



226th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) in Salt Lake City, Utah

July 24, 2024

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The 226th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA), held in Salt Lake City, Utah, was a landmark event that featured significant elections and decisions shaping the denomination's future.

Election of Co-Moderators & Stated Clerk

Commissioners elected Rev. Cecelia (CeCe) D. Armstrong and Rev. Anthony (Tony) L. Larson, both from South Carolina, as Co-Moderators of the 226th General Assembly. A historic moment occurred on July 1st when Rev. Jihyun Oh was elected as the Stated Clerk of the denomination, becoming the first woman and the first woman of color to hold this prestigious position. She was installed immediately after the election and will officially begin her service on August 1st.

Items Requiring Approval of the Majority of Presbyteries

The Assembly made strides toward diversity and inclusion, recommending two amendments to the Book of Order for separate votes. The first amendment seeks to add "gender identity" and "sexual orientation" to the protected classes in F-1.0403 "Unity in Diversity." The second amendment proposes including "the principles of participation and representation found in F-1.0403" to the list of considerations for candidates for ordained office in G-2.0104b. (See my [Advisory Opinion](#) regarding this item, reiterating the perspective of the General Assembly's Advisory Committee on the Constitution.)

Other proposed changes include addressing paid administrative leave, expanding the definition of "congregation" to include "worshiping communities," adding "adults with vulnerabilities" to protection policies, updating response protocols for minor or vulnerable adult abuse, modifying temporary pastoral relationships timelines, and banning Non-Disclosure Agreements.

Ministry in the New World

Responding to a request from the Presbytery of Milwaukee, the General Assembly passed an Authoritative Interpretation (AI) allowing the celebration of holy communion by electronic means. This matter was also referred to the Office of Theology and Worship for a more in-depth AI to be presented at the 227th General Assembly in Milwaukee.

A comprehensive review of the "Preparation for Ministry" process was approved, focusing on the efficacy of ordination exams and the various steps involved. Recommendations from this review are expected at the next Assembly.

The Assembly disapproved recognizing the National Caucus of Korean Presbyterian Churches due to the absence of women in leadership and concerns about the treatment of female clergy, despite the caucus representing a significant contingent of the denomination.

In Response to Ongoing Concerns Regarding Cultural and Social Issues

The Assembly adopted a statement denouncing antisemitism and Islamophobia to be used as a study document across all churches and mid-councils. They also voted to reject Christian Zionism in all forms and issued a study document expanding the 2004 policy on the understanding of Christian Zionism.

Addressing the climate crisis, the Assembly directed the Presbyterian Mission Agency's Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) to divest from the top 10 fossil fuel companies and to continue engagement with companies on the "Climate Action 100+" list, with updates to be reported at the 227th Assembly.

In a rare consensus, the Assembly passed a call to action on gun violence, urging congregations to protect children from such threats. Additionally, they advocated for prison reform, explicitly ending prolonged solitary confinement and unpaid labor for prisoners.

The Assembly also approved adding "Transgender Day of Visibility" on March 31 to the Presbyterian Planning Calendar.

Updates to the Work of the Wider PC(USA)

The Assembly approved an overhaul of the Assembly's Standing Rules to accommodate the hybrid modality, moving the moderator(s) election to the end of the Assembly and revising the number of commissioners and advisory delegates. The 227th General Assembly will be held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

A resolution was passed to explore adjustments to medical dues plans for pastors and their families. The Assembly also supported the ongoing Latino-a-é ministry, including a discernment gathering in 2026 and funds to support new initiatives.

Reflecting on the recommendations from the Special Offerings Task Force, the Assembly approved reducing the PC(USA) Special Offerings from four to three, with adjustments to supported ministries and funds.

Lastly, the Assembly referred calls to divert funds from the Self-Development of People (SDOP) to African American congregations to the "New Unified Ministry Agency," entrusting it with discernment of how best to meet SDOP's vision and the needs of these congregations.

Five Presbyterian seminaries confirmed new presidents, signaling a new era for theological education in the PC(USA).

For more information on these items or other General Assembly actions, please visit ga-pcusa.org or pres-outlook.org.