

**Commission to Unify the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency
Minutes
Online
May 18, 2024**

Gathering The Commission to Unify the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency (“the Unification Commission”) held their eighteenth meeting online using Zoom, an online audio and web conferencing platform. The public 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. Materials, including the agenda and minutes, were available to the public via EQUIP, a learning management system administered by the Officer of the General Assembly.

Roll The roll was formed:

Commissioners (as appointed by the Co-Moderators of the 225th 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
Dave Davis, Teaching Elder, Presbytery of the Coastlands; Committee on the Office of the
General Assembly

Frances Lin, Teaching Elder, Presbytery of Riverside; At-Large [Ordained Aug. 11, 2023]

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

Staff:

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

Jennifer Clowery, interpreter

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

Samantha Lund, Legal Office Administrator, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
A Corporation

Guests:

Kelly Beeland, culture and change consultant

Opening Prayer	Felipe 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. ET on May 18, 2024, with an opening prayer. At the conclusion of the prayer, Felipe Martínez thanked Jennifer Clowery, interpreter, and reminded the commissioners of the settings for English or Spanish.
Land Acknowledgment	Upon recognition, Cristi Scott Ligon, co-moderator of the Unification Commission, led the land acknowledgment, informed by the Native American Indian Association of Tennessee and the Higher Education Institute. the lasting influence of Native American peoples in our state. Currently, there were no Native American Indian reservations in Tennessee, and there were no state or federal services, representation, or recognition of the First People here. Reading the place names aloud provides echoes of the old tongue in Etowah, Sewanee, Chattanooga, Hiwassee, Chickamagua, Nickajack, Tellico, and Tullahoma. Speaking the name Tennessee utters a tribute to our first nations’ musical word for where the river bends.
Agenda and Minutes	By common consent and without objection, <u>the Unification Commission adopted the agenda</u> . Some of the materials, including the agenda and materials, were available to the public via EQUIP, a learning management system administered by the Office of the General Assembly. By common consent and without objection, <u>the Unification Commission adopted</u> the minutes of the April 4-5, 2024, in-person stated meeting, and the May 9, 2024, online called meeting.
Covenant	Felipe Martínez and Cristi Scott Ligon, as co-moderators, read the covenant as a reminder of how the Unification Commission had agreed to engage this responsibility of this commission.
Key Unifying Principles	The co-moderators continued by reminding the Unification Commission of their key unifying principles: Relational; Streamlined; Nimble; Justice Focused; and, Vision Driven.
Co-Moderators Report	Felipe Martínez and Cristi Scott Ligon, as co-moderators, provided their report, which included preparation for the May 9, 2024, called meeting, and this May 18, 2024, stated meeting.
Culture Consultant Report	<p>Cristi Scott Ligon, co-moderator, reminded the Unification Commission of the previously identified need to address the change management and culture facets of unification. These needs prompted the Unification Commission to interview, recommend, and retain a culture consultant, who was Kelly Beeland. Kelly Beeland qualifications were described.</p> <p>Kelly Beeland led the Unification Commission through a presentation (Attachment 1), available online in EQUIP and available for review prior to the meeting. The presentation provided a common language and understanding of change management and organizational impact, including organizational culture. Distinctions and expectations were outlined between change management work and culture work. Kelly Beeland’s self-defined role was to support and advise the Unification Commission in building a greater understanding of the cultures at OGA and PMA today in working to define what the desired culture is in the future, what that vision is, and then to talk about and make recommendations on how bridges are built between today and the future.</p> <p>The focused timeline of moving through the balance of 2024 was discussed. The process to develop the unified budget was identified as representing better change management principles. The focus on change management for a project on changing culture was addressed - changing culture begins by changing the stories that one tells oneself, a change in how changes are communicated, and over-communicating change is a key part of change management. Culture was defined as the unwritten rules of how things get done, including the values, attitudes, and systems</p>

that are in place. Change is harder in organizations with a strong history. Distinctions were drawn between change management capability and capacity, and the role of change fatigue.

Kelly Beeland led the Unification Commission in a roundtable discussion.

226th GA (2024)
Planning

Cristi Scott Ligon, co-moderator, recognized Kathy Lueckert, president, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, for a discussion on planning for the 226th General Assembly (2024). Committees will be meeting online, with the plenary gathering in Salt Lake City, Utah. Each of the national agencies, including the Unification Commission, will have a single table to be present and interact with the GA Commissioners. Currently scheduling appears the Unification Commission Report, and the Unifying Budget, will be reviewed by two different committees. There were also information sessions scheduled for early June, to be held online, for any interested parties.

A working deadline for Commissioner Resolutions was June 24, and a deadline for comments will be days later. Kathy Lueckert observed as of today, there were no additional overtures or business that would need comments from the Unification Commission.

A topic for the June 15, 2024, meeting of the Unification Commission would be to refine a communication strategy to provide members of the Commission a consistent response to individual questions asked by individual General Assembly commissioners in informal contexts. It was noted that the responsibility to formally speak on behalf of the Unification Commission lay with the co-moderators, Felipe Martínez and Cristi Scott Ligon.

In-Person Meeting
Schedule

Kathy Lueckert continued. The in-person meeting schedule was set for August 8-10, 2024 (a Thursday – Saturday). Travel should be on Wednesday, August 7, 2024, and late Saturday, August 10, 2024.

The October dates are October 10-12, 2024 (again Thursday to Saturday), to meet in Denver, Colorado. Travel should be on Wednesday, October 8, 2024, and late Saturday, October 12, 2024.

The agendas for both meetings were anticipated to be quite full. A quick straw poll was taken, and it appeared a super-majority of commissioners would be able to be present at the August meeting.

Finance Working
Group

Upon recognition, Scott Lumsden spoke for the Finance Working Group. Thanks were again shared for the good work leading up to the approval of the Unified Budget at the recent called meeting on May 9, 2024.

Governance
Working Group

Upon recognition, Debra Avery spoke for the Governance Working Group. Conversations were held with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, and the Board for Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation (“A Corp”). A conversation with the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board was still being scheduled. These conversations will focus on both the work addressed at their respective levels of governance, and what work they are doing to prepare for unification. The A Corp conversation was slightly different, focusing on the work forming the Administrative Services Group (“ASG”), and what could be learned from the formation and definition of the role and work of ASG.

Another topic of focus has been the interim governance and leadership, and this was an intended topic for deep discussion at the in-person August 8-10, 2024, meeting. An interim timeline was shared ([Attachment 2](#)), with a focus on an interim governance group to succeed the Governance Workgroup on January 1, 2025. With unification still scheduled for July 1, 2025, the interim

governance group would lead through the election of a new board at the 227th General Assembly (2026), with an intentional season of overlapping service from July 1, 2026 through September 30, 2026.

Executive Session	Upon motion and second, and without discussion, the Unification Commission <u>voted to enter executive session to discuss matters of personnel and property</u> . Staff were invited to remain.
Rising from Executive Session	Felipe Martínez announced <u>the Unification Commission voted to rise from executive session, and reported no actions were taken</u> .
Governance Working Group, Conclusion	Debra Avery concluded the report on the interim timeline from the Governance Working Group. January 1, 2025 was a target date for the interim governance group to begin working very closely with COGA and PMAB to transition toward interim governance.
Comments for the Good of the Body and Closing Prayer	There were no further questions. Without objection, at the conclusion of a prayer by Carson Brown, the Unification Commission adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Raymond Bonwell
Recorder