

**Minutes of the  
Commission to Unify the Office of the General Assembly  
and the Presbyterian Mission Agency  
January 21, 2023**

Gathering	The Commission to Unify the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency held an online meeting using Zoom, an online audio and web conferencing platform. The public, including press, was able to watch in real-time (and view a recording) via Vimeo, a video sharing platform, on the website of the Office of the General Assembly, in the General Assembly section ( <a href="http://oga.pcusa.org/ga">oga.pcusa.org/ga</a> ; accessed January 21, 2023).
Opening Prayer	Felipe N. Martínez, 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 at 3:00 p.m. EST, and recognized Emily Martin for the opening prayer, which included lifting up the staff and leadership of the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and the various commissions of the 225th General Assembly (2022).
Roll	<p>The roll was formed:</p> <p>Commissioners (as appointed by the Co-Moderators of the 225th General Assembly (2022); criteria and demographics included for the record):</p> <p>Felipe N. Martínez, Co-Moderator, Teaching Elder, Presbytery of Ohio Valley; Commissioner, 225th General Assembly (2022)</p> <p>Cristi Scott Ligon, Co-Moderator, Ruling Elder, Presbytery of Middle Tennessee; Commissioner, 225th General Assembly (2022)</p> <p>Debra Avery, Teaching Elder, Presbytery of Great Rivers; Moving Forward Implementation Special Committee</p> <p>Carson Brown, Ruling Elder, Presbytery of Peace River; Young Adult Advisory Delegate, 225th General Assembly (2022)</p> <p>Dee Cooper, Teaching Elder, Presbytery of Denver; Presbyterian Mission Agency Board</p> <p>David Davis, Teaching Elder, Presbytery of the Coastlands; Committee on the Office of the General Assembly</p> <p>Frances Lin, Ruling Elder, Presbytery of San Diego; At-Large</p> <p>Scott Lumsden, Teaching Elder, Presbytery of Seattle; Per Capita and Financial Sustainability Special Committee</p> <p>Emily Martin, Ruling Elder, Presbytery of North Central California; Young Adult Advisory Delegate, 225th General Assembly (2022)</p> <p>José Rosa-Rivera, Ruling Elder, Presbiterio de San Juan; Per Capita and Financial Sustainability Special Committee</p> <p>Bill Teng, Teaching Elder, Presbytery of Peace River; Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation Board</p> <p>Kris Thompson, Ruling Elder, Presbytery of National Capital; At-Large</p> <p>Ex-Officio:</p> <p>Ruth Faith Santana-Grace, Co-Moderator, 225th General Assembly (2022)</p> <p>Shavon Starling-Louis, Co Moderator, 225th General Assembly (2022)</p> <p>Staff and Support:</p> <p>Raymond Bonwell, recorder</p> <p>Barry Creech, Deputy Executive Director for Administration, Presbyterian Mission Agency</p> <p>Kathy Lueckert, President, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation</p>

Kerry Rice, Deputy Stated Clerk, Office of the General Assembly  
Alejandra Sherman, Executive Assistant to the President, Presbyterian Church  
(U.S.A.), A Corporation

Invited Guests:

Tim Cargal, Assistant Stated Clerk and Associate Director, Ministry Leadership  
Development, Office of the General Assembly  
Laurie Griffith, Associate Director for Constitutional Interpretation, Office of the  
General Assembly

- Agenda                      Without objection, the agenda was adopted.
- Introductions            Upon recognition, Kathy Lueckert introduced Raymond Bonwell to the Unification Commission as the recorder and another resource, noting Raymond's previous service as the Corporate Secretary of the Board of Pensions. Laurie Griffith was also introduced, as a subject matter expert for the Open Meeting Policy and the supplemental Administrative Action Regarding Trust and Transparency.
- 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 noted the additional purposes for the closed session included a discussion regarding the Unification Commission's Covenant, and a discussion regarding use of executive session. Felipe Martínez observed the Unification Commission would follow a better practice of including an executive session toward the end in future agendas. There was a motion made to enter executive session. Upon second, discussion, and approval, the Commission entered executive session. In addition to the Commissioners, the following were invited by Felipe Martínez to remain: those serving ex-officio, staff and support, and Laurie Griffith.
- [Recorder's Note: the public livestream noted the Commission was meeting in executive session with an anticipated time to return.]
- Rising from  
Executive Session      Upon rising from Executive Session, it was reported the sole action was to include the Commission's Covenant as part of the public documents (Attachment 1).
- Tim Cargal, Assistant Stated Clerk and Associate Director, Ministry Leadership Development, Office of the General Assembly, joined the meeting. Laurie Griffith also remained in attendance.
- Commissioner  
Contributions          Felipe Martínez and Cristi Scott Ligon invited the commissioners to volunteer for offering opening/closing prayers and Land Acknowledgement statements at each of the Commission meetings.
- Land  
Acknowledgment        Felipe Martínez led the land acknowledgment, informed by current service at the First Presbyterian Church of Columbus, Indiana, and acknowledged that the land known today as Bartholomew County and the parcel on which the church building stands are part of ancestral territory of the My-aam-ia (Miami), Shaw-an-da-sse Tula (Shaw-an-waki/Shaw-nee), Kas-kas-kia, Adena Culture and Kii-kaa-poi (Kickapoo).
- It was noted only the Miami Nation of Indiana is formally recognized by the State of Indiana, and recently, Hanover College, a PC(USA)-affiliated school near Madison, Indiana, entered into a friendship relationship with the Miami Nation which included offering a full-tuition, four-year, award annually to two incoming first-year students who are members of the Miami Nation of Indiana.

Minutes	Upon motion and second, and without objection, <u>the Minutes of the December 17, 2022, meeting were approved.</u>
Organizing the Work	<p>Upon recognition, Barry Creech discussed a framework for organizing the work of the Commission; the framework was distributed in advance of the meeting and as part of the publicly available information. The framework included bullet points comprised of pieces of the mandate from General Assembly (from the 225th GA (2022), “Align in Mission, Purpose, and the Use of Resources: Report of the Special Committee on Per-Capita Based Funding and National Church Financial Sustainability” [FIN-10], Item 1).</p> <p>Commissioners noted a need to work from the same common material, including agency descriptions and organizational charts. A sense of urgency was shared to break down the tasks, and it was noted this was only the second meeting of the Commission.</p> <p>Barry Creech was thanked for the framework, and it was agreed this facet of the work is “in progress.”</p>
Electronic Resource and Repository	<p>Kerry Rice introduced Tim Cargal. Kerry shared that Tim led the team that migrated the reading of ordination exams into an online environment, based on Moodle, an open-source learning management system. Moodle is the backbone of EQUIP, a PC(USA) electronic platform to provide training and support on behalf of the church. EQUIP (accessed at <a href="http://equip.pcusa.org">http://equip.pcusa.org</a>) contains both resources that are available to everyone and materials with limited access that are available only to those who have been granted permission by the content managers.</p> <p>Tim emphasized some advantages of using EQUIP, including the ability to be as single location for multiple materials (web links, files, other resources), and, it is both secure and provide open public access to those without accounts (including materials the Commission deems public). Tim continued that EQUIP is designed for any web browser, including those on mobile and tablet devices. Internal messages on the EQUIP platform will notify the user based on the preferences of the user.</p> <p>EQUIP was received favorably as a single solution. It was noted, without objection, the Covenant should include confidentiality relating to the work and the platform.</p> <p>Upon motion and second, and without objection, <u>the Commission adopted EQUIP as the electronic platform.</u></p>
Future Meetings	<p>Cristi Scott Ligon moved the focus to future meetings of the Commission. Normative expectations were raised, including the challenges of scheduling for full commissioner participation, and an alternative to meeting only on Saturdays.</p> <p>By common consent, it was decided the next meeting would be decided by the Commission leadership using Doodle, an online survey that helps a group find a better time to meet. It was noted, without objection, the Covenant should include the expectation to quickly respond to polls. It was noted the February meeting would be online, proposed between Wednesday, February 15 and Sunday, February 19, 2023.</p> <p>The same Doodle poll would set meetings through August, 2023, alternating on the third week of the month between mid-week and Saturday.</p> <p>The first in-person meeting was already decided for March 9-11, 2023 in Louisville, Ky. (with an option for online participation). The next in-person meeting would be in September – October, 2023. It was noted the Polity, Mission and Benefits Conference would be October 9-12, at a location to be determined. Many Mid-Council leaders are anticipated to be present, in addition to staff from the Officer of the General Assembly</p>

and the Presbyterian Mission Agency – the Commission is tasked to hold consultations that include these three audiences. Staff will bring this scheduling inquiry from the Commission to the Conference planning team. It was also noticed the conversations with Mid-Council leaders were included in the Per Capita and Financial Sustainability Report to the 225th GA (2022), and while these conversations could be helpful to review, it was noted the context might have changed.

Without objection, the same Doodle poll would include suggestions for the second in-person meeting, September – October 2023.

Closing Prayer

Having completed the agenda and with no new business, Felipe Martínez entertained a motion to adjourn. After a motion and second and without objection, with a closing prayer the meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Raymond Bonwell  
Recorder

**Commission for the Unification  
of the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency**

**COMMISSION COVENANT**

- To pray for one another
- To speak and listen with respect
- To inhale and exhale, to remember to breathe
- To have a posture of open mindedness, ready to listen, not quick to make decisions but seek understanding first
- To offer grace as we share collective witness
- To address things authentically, transparently and directly
- To make tough decisions
- To not be bound by our assumptions
- To be open to the Spirit's new options we haven't even considered
- To stay trusting in God
- To know when to speak and act, and know when to be quiet and wait for decisions to come in their time
- To be sensitive to the mindset of staff from OGA and PMA, to pray for them, to be a calming force
- To be consistent in how we communicate officially and unofficially
- To not take ourselves too seriously
- To support and care for one another

*Adopted on December 17, 2022*