PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA)

GENERAL ASSEMBLY, SYNOD, PRESBYTERY, AND SESSION

HOW MANY OTHER PRESBYTERIAN DENOMINATIONS ARE THERE?

There are currently at least 29 Presbyterian denominations in the USA.

Presbyterian Church USA – (PCUSA)
Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC)
Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians (ECO)
Presbyterian Church in America (PCA)

COUNCILS
BOOK OF ORDER G-3.0101

The Presbyterian Church (USA) is governed by councils composed of presbyters elected by the people. These councils are called the session, the presbytery, the synod, and the General Assembly. All councils of the church are united by the nature of the church and share with one another responsibilities, rights, and powers as provided in the Constitution. The councils are distinct but have such mutual relations that the act of one of them is the act of the whole church.

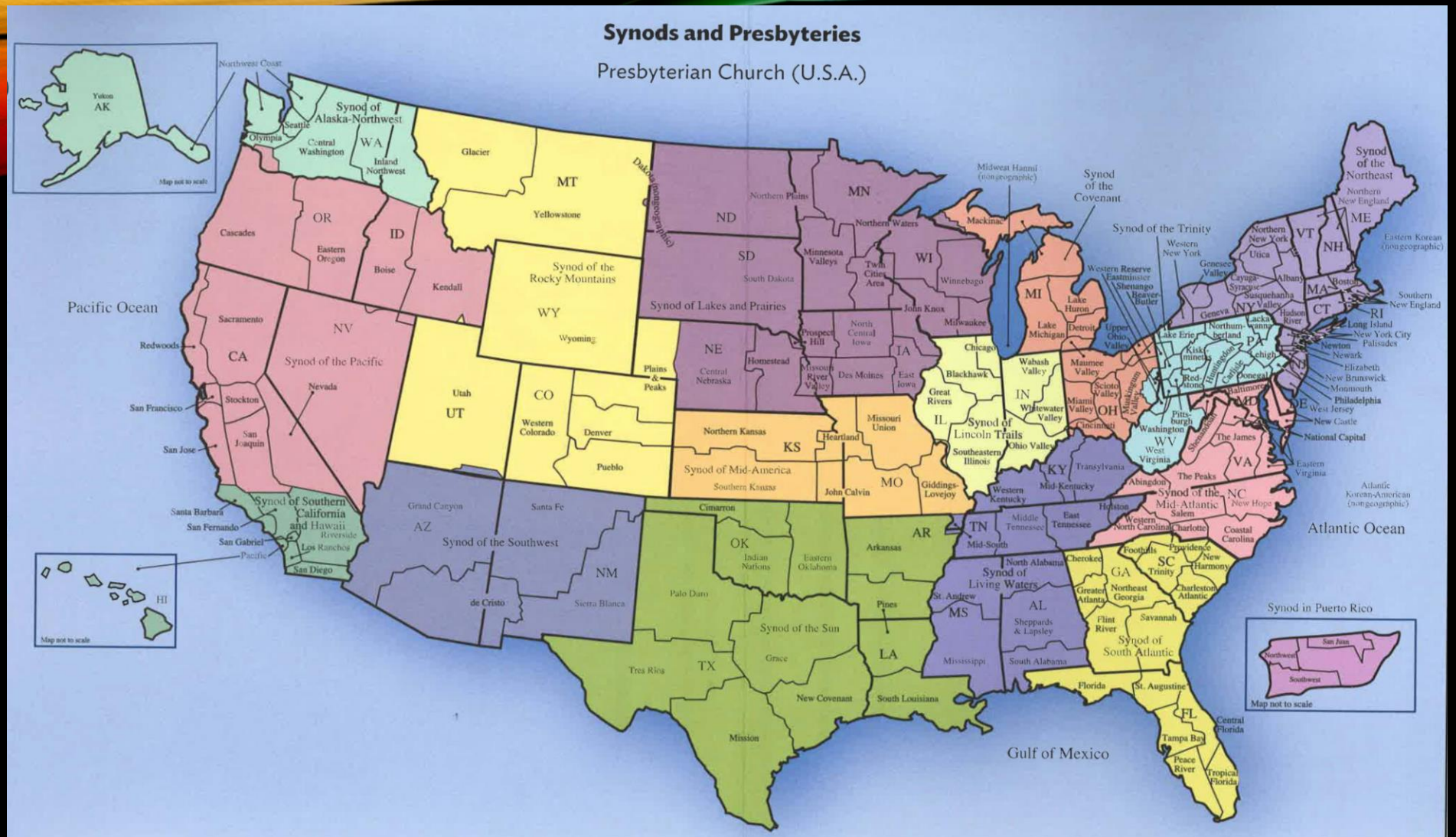
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA)

The four governing bodies (Councils) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) are:

General Assembly
Synods
Presbyteries
Sessions

Synods and Presbyteries

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)



Synod of Alaska-Northwest
Churches: 220
Members: 39,263

Synod in Boriquén (Puerto Rico)
Churches: 73
Members: 6,758

Synod of the Covenant
Churches: 711
Members: 124,373

Synod of Lakes and Prairies
Churches: 821
Members: 120,220

Synod of Lincoln Trails
Churches: 606
Members: 99,073

Synod of Living Waters
Churches: 656
Members: 86,208

Synod of Mid-America
Churches: 427
Members: 56,893

Synod of the Mid-Atlantic
Churches: 1,373
Members: 257,749

Synod of the Northeast
Churches: 1,086
Members: 167,580

Synod of the Pacific
Churches: 397
Members: 67,021

Synod of the Rocky Mountains
Churches: 214
Members: 32,281

Synod of South Atlantic
Churches: 895
Members: 206,108

Synod of Southern California and Hawaii
Churches: 265
Members: 59,048

Synod of the Southwest
Churches: 154
Members: 24,930

Synod of the Sun
Churches: 792
Members: 142,204

Synod of the Trinity
Churches: 1,139
Members: 178,025

TOTALS
Churches: 9829
Members: 1,667,734

WHAT IS THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY?

BOOK OF ORDER G-3.0501

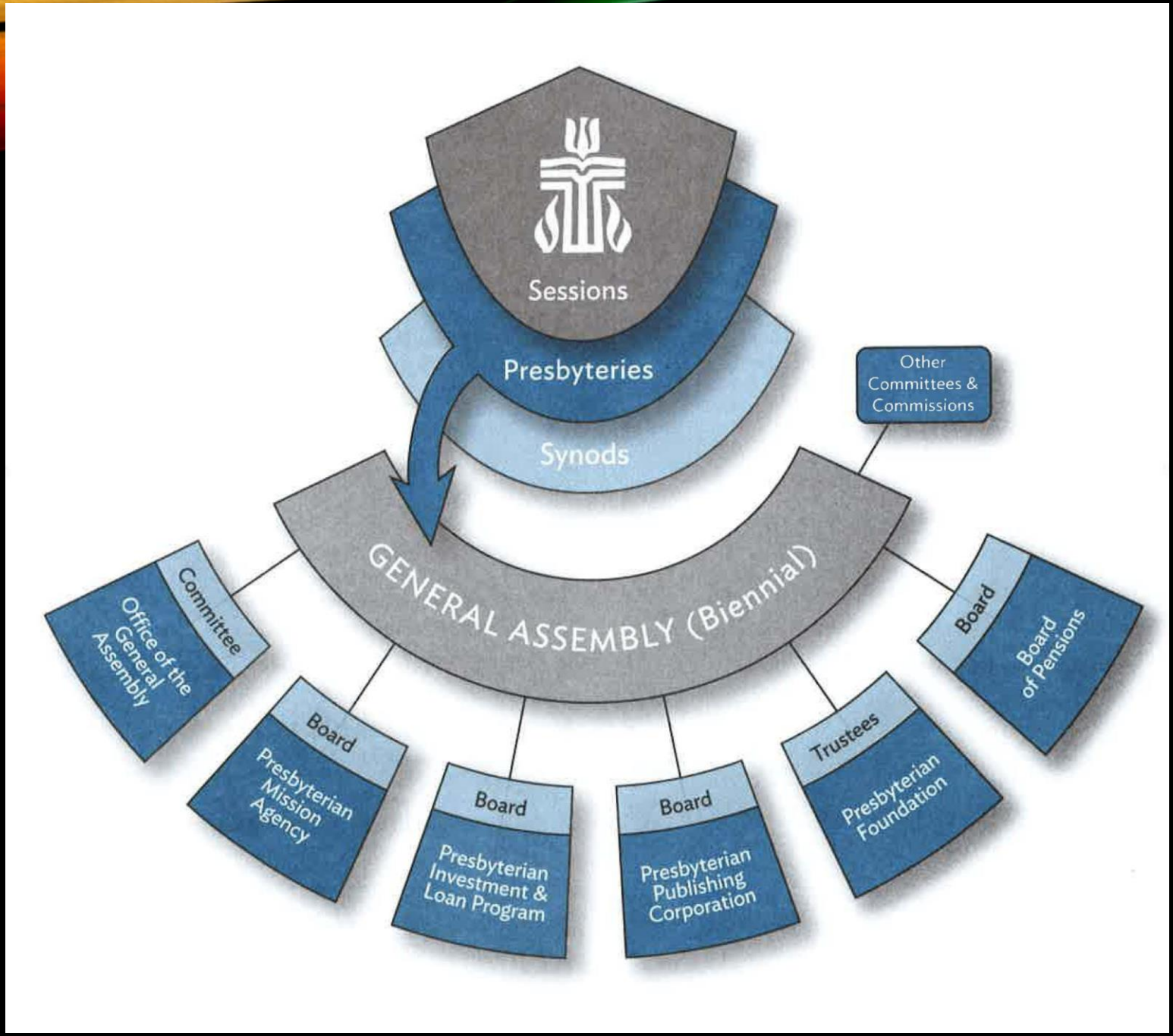
The General Assembly is the council of the whole church, and it is representative of the unity of the synods, presbyteries, sessions, and congregations of the Presbyterian Church (USA). It shall consist of equal numbers of ruling elders and ministers elected by the presbyteries and reflective of the diversity within their bounds…

BOOK OF ORDER G-3.0501

The General Assembly constitutes the bond of union, community, and mission among all its congregations and councils, to the end that the whole church becomes a community of faith, hope, love, and witness. As it leads and guides the witness of the whole church, it shall keep before it the marks of the church, the notes by which Presbyterian and Reformed communities have identified themselves through history, and the six Great Ends of the Church. (G-3.0501 Book of Order)

GREAT ENDS OF THE CHURCH

1. The proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of humankind
2. The shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship of the children of God
3. The maintenance of divine worship
4. The preservation of the truth
5. The promotion of social righteousness
6. The exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the world


Sessions
Presbyteries
Synods
Other Committees & Commissions
GENERAL ASSEMBLY (Biennial)
Committee
Office of the General Assembly
Board
Presbyterian Mission Agency
Board
Presbyterian Investment & Loan Program
Board
Presbyterian Publishing Corporation
Trustees
Presbyterian Foundation
Board
Board of Pensions

GENERAL ASSEMBLY (GA)

6 Agencies:

1. Office of the General Assembly (OGA) in Louisville, KY
2. Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) in Louisville, KY
3. Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program (PILP) – in Louisville, KY
4. Presbyterian Publishing Corporation – in Louisville, KY
5. Presbyterian Foundation - in Jefferson, IN
6. Board of Pensions (BOP)– in Philadelphia, PA

GENERAL ASSEMBLY (GA)

Meets every two years

In 2020 it was to be held in Baltimore, but instead was virtual.

Presbyteries send Commissioners to GA

- Ministers
- Ruling Elders
- Young Adult Advisory Delegates (YAAD)

Under 8,000 members, we sent 1 minister (Rob Ater, Immanuel) and 1 Ruling Elder (Cathy Manthei - Apostle) and 1 YAAD (Elizabeth Tan, Forest Park) nominated by the nominating committee, and elected by the presbytery.

GA BIANNUAL GATHERING

At GA, in addition to electing new officers, commissioners meet in committee and then vote on amendments, and if approved, the amendments are sent back to all 172 presbyteries for approval.

Which means:

Every two years, presbyteries are asked to vote on the amendments approved by GA, and if a certain percentage of the presbyteries approve, then the amendments become permanent in the Book of Order.

New Book of Order every two years

GENERAL ASSEMBLY (GA)

Officers:

Stated Clerk –
The Rev. Dr. J. Herbert Nelson

STATED CLERK - PCUSA

The Rev. Dr. J. Herbert Nelson

GENERAL ASSEMBLY (GA)

Officers:

Co-Moderators Elona Street-Stewart and Gregory Bentley

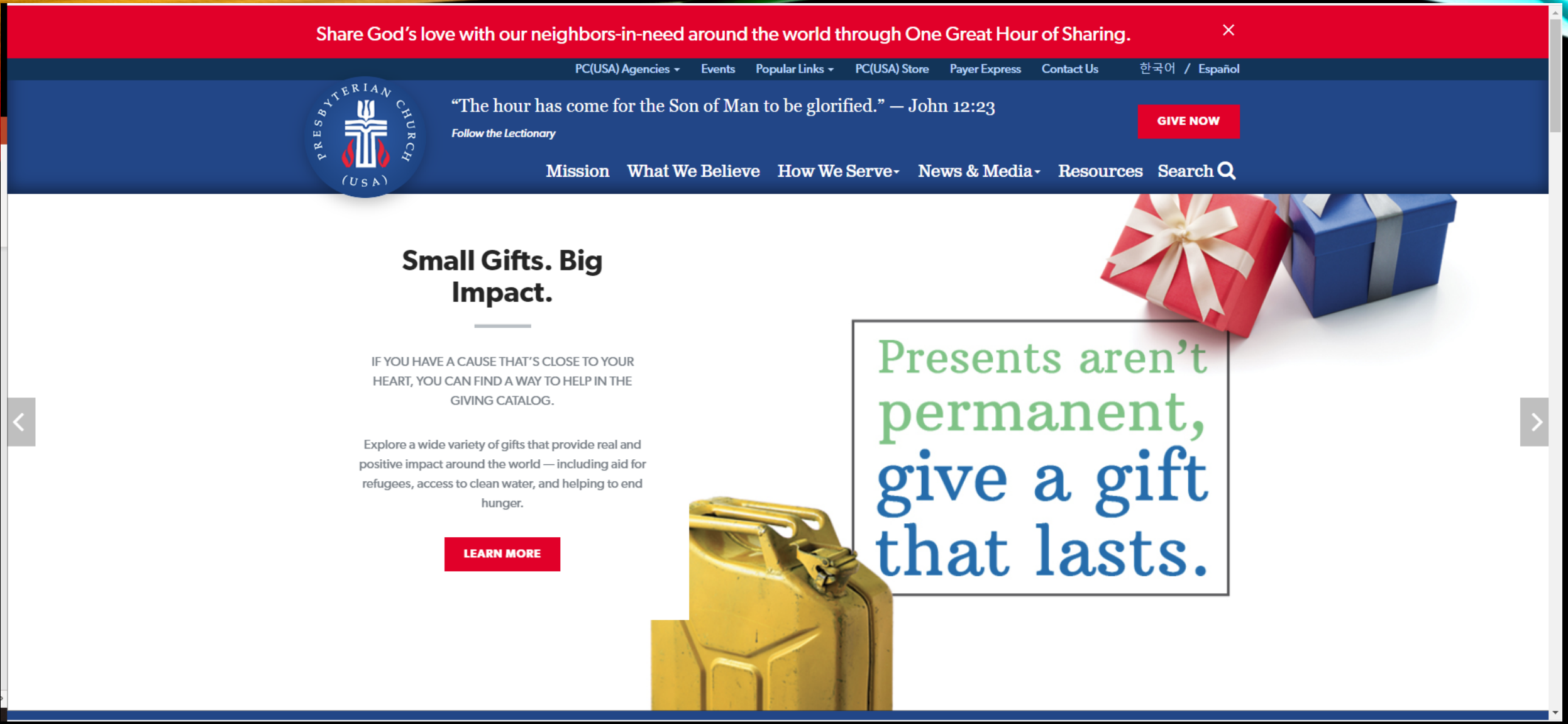
GA CO-MODERATORS

Ruling Elder Elona Street-Stewart

the Rev. Gregory Bentley

PRESIDENT AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - PMA

The Rev. Diane Moffett


Share God's love with our neighbors-in-need around the world through One Great Hour of Sharing.
PC(USA) Agencies
Events
Popular Links
PC(USA) Store
Payer Express
Contact Us
한국어 / Español
"The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified." — John 12:23
Follow the Lectionary
GIVE NOW
Mission
What We Believe
How We Serve
News & Media
Resources
Search
Small Gifts. Big Impact.
IF YOU HAVE A CAUSE THAT'S CLOSE TO YOUR HEART, YOU CAN FIND A WAY TO HELP IN THE GIVING CATALOG.
Explore a wide variety of gifts that provide real and positive impact around the world — including aid for refugees, access to clean water, and helping to end hunger.
LEARN MORE
Presents aren't permanent, give a gift that lasts.

pcusa.org

PRESBYTRIVIA

Famous Presbyterians…

Actor in "The Searchers" and "True Grit"
Author of "Life on the Mississippi"
28th President, promoted League of Nations
Famous Child Star of 1930's
Author of "The Sound and the Fury"

John Wayne
Mark Twain
Woodrow Wilson
Shirley Temple
William Faulkner

SYNOD

The Synod is responsible for the life and mission of the church throughout its region and for supporting the ministry and mission of its presbyteries as they seek to support the witness of congregations, to the end that the whole church throughout its region becomes a community of faith, hope, love, and witness. (G-3.0401 Book of Order)

and

Provide that the Word of God may be truly preached and heard

Provide that the Sacraments may be rightly administered and received

Nurture the covenant community of disciples of Christ.

SYNOD OF LAKES AND PRAIRIES

The Synod of Lakes and Prairies covers a wide area of the upper Midwest over 6 states. Within the synod's boundaries

- 16 presbyteries
- 790 churches
- 105,000 members
- 5 Presbyterian camps
- 7 affiliated colleges
- 1 Presbyterian seminary
- 7 Presbyterian Homes - a family services organization supporting the church's mission across all ages, ethnicities and life stages.

SYNODS

16 Synods in the PC(USA)
- Executive
- Stated Clerk

Our Synod is the Synod of Lakes and Prairies
- Located in Eagan, MN

- Executive is Elona Street-Stewart
- Stated Clerk is Pam Prouty

SYNOD MEETINGS

Synod Gatherings (Meetings) are held twice a year.

Milwaukee Presbytery sends 3 commissioners to Synod

Paula Tillen – elder, Southminster

Lance Loveall – minister, First Kenosha

Young Adult Delegate (YAD) - vacant

lakesandprairies.org

PRESBYTRIVIA

Famous Presbyterians…

First American in orbit, Senator from Ohio
Founder of Walmart
US Politician, prosecutor Scopes Monkey Trial
Cowboy Icon in 1940's, rode Trigger
Developed Steam Engine

John Glenn
Sam Walton
William Jennings Bryan
Roy Rogers
James Watt

PRESBYTERIES

There are 172 presbyteries in the PC(USA)

Each has:

- Executive
- Stated Clerk
- Moderator, elected annually
- Minister Members
- Officers – Committee Members
- Ruling Elder Commissioners from each church's session

PRESBYTERY RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsible for the government of the church throughout its district, and for assisting and supporting the witness of congregations to the sovereign activity of God in the world, so that all congregations become communities of faith, hope, love and witness… (G-3.0301)

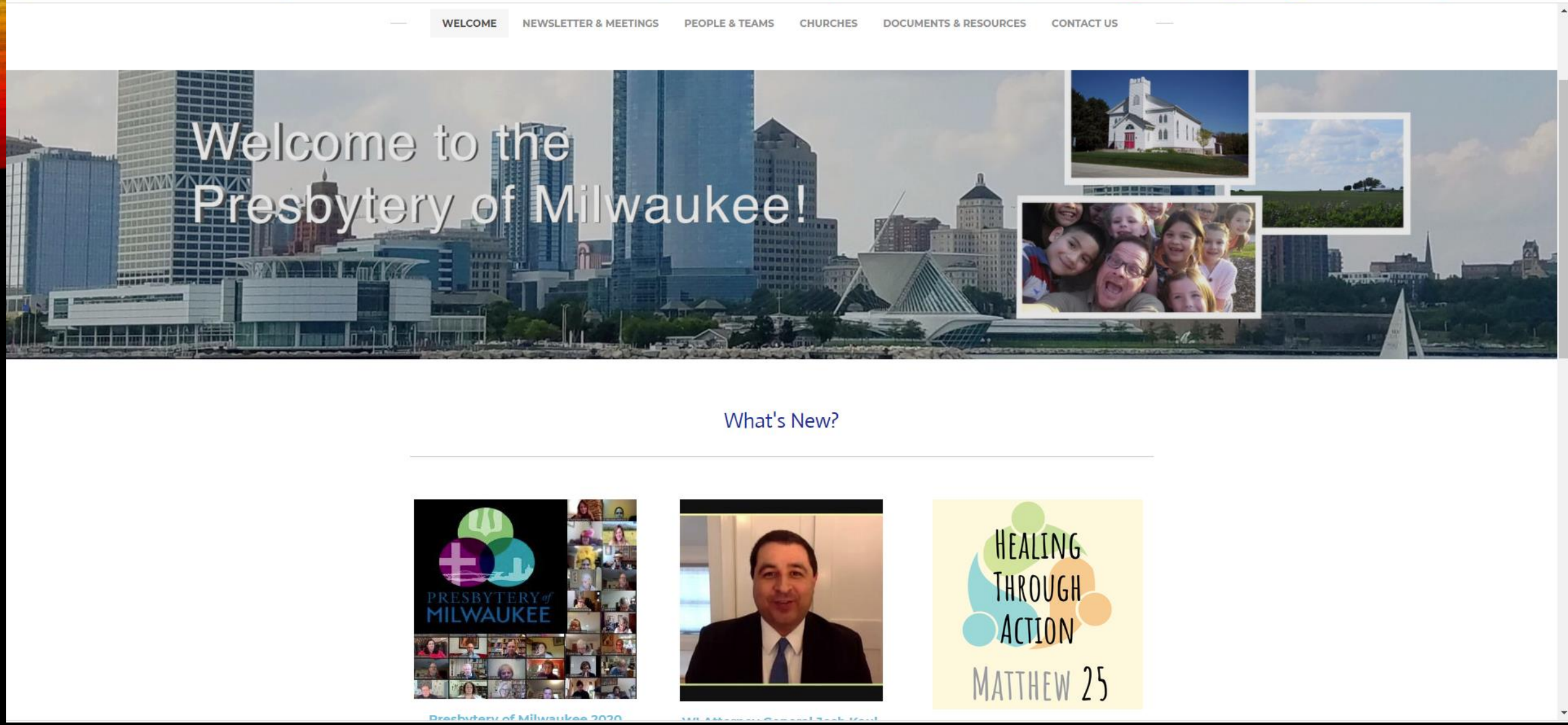
and

Provide that the Word of God may be truly preached and heard

Provide that the Sacraments may be rightly administered and received

Nurture the covenant community of disciples of Christ

PRESBYTERY *of*
MILWAUKEE



pbymilwaukee.org

PRESBYTERY OF MILWAUKEE

VISION STATEMENT:

Through authentic relationships,
risk taking for the gospel,
and collaborative leadership,

the Presbytery of Milwaukee supports congregations and leaders to serve as Christ directs.

PRESBYTERY COMMISSIONS/COMMITTEES

Commission on Transitional Ministries
Commission on Pastoral Ministries
Commission on Congregational Vitality
Council
Committee on Representation
Foundation
Nominating Committee
Permanent Judicial Commission
Presbytery Planning Commission

PRESBYTERY COMMISSIONS/COMMITTEES

Two newest:

Disaster Preparedness and Response Task Force
Racial Equity and Justice Task Force

VOTING MEMBERS OF PRESBYTERY

All Ministers – Church pastors, At Large pastors, Honorably retired, Validated ministers

1 Elder commissioner elected by each church's session

Elders serving on Presbytery Commissions/Committees

PRESBYTERY OF MILWAUKEE

41 Churches
- Largest - 876 members
- Smallest - 13 members

Covers 10 geographical counties

5899 members

100 ministers

1 Commissioned Pastor

Meets 4 times a year

Elder Rachel Yates
Presbytery Executive

PRESBYTERY STAFF

Christian Boyd
Stated Clerk

Ann Gibbs
Associate for
Ministry Vitality

Chris Halverson
Office Manager/
Assoc. Stated Clerk

Kate Hopta
Communications
Coordinator

Gail Boerema
Treasurer

PRESBYTERY OF MILWAUKEE MODERATOR

The Rev. Nicole Farley

PRESBYTRIVIA

Famous Presbyterians…

7th President, "Old Hickory"
Author of "Treasure Island"
Jefferson's VP, killed Hamilton in duel
Chief Justice, US Supreme Court, 1969-86
Billionaire, 3rd party Presidential Candidate, 1992 & 1996

Andrew Jackson
Robert Louis Stevenson
Aaron Burr
Warren Burger
Ross Perot

CHURCHES & SESSIONS

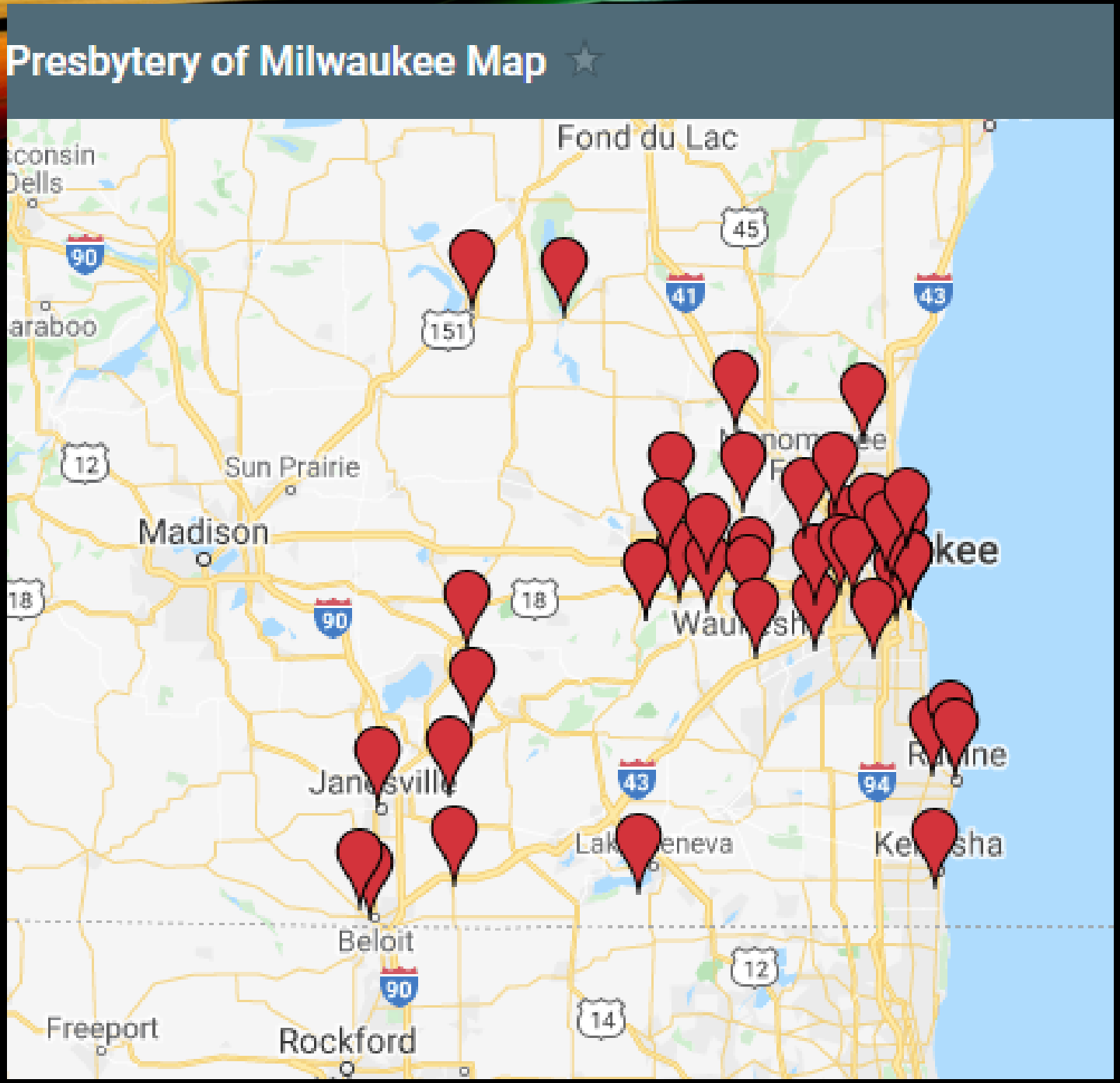
There are 9041 churches in the PCUSA

41 Churches in the Presbytery of Milwaukee

Each church shall have:

- Minister or Commissioned Pastor
- Session
- Clerk of Session (keeper of all history)
  - Parliamentarian
  - Minutes
  - Church Register
  - Statistical Reports

Some churches have Deacons


Presbytery of Milwaukee Map
Fond du Lac
Sun Prairie
Madison
Beloit
Freeport
Rockford
90
45
41
43
151
12
18
94
14

RESPONSIBILITY/VOTING

Presbyters (all ministers and elected elders) are not simply to reflect the will of the people, but rather to seek together to find and represent the will of Christ. (F-3.0204)

We are a Theocracy, not a democracy. People vote their conscience, not "representing any group".

Cannot vote by proxy. The Holy Spirit is present at each gathering and insight and knowledge in the moment could potentially guide or affect any decision or vote.

PER CAPITA APPORTIONMENT

All churches in the PC(USA)

Opportunity for all to participate equally, responsibly and interdependently

Money is used for administration, coordinating and evaluating mission, performing ecclesiastical, legislative, and judicial functions, and strengthening the sense of community among all Presbyterians.

Based on church's membership

Money is split 3 ways

Voluntary

Presbytery is obligated to visit with sessions who don't pay to determine the cause of withholding.

PER CAPITA

Our Per Capita is:

$38.75 per communicant member in 2021

- $8.98 goes to GA – (in 2020 $55,631)
- $5.50 goes to Synod – (in 2020 $34,072)
- $24.27 remains with the Presbytery – (in 2020 $117,225)

Presbytery pays GA and Synod regardless of whether a church pays their own per capita.

PER CAPITA

"Not paying Per Capita is similar to going to a potluck dinner without a dish to pass."

SHARED MISSION

Each church is invited to pledge to the PCUSA shared mission annually

Voluntary

About half of our churches pledge to the denominational shared mission.

DENOMINATIONAL OFFERINGS

1. One Great Hour of Sharing
2. Pentecost (40% to congregation)
3. Peace and Global Witness (25% to congregation & 25% to Presbytery)
4. Christmas Joy

DID YOU KNOW?

The Presbytery of Milwaukee is known for championing Gender Equality…

In 1930 Sarah Dickson was the first Presbyterian woman in the country to be ordained as an elder at Wauwatosa Presbyterian Church.

In 1956 Margaret Towner was ordained as the first female minister in the denomination in Cayuga-Syracuse Presbytery, and she went on to be a minister in our presbytery from 1973-1989, and our presbytery moderator in 1987.

In 1971 Lois Stair became the first woman Moderator of General Assembly. She was an elder from First Presbyterian Church of Waukesha.

PRESBYTRIVIA

- **Famous Presbyterians…**

40th President, "The Gipper"
Author of "Anne of Green Gables"
Actor, "Superman"
Head G-man, FBI Director 1935-72
Actor "It's a Wonderful Life"

Ronald Reagan
Lucy Maud Montgomery
Christopher Reeve
J. Edgar Hoover
Jimmy Stewart