, the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Office of the General Assembly, and the Presbyterian Church (USA), A Corporation (A Corp) to support the new Organization for Mission so that each area of mission has adequate funds to sustain its mission long-term.



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This commission shall have the power to combine, unify, eliminate, and/or create any necessary organizational structure, including personnel and budget, to accomplish these missional strategies and priorities.

Once unification is finalized, the commission shall determine the structure moving forward and present the new Organization for Mission to the 227th General Assembly (2026).



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. (PILP),
- the Presbyterian Foundation (FDN), or
- the Presbyterian Church (USA), A Corp.

The commission may make recommendations to these agencies in an effort to better align the mission goals and priorities of the General Assembly.





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The commission, named by the Co-Moderators of the 225<sup>th</sup> Generals Assembly (2022), includes:

- One member each from the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA), the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB), and the Board of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation.
- Two members from the Per Capita and Financial Sustainability Special Committee (PCFSSC)
- A member of the Moving Forward Implementation Special Committee (MFISC)
- Two commissioners from the 225th General Assembly (2022).
- Two members-at-large from the larger church
- Two Young Adult Advisory Delegates (YAAD) from the 225th General Assembly (2022)





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In forming the commission, attention will be paid to best practices of representation to ensure that in addition to representation from agencies, there is diversity in identities, particularly including race, age, sexuality, and gender.

Staff from the Office of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and the Administrative Services Group (ASG) of A Corp will provide support to the work of the commission:

- Barry Creech - Deputy Executive Director, Presbyterian Mission Agency
- Kathy Lueckert – President, Presbyterian Church (USA), A Corporation
- Kerry Rice – Deputy Stated Clerk, Office of the General Assembly
- Raymond Bonwell will provide administrative and minute taking services

# Timeline for the Commission

The Commission is appointed

**November 2022**

The Commission begins meeting

**December 2022**

120 Day Deadline for Commission's report

**February 26, 2024**

Timeline for  
the  
Commission

60 Day Deadline for Financial Implications

**April 26, 2024**

226<sup>th</sup> General Assembly – Salt Lake City

**June 25 – July 4, 2024**

227<sup>th</sup> General Assembly - TBD

**Summer 2026**



## Financial Implications

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The General Assembly approved a financial implication of \$44,602 for 2023 and \$47,352 for 2024:

- Up to three in-person meetings per year
- Two Commission members to attend the in-person portion of the 226<sup>th</sup> General Assembly in 2024
- Small one-time costs for a Zoom license to enable additional on-line meetings of the Commission as needed





# The Unification Commission

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*Questions?*