

**Unification Commission**  
**April 16, 2023**  
**3:00 p.m. Eastern / 2:00 p.m. Central / Noon Pacific**

**AGENDA**

3:00 p.m.	Call to Order	Felipe Martinez
	Opening Prayer	Dave Davis
	Land Acknowledgement	Dee Cooper
	Approve the agenda	
	Approve the March 9-11, 2023, meeting minutes	
	Open meeting clarification	Staff
	Demo on Equip for Work Groups	Alex Sherman
	Report from Work Groups:	
	a. Common Mission	
	b. Consultations	
	c. Financial	
	d. Governance	
	Conversation about upcoming Consultation with COGA and PMAB April 19	
	Closed session (if needed)	
5:00 p.m.	Closing Prayer	Cristi Scott Ligon

**Commission to Unify the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency  
Draft Minutes  
Louisville, Ky. and Online  
March 9-11, 2023**

Thursday, March 9, 2023, 1:00 p.m. EST

**Gathering** The Commission to Unify the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency held their first in-person meeting in Louisville, Ky. at the Presbyterian Center in the Conference Center, the meeting and broadcasting facilities built out for the 225th General Assembly (2022). Remote participants joined using Zoom, an online audio and web conferencing platform. Press were present in the Conference Center, and 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.

**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  
David Davis, Commissioner, Teaching Elder, Presbytery of the Coastlands; Committee on the  
Office of the General Assembly [attended fully online]  
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) [attended Sat. Mar. 13 online]  
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, Ex-Officio, Co-Moderator, 225th General Assembly (2022)  
Shavon Starling-Louis, Co Moderator, 225th General Assembly (2022) [joined Fri. Mar. 12  
afternoon online]

Staff and Support:

Raymond Bonwell, recorder [attended fully online]  
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  
Alejandra Sherman, Executive Assistant to the President, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A  
Corporation

Invited Guests:

Erica Rader, Co-Moderator, Funding Model Development Team  
Michael Wilson, Co-Moderator, Funding Model Development Team

Opening Prayer and Devotion	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 at 1:00 p.m. EST, and recognized Felipe Martínez, co-moderator, for the opening prayer and devotion, which drew upon Mark 2:18-22 and the reference to new wine going into fresh wineskins.
Land Acknowledgment	Barry Creech was recognized to lead the land acknowledgment, informed by the location of the Presbyterian Center in Louisville, Ky. It was observed that early local history dating to the late 1800s was contradictory, claiming the greater area to be only a regional hunting ground, and also acknowledging graves and evidence of settlement. After detailing this history, the Unification Commission remembered the Hopewell and Adena peoples, whose communities lined the river systems between Louisville and Ohio. The Unification Commission remembered the people who later lived on the land, next to the falls of the Ohio, whose names are remembered as Kaskaskia, Shawnee, Miami, Osage, Cherokee, and Iroquois.
Introductions of Guests	<p>Cristi Scott Ligon welcomed the additional invited guests for this session, including:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Diane Givens Moffett, President and Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency J. Herbert Nelson, II, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">[Recorder’s Note: the Unification Commission met for several sessions for this meeting, recessing and reconvening as noted. The invited guests for each session will be listed.]</p>
Agenda	Without objection, <u>the agenda was adopted</u> . The agenda and presentations were distributed to the Unification Commission and publicly posted prior to the meeting.
Minutes	Revised minutes were distributed. Upon motion and second, and without objection, <u>the Minutes of the February 18, 2023 meeting were approved</u> .
Covenant	Felipe Martínez and Cristi Scott Ligon, in their roles as co-moderators, read the covenant as a reminder of what the Unification Commission had adopted.
Co-Moderator Report	<p>Felipe Martínez and Cristi Scott Ligon, provided the Unification Commission with an update of their work as co-moderators. There was a meeting with the moderator and vice-moderator of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (“COGA”), and another meeting with the co-moderators of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (“PMAB”). There was also a meeting with members of the board of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation (“A Corp.” alternately “A Corporation”).</p> <p>Common themes included a sense of faithfulness, a sense of call, a readiness to collaborate and cooperate, and a resilience to move through areas where trust is thin and strong. Felipe Martínez noted there would be time during this meeting for the Unification Commission to hear directly from staff of the Presbyterian Mission Agency (“PMA”) and the Office of the General Assembly (“OGA”).</p> <p>Felipe Martínez noted that Erica Rader and Michael Wilson, co-moderators, Funding Model Development Team had coordinated their schedules to hold conversations with staff of PMA and OGA, and to be present with the Unification Commission as a conversation partner and resource.</p>
Roundtable Check-In	Without objection and with recognition of being ahead on the agenda, the agenda was amended to insert a check-in with the members and invited guests of the Unification Commission. Common

themes included the joy of gathering in-person, and the opportunity to discern and grow into the Church that God calls the PC(USA) to be. A common hope was to be able to adjourn this meeting with a common understanding of the work ahead.

Overview of Staff Conversations Staff of PMA and OGA were previously invited to join staff for listening sessions with the Unification Commission, one today in-person in a different space without broadcast capability, and one tomorrow on Zoom. Since the focus of these conversations are personnel matters, these conversations will occur when the Unification Commission is recessed – therefore no minutes will be taken. It was also explained that no members of leadership will be present to create an environment for engaged staff feedback and observations. Staff were not asked to make reservations to participate, therefore, it is not known how many staff will participate.

Recess Without objection, the Unification Commission recessed for in-person conversations with staff.

Thursday, March 9, 2023, 4:30 p.m. EST

Reconvening and Introduction of Additional Invited Guests The Unification Commission reconvened at 4:30 p.m., with Diane Givens Moffett, and J. Herbert Nelson, II returning as additional invited guests. There was an additional introduction of Sara Lisherness. Deputy Executive Director for Mission Program, Presbyterian Mission Agency. An audio/visual check for remote participants was completed. Felipe Martínez noted this session would provide an overview of the structures of PMA and OGA, including their governance.

Overview of the Office of the General Assembly Upon recognition, Kerry Rice led a presentation on the Office of the General Assembly (**Attachment 1**). This presentation included the role of the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, and governance of the Office of the General Assembly. The presentation addressed the guiding values behind the last two budget cycles (2021-2022, 2023-2024), and the ministry areas (Mid Council Ministries, Office of the General Assembly, and the Presbyterian Historical Society). The various formats of recent General Assemblies were addressed, in addition to resources (The Book of Order, The Manual of the General Assembly, The Organization for Mission, The Standing Rules of the General Assembly, and COGA's Manual of Operations).

Overview of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Upon recognition, Diane Givens Moffett led a presentation on the Presbyterian Mission Agency (**Attachment 2**). This presentation included an overview of the PMA Board ("PMAB"), and an overview of PMA functions (including Administration, Mission Programs, and Vision & Innovation). Upon recognition, Sara Lisherness addressed the programmatic ministry areas of the presentation.

Discussion of the Presentations It was observed that COGA and PMAB were required to meet jointly on an annual basis. A common focus of this meeting is the joint budget; the next meeting will be in April 2023 in-person, and Felipe Martínez and Cristi Scott Ligon plan on attending a portion of the joint meeting. The discussion continued on how to better handle and coordinate the work of the Unification Commission, including determining the work that is core and essential, and options for structure.

Recess Without objection, the Unification Commission recessed for a tour of the Presbyterian Center and dinner in-residence, with plans to reconvene at 7:15 p.m. EST.

Thursday, March 9, 2023, 7:15 p.m. EST

Reconvening The Unification Commission reconvened at 7:15 p.m., with J. Herbert Nelson, II returning as an additional guest. An audio/visual check for remote participants was completed.

Recent General Assembly Special Committee / Commissions Felipe Martínez noted this session would provide an overview of recent General Assembly Special Committees / Commissions, and their intentional representation on the Unification Commission. Brief overviews were provided on:

- Presbyterian Mission Agency Review Committee by Debra Avery, appointed in 2014;
- All Agency Review Committee by Dave Davis, appointed in 2016; noted this work was independent of the Way Forward Commission, with similar conclusions;
- Per Capita and Financial Sustainability Special Committee by José Rosa-Rivera and Scott Lumsden, appointed in 2018; and,
- Moving Forward Implementation Commission by Debra Avery, appointed in 2018.

Common themes of the above overviews included organizational structures and cultures (of PMA and OGA), financials, budgets, and fundraising. It was noted the focus of funding the 1,001 New Worshipping Communities, and the camps and conference centers, was in 2014.

Though today's overview went back to 2014, it was noted the idea of a unification or merger has been present since Reunion in 1983 (references were made to the Unification Commission's February 18, 2023 "timeline" presentation by Barry Creech).

The presentations on OGA and PMA during today's 4:30 p.m. session included an overview on governance, which noted only OGA and PMA are within the purview of the Unification Commission. OGA and PMA have a different relationship with the General Assembly, which is responsible – among other things – for approving the OGA and PMA budgets. The other national agencies have an independent legal status.

Financial urgency was discussed. OGA is anticipated to exhaust reserves within three years, given the current funding structure.

Closed Session and Recess Upon recognition, Cristi Scott Ligon made a motion to meet in executive session to discuss personnel matters. After second, discussion and perfection, the Unification Commission voted to enter executive session. Erica Rader and Michael Wilson were invited to remain; all staff were excused. Prior to the discontinuation of the livestream, it was noted there was an order of the day to recess at 8:15 p.m. EST, and though actions were not anticipated, a report of actions in executive session would be provided upon reconvening on Friday, March 10, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. EST.

Friday, March 10, 2023, 9:00 a.m. EST

Reconvening and Opening Prayer The Unification Commission reconvened at 9:00 a.m., with J. Herbert Nelson, II and additional invited guests including Ian Hall, Chief Financial Officer and Chief Operating Officer for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation; and, Denise Hampton, controller. An audio/visual check for remote participants was completed. Cristi Scott Ligon reported the previous evening during the executive session, there were no actions taken, prior to the recess for the evening.

Frances Lin provided the opening prayer.

Financial Overview Cristi Scott Ligon recognized Ian Hall and Denise Hampton for a financial overview (**Attachment 3**), which included an overview of sources of income (contributions; investment returns; and, other income). A discussion followed.

The spending formula on investments, as referenced in the presentation, was smoothed out as a five-year trailing average of quarterly valuations on an 18-month lag. It was explained that the distribution was voted to be reduced 0.05% over five years (moving from 4.25% in 2022 to 4.0% in 2027).

The unrestricted income allocation between PMA and OGA prior to 2019 followed a detailed formula including shared services. A subsequent 80/20 allocation was based on a simple budget split. The recommendation before the 225th GA (2022) was a 50/50 allocation, and the General Assembly approved a 70/30 allocation without providing a rationale. It was noted there are more than 2,000 restricted funds.

For OGA, 2023 and 2024 budget shortfalls will be met by reserves (as recommended by COGA and approved by the General Assembly). This will exhaust the OGA reserves. For PMA, there were budget variations due to Ghost Ranch (2016) and Stony Point (2020) [national conference centers that are a responsibility of PMA], and an accounting variation in 2017 for Presbyterian Disaster Assistance.

The discussion returned to gifts, and the various fees assessed for cost recovery. Per Capita is not assessed any additional cost recovery. Gifts received with restrictions have a cost recovery of 17%, even though the actual cost recovery needed is around 27%. It was noted that often administrative grant cost recovery in non-profit and government areas is between 25% - 30%.

It was noted that Ian Hall joined the PC(USA) on July 1, 2021, and this presentation was commended by the Unification Commission for depth and clarity.

Areas of  
Current  
Collaboration After a brief break, a presentation on the current collaborations between PMA and OGA was led by Barry Creech and Kerry Rice (**Attachment 4**). It was noted there is no formal definition to “collaboration”, and often PMA and OGA are working with the Administrative Services Group (“ASG”, part of A Corporation).

During the discussion, it was observed ASG, PMA, and OGA all have their own policies, practices, protocols, and procedures.

An additional challenge is each entity has its own people (including staff and volunteers elected / appointed to commissions, task forces, committees, etc.). With people there are known challenges of succession planning and knowledge transfer, in addition to business continuity. All of these factors influence the culture of each organization, and their interactions.

Recess Without objection, the Unification Commission recessed for lunch, and a Zoom meeting with staff (with only Commissioners in attendance), with plans to formally reconvene at 2:30 p.m. EST.

Friday, March 10, 2023, 2:30 p.m. EST

- Reconvening and Welcome The Unification Commission reconvened at 2:38 p.m., including J. Herbert Nelson, II. An audio/visual check for remote participants was completed. Shavon Starling-Louis was recognized for greetings. Without objection, the agenda focused on the mandates, timelines, and consultations.
- Mandates and Timelines Upon recognition, Kathy Lueckert provided a presentation on the mandates and timeline (**Attachment 5**). It was discussed the “missional and ecclesial” coordination is another reference to PMA and OGA, respectively. Regarding references to PMAB and COGA, Felipe Martínez and Cristi Scott Ligon have begun coordinating conversations. There was a discussion on when and how to engage with staff, and where specifically to begin.
- Consultations Kathy Lueckert continued with a full list of Consultations (**Attachment 6**), directed by the General Assembly for the Unification Commission to engage. This list includes all other agencies, committees, staff, and PC(USA) entities and their boards; Advocacy and Advisory Committees; and, Mid Councils. There was a broader discussion on how the Unification Commission will feel aligned in their work.
- Work Groups After a brief break, Felipe Martínez noted there was an order of the day at 5:30 p.m. to recess, and the desire for this current session to include an executive session.
- There was a broad discussion regarding how to share the work of the Unification Commission among four work groups. Each commissioner will serve on one work group; therefore, each work group will be comprised of three commissioners. The four work groups identified were:  
Common Mission;  
Consultations;  
Financial; and,  
Governance.
- It was noted the Unification Commission is scheduled to meet for four years, and these work groups are a starting point. The Unification Commission was tasked to give further reflection to the work groups, and to where Commissioners might be called to serve.
- Closed Session and Recess There was a motion to meet in executive session to discuss personnel matters. After second, and discussion, the Unification Commission voted to enter executive session. Erica Rader and Michael Wilson were invited to remain; all staff were excused. Prior to the discontinuation of the livestream, it was noted there was an order of the day to recess at 5:30 p.m. EST, and though actions were not anticipated, a report of actions in executive session would be provided upon reconvening on Saturday, March 11, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. EST.

Saturday, March 11, 2023, 9:00 a.m. EST

- Reconvening and Prayer The Unification Commission reconvened at 9:00 a.m. An audio/visual check for remote participants was completed. Cristi Scott Ligon reported the previous evening during the executive session, there were no actions taken, prior to the recess for the evening.
- Carson Brown led an opening prayer, and Emily Martin brought greetings.
- Commissioners Assignments to Work Groups Felipe Martínez and Cristi Scott Ligon shared the following work group assignments, and the facilitator. By common consent, the Unification Commission adopted the following structure:
- Governance  
Debra Avery, facilitator;

Carson Brown; and,  
José Rosa-Rivera.

Financial

Scott Lumsden, facilitator;  
David Davis; and,  
Kris Thompson.

Common Mission

Bill Teng, facilitator;  
Felipe Martínez; and,  
Frances Lin.

Consultations

Dee Cooper, facilitator;  
Cristi Scott Ligon; and,  
Emily Martin.

The Unification Commission recessed for the work groups to meet independently and further define each group's focus, to be shared upon reconvening.

Work Group Goals	<p><u>The Unification Commission reconvened</u>, and after an audio/visual check for remote participants, each work group reported out their self-defined focus and goals.</p> <p>Governance plans to review the Manual of the General Assembly, materials of COGA and PMAB, and will join the April joint meeting of COGA and PMAB.</p> <p>Consultation will focus on the process to consult with all of the constituencies as mandated. Top priorities include the Stated Clerk Nominating Committee, and the upcoming joint meeting of COGA and PMAB.</p> <p>Common Mission hopes to define mission for a unified body, including identity and connections. An anticipated start is with the Book of Order and the Foundation of Government and what “the church is called to do and be.”</p> <p>Finance wishes to consult with the Presbyterian Foundation to understand development, and designation of funds. There is also planned a thorough review of the finances of PMA and OGA. The Finance Work Group, drawing upon Ian Hall’s financial presentation, is starting from a position of abundance, that there are resources – beyond and including finances.</p> <p>By common consent, <u>the Unification Commission agreed the breadth in the work groups is sufficient</u>. Felipe Martínez and Cristi Scott Ligon, as co-moderators, reminded the commissioners to make sure the work groups interact, that work is shared among the commissioners (using the EQUIP portal), and honoring the Open Meeting Policy to be transparent about decision making.</p>
Reflections and Observations	<p>Felipe Martínez and Cristi Scott Ligon, as co-moderators, opened the floor for reflections on this meeting. Common themes included a growing common understanding of the task; the work is becoming clearer; and gratitude for the experience and leadership.</p> <p>It was agreed how helpful the in-person meeting was for the process; there are three scheduled per year. Further, the online meetings could be extended and include a break.</p>
Preparing for the Next	<p>Felipe Martínez and Cristi Scott Ligon noted the next meeting is scheduled online on Sunday, April 16, 2023 at 3:00 p.m. EDT.</p>



Meeting  
(Remote)

Executive  
Session Not  
Required

Felipe Martínez observed the Unification Commission is following a better practice of including an executive session toward the end of the agenda, to provide an appropriate time to discuss matters of personnel. The consensus was the previous executive sessions in this meeting were sufficient.

Closing  
Prayer

Cristi Scott Ligon gave thanks for the commissioners, guests, staff, and Conference Center staff.

Felipe Martínez entertained a motion to adjourn. After a motion and second and without objection, with a closing prayer from Ruth Faith Santana-Grace and Shavon Starling-Louis, the meeting was adjourned at 11:36 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Raymond Bonwell  
Recorder