

OUR PURPOSE

*The Presbytery of Geneva lives to support and equip congregations and leaders
to be Christ in the Finger Lakes and the world.*

OUR VISION

*Radiating the light of Christ, the Presbytery of Geneva thrives
as a community of servants, lifting up every congregation and leader
in ministering together.*

MINUTES

The Presbytery of Geneva held a Stated Meeting on Tuesday, May 21, 2024, held in person at Camp Whitman and electronically via Zoom.us.

GATHERING FOR SHARED WORK: OPENING BUSINESS

GATHERING

9:30 am Registration and Fellowship Time (through 10:00 am)

CALL TO ORDER

CRE Connie Franks (Shortsville, First), Vice-Moderator, called the meeting to order at 10:05 am, a quorum being present.

Presbytery Leader Marjorie Ackerman shared a few announcements, noting the availability of a prayer request table, sign-up sheets for upcoming workshops, and a sign-up sheet for an upcoming book study.

The Vice-Moderator offered the opening prayer.

ROLL

CONGREGATIONS: MINISTERS & COMMISSIONERS (CM = Corresponding Member; CP = Commissioned Pastor)

CONGREGATION	MINISTER(S)	COMMISSIONER	CONGREGATION	MINISTER(S)	COMMISSIONER
ADDISON	A - Peter Marr (CM)		MARION, UNITED	A - Denise Logan (CM)	A - Frank Halstead
ANDOVER, FIRST	A - C. Mattison (CM)		MORELAND	A - Paul Yoder (CRE)	
ARKPORT, FIRST	EX - Bruce Incze		NAPLES, TRINITY FEDERATED	A - Michael Whitcomb-Tavey (CM)	
-----	-----	-----	NEWARK, PARK	Susan Frost	Anne Rogers
BATH, FIRST	John Woodring	Dean Chatfield	OAKS CORNERS	A - Karl Warrington	
BELLONA, MEMORIAL	Amy Loving Austin	EX - Roxann Carpenter	ONTARIO CENTER, FIRST	----	
BIG FLATS, FIRST	EX - Denise Stone	A - Robin Fitzgerald	OID, FEDERATED	Rob Mellgard	Judy Mellgard
BURDETT	EX - Richard Evans (CRE)	EX - Martha Evans	PAINTED POST, UNITED	David Preisendanz	
CANANDAIGUA, UNITED	A - Wade Allen (CM)	Ken Allen	PALMYRA, WESTERN	EX - Hodong Hwang	Philip Opdycke
CANISTEO, FIRST	Michelle Serra		PENN YAN, FIRST	A - Paul Malles	Rob Anderson
COHOCTON, FIRST	-----	EX - Linda Hodges	HELPS, UNITED	EX - H. Leigh Holder	Peg Carlson
CORNING, FIRST	Jeffrey Ugoretz	Kay Rogus	PRATTSBURGH, FIRST	-----	EX - Lynn Dinehart
EAST PALMYRA, FIRST	-----	EX - Judith Langdon	PULTENEY, FIRST	----	EX - Mary Jane Peek
ELMIRA, FIRST	EX - Lynn Rubier-Capron	Alida Schamel	RED CREEK		A - Virginia Kachurak

ELMIRA, NORTH	EX - Evan Hansen	EX - Annie LeFevre	ROCK STREAM	EX - Carleen Frost (CRE)	
GENEVA, THE PC	EX - Colin Pritchard	Chris Gerling	SENECA #9	Amy Loving Austin	EX - Pam Ells
-----	-----	-----	SENECA FALLS, FIRST	Leah Ntuala	A - Susan Sholar
HECTOR	Daniel Russell	Sue Rocholl	SHORTSVILLE, FIRST	Connie Franks (CRE)	
HORNELL, UNITED	EX - Jonathan Barker (CM)	Lisa Sanford	SODUS, FIRST	Gail Heimberger	Sue Mulberry
HORSEHEADS, FIRST	Aaron Frank	Ruth Hauser	SPENCER, CHRIST THE KING FELLOWSHIP	EX - Sabrina Slater	Tom Bailey
HOWARD, UNION	----		TRUMANSBURG, FIRST ULYSSES	Susan Joseph Rack	A - Pamela Postle
HURON		EX - Linda Hayes	WATERLOO, FIRST	EX - Anita Milne	EX - George Bassett
ITHACA, FIRST	Cynthia Weaver Kirianna Weaver	A - Brad McFall	WATKINS GLEN, FIRST	EX - Cara Milne	Nan Woodworth
JASPER, UNITED	A - Brain Dieffenbacher (CM)		WESTON	-----	Barry Winters
JUNIUS	----	A - Kristi Ward	WOLCOTT, FIRST	A - Walter Stuber (CM)	EX - Dolores Gingerich
LYONS, FIRST	-----	Joanne Reinhardt			

MINISTERS IN VALIDATED MINISTRIES / MINISTERS AT-LARGE / HONORABLY RETIRED MINISTERS

Present: Marjorie Ackerman (VM) Christy Wareham (AL) Tom Montgomery (HR)
 David Ashby (AL) Paul Rack (HR) Jane Winters (HR)
 Deborah Grohman (AL) Barbara Schwartz (HR) Adrian Tierson (VM)

Excused: Betsey Crimmins (HR) Jeff Kellam (HR) Philip Courtney (HR)
 David Barnard (HR) Susan Husted (HR) James Kerr (HR)
 Glenn Kennedy (AL) John Milne (HR) James Hicks (HR)
 Robert Rochelle (HR) Jim Gerling (HR) Cynthia Huling Hummel (HR)

ADDITIONAL ELDER COMMISSIONERS (appointed by Presbytery to correct elder-clergy imbalance)

Jeff Richards (Elmira, North) COUNCIL CHAIR	Virginia Champlin (Geneva) COUNCIL (Presbyterian Women)	Sandra Ansley (Geneva) COUNCIL (Operations)	A - Paul Yoder (Horseheads, First) CRE (Moreland)
EX - Pricilla Andrews (Rock Stream) CRE (Pulpit Supply)	EX - Richard Evans (Watkins Glen, First) CRE (Burdett)	A - Bob Sell (Horseheads, First) CRE (Pulpit Supply)	John Gingerich (Wolcott, First) CRE (Pulpit Supply)
EX - Carleen Frost (Sodus, First) CRE (Rock Stream)	A - Bessie Tyrrell (Atlanta) CRE (Pulpit Supply)	EX - Don Peek (Pulteney, First) CRE (Pulpit Supply)	Connie Franks (Ontario, First) CRE (Shortsville, First)
A - Irene Fadden (Palmyra, Western) COUNCIL (Operations)	Beth Newell (Geneva) COUNCIL (COM)		Linda Werts (Canandaigua, United) Presbyterian Women
Joanne Tunison (Horseheads, First) COUNCIL (Mission and Witness)			

PRESBYTERY STAFF (granted voice)

Present: Bryan Muecke (Camp Whitman)

Excused: Elena Delhagen (Albany Presbytery)

REGISTERED GUESTS (Current Meeting; granted voice)

Regina Allen (Canandaigua, United)	Cathy Foerster (Penn Yan, First)
Donna Colvin (Pulteney, First)	Velda Schmiege (Bath, First)
Darlene Whitcomb (Lyons, First)	TE Ryan White (Presbytery of Seattle)
John Schwartz	Walter Scheuer (Hector, First)
Cim McFarlane (Palmyra, Western)	Emily McFarlane (Palmyra, Western)
Donna Montgomery	Ray Crosby-Willis (Camp Whitman)
Dexter Benedict (Penn Yan, First)	

SUMMARIES FOR EACH MEETING 2023	Jan 27	Mar 19	May 21				
Total Minister Commissioners Present*	28	27	23				
Total Elder Commissioners Present **	37	31	25				
Parity (expressed in terms of Elders, + or -)	+9	+4	+2				
Total Minister Commissioners Absent, Unexcused***	3	2	2				
Total Churches Unrepresented by Elders****	26	29	31				
Total Churches Unrepresented by Elders and Pastors****	9	20	23				
Total Registered Visitors and Staff	4	5	14				
Total Registered Attendance*****	72	64	62				

* Does not include Corresponding Members, with voice, not vote. Does include Validated, At-large, and Honorably Retired
 ** Includes Elder Commissioners and Additional Elder Commissioners
 *** Does not include Corresponding Members with voice only; Honorably Retired Ministers; and Excused Minister Members.
 **** Includes churches marked "excused"; does **not** include Additional Elder Commissioners, as they are not elected by sessions.
 ***** Includes Corresponding Members without vote

INTRODUCTORY BUSINESS

APPROVAL OF DOCKET

The presbytery VOTED to **approve** the docket for the meeting:

- 9:30 AM Registration and fellowship time (through 10:00 AM)
- 10:00 AM Call to Order, Declaration of Quorum, and Opening Prayer
- 10:10 AM Introductory Business
 - Call for New Business & Approval of the Docket
 - Introduction of New Commissioners, Corresponding Members, and Guests
 - Acknowledgment of the First Stewards of the Land [RE Donna Colvin (Pulteney, First)]
- 10:20 AM Consent Agenda & Clerk's Report
[TE Amy Loving Austin (Stanley, Seneca #9 / Bellona, Memorial), Stated Clerk]
- 10:25 AM Welcome to Camp Whitman [Bryan Muecke (Camp Director)]
- 10:30 AM Committee on Ministry [RE Beth Newell (Geneva)]
 - Examination for Membership: TE Pamela Gnagy (Cayuga-Syracuse Presbytery)
 - Examination for Installation & Membership: TE John Woodring (Western New York Presbytery)
 - Board of Pensions: 2025 Plan Changes
- 11:00 AM Report from General Council, Committee on Operations, and Treasurer
[TE David Ashby (AL, Treasurer)]
- 11:15 AM Looking Forward to Our September Presbytery Meeting [TE Kirianne Weaver (Ithaca, First)]
- 11:20 AM Worship & the Lord's Supper [TE Susan Joseph Rack [(Trumansburg, First Ulysses), presiding]
- 12:05 PM Lunch
- 1:10 PM Committee on Representation [RE Rob Anderson (Penn Yan, First)]
 - Anti-Harassment Policy
 - Anti-Racism Policy
- 1:30 PM Committee on Mission and Witness [RE Joanne Tunnison (Horseheads, First)]
 - PMA Peacemaker
 - Puerto Rico Mission Opportunities
- 1:40 PM Good News from Congregations

* To include your news in the minutes, please email a written copy to:
statedclerk@presbyteryofgeneva.org

1:50 PM	A Word from the Presbytery Leader [TE Marji Ackerman (VM)]
1:55 PM	Resolution of Thanks [RE Ken Allen (Canandaigua, United)]
2:00 PM	Benediction and Adjournment

INTRODUCTION OF NEW COMMISSIONERS AND GUESTS

New Commissioners and Guests were introduced.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE FIRST STEWARDS OF THE LAND

RE Donna Colvin (Pulteney, First), offered acknowledgement of the first stewards of the land where we live and serve.

CONSENT AGENDA

The Presbytery VOTED to approve the following:

1. **Approve** the minutes of the March 19, 2024 stated meeting, held via Zoom.us.
2. **Grant** privilege of voice to non-commissioners who will make a presentation or participate in a report to the presbytery.
3. **Receive** the April Operating Statement and Balance Statement and Treasurer's report.
4. **Approve** the election of the following to serve on Presbytery Committees and Boards:
 - a. General Council - Member at Large
Class of 2025: RE Kermit Bossard (Spencer, Christ the King Fellowship)

ITEMS FOR PRESBYTERY'S INFORMATION FROM YOUR STATED CLERK

1. An Investigating Committee was established on January 16, 2024. The issue was investigated and resolution found without any charges needing to be filed. The Investigating Committee has been dismissed and the issue is now concluded.
2. Please take advantage of the (FREE) Synod of the Northeast Webinars: <https://www.synodne.org/webinars>
3. You are invited to a Zoom Gathering with our Board of Pensions Church Consultant, Rev. Luke Choi, to learn more about the new Benefits Plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) that will take effect January 1, 2025. This gathering will be especially informative for all Ministers, CREs, and Personnel Chairpersons. This Zoom Gathering will take place on Tuesday, May 28th, 2024 at 9:00am. You must register in advance for this meeting:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMtde-srTkpGt1SrW6w0OOXyo8pZUawJbKE>
After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting. Churches are also encouraged to schedule one-on-one meetings with our Board of Pensions Church Consultant, Rev. Luke Choi. His contact information is:
Mobile: 609-575-6321
Office: 215-587-7463
www.pensions.org
LChoi@pensions.org
4. Congregations and Minister Members of the Presbytery are encouraged to pay their per capita to the Presbytery of Geneva. Read about how per capita helps build up the body of Christ here:
https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/building_a_beloved_community_tha_pt_nov_dec_2021.pdf

WELCOME TO CAMP WHITMAN

Bryan Muecke (Camp Whitman Director) welcomed the Presbytery to Camp Whitman.

THE COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY

RE Beth Newell (Geneva), co-chair of the Committee on Ministry, presented the report.

The COM will present TE Pamela Gnagy (HR, Presbytery of Cayuga-Syracuse) for examination by the Presbytery to transfer her membership at our next stated meeting.

The COM presented TE John Woodring (Presbytery of Western New York) for examination for installation and transfer of membership.

RE Dean Chatfield (Bath, First) spoke on behalf of the PNC, describing their discernment process and how they arrived at the decision to call TE Woodring to serve as their installed pastor.

TE John Woodring shared his own discernment and sense of call to serve as the next installed pastor at First Presbyterian of Bath, NY.

Following examination, the Presbytery of Geneva VOTED to:

- **suspend** the examination of the Rev. John C. Woodring (Presbytery of Western New York);
- and **approve** his transfer of membership to Geneva Presbytery and **approve** his call and installation as Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church-Bath NY, effective June 1, 2024, at the terms provided below. [Date of Installation service to be determined. The vote to approve the call/installation was conducted according to the Book of Order G-2.0504c which states that "a presbytery may determine that its mission strategy permits a minister of the Word and Sacrament currently employed in a temporary pastoral relationship to be eligible to serve as the next installed pastor. Presbyteries that permit this eligibility shall establish such relationships only by a three-fourths vote of the members of presbytery present". The vote was unanimous.]

Terms of Call:

Salary	\$27,000
Housing	\$31,000
SECA offset	\$4,437
Board of Pensions	\$22,620
Travel	IRS rate for all church-related travel
Study Leave	\$1,500
Matching Retirement	\$1,200
Study Leave	2 weeks, including 2 Sundays
Vacation	31 days, including 4 Sundays

TE Paul Rack (HR) and TE Amy Loving Austin (Seneca #9 & Bellona, Memorial) strongly encouraged the Presbytery to participate in the Zoom gathering led by our BOP Church Consultant (details included in the consent agenda and clerk's report).

ACTIONS TAKEN ON BEHALF OF THE PRESBYTERY

The Committee on Ministry VOTED to:

- Approve the transfer of membership of the Rev. Robin Lostetter (HR) to Susquehanna Valley Presbytery, effective April 2, 2024.
- Approve on behalf of the Presbytery of Geneva the Dissolution Agreement between the First Presbyterian Church of Watkins Glen and the Rev. Cara Milne.

ITEMS FOR THE PRESBYTERY'S INFORMATION

The Committee on Ministry VOTED to:

- Approve the Annual Approval of Terms of Call between Memorial Presbyterian Church (Bellona) and the Rev. Amy Loving Austin for the calendar year 2024.
- Approve the Covenant for Pastoral Services with a CRE between Burdett Presbyterian Church and CRE Richard Evans for January 21, 2024 to December 31, 2024.
- Approve the Covenant for Services as a Covenanted Pastor (other than Transitional or CRE) between the First Presbyterian Church of Ithaca and the Rev. Cynthia A. Weaver from January 31, 2024 to January 31, 2025.
- Approve the Annual Approval of Terms of Call between the Elmira First Presbyterian Church and the Rev. Susan L. Rubier-Capron for the calendar year 2024.
- Approve the Annual Approval of Terms of Call between the First Presbyterian Church Big Flats and the Rev. Denise Stone for the calendar year 2024.
- Approve and Receive the Promoting Healthy Boundaries agreement between the First Presbyterian Church of Watkins Glen and the Rev. Cara Milne.
- Approve the Waiver of Term Limits for three Deacons from the Waterloo Presbyterian Church: Carol Gibbes and Kathy Burnett for 1 year terms and Laura Paulsen for a 1 year term
- Approve Hector Presbyterian Church's Mission Study and approve their moving forward in the process.

- Approve Rev. Bruce Incze to serve as the moderator for Hornell, United, beginning May 5, 2024.
- Approve Ann Waasdorp as Moderator of the congregational meeting held at the Bath church on May 5, 2024.
- Approve Hornell's request to pursue supply preachers from other presbyteries' lists.
- Receive and accept the clearance interview for John Woodring

GENERAL COUNCIL, COMMITTEE ON OPERATIONS, & TREASURER'S REPORT

TE David Ashby (AL), Treasurer, presented the report.

- The Presbytery of Geneva has not raised our Per Capita rate since 2017, holding it at a total of \$50 - in spite of the fact that the General Assembly portion has increased (and our population has decreased).
 - 2017: Presbytery \$38.40; Synod \$4.10; General Assembly \$7.50
 - 2018: Presbytery \$38.17; Synod \$4.10; General Assembly \$7.73
 - 2019: Presbytery \$36.95; Synod \$4.10; General Assembly \$8.95
 - 2020: Presbytery \$36.95; Synod \$4.10; General Assembly \$8.95
 - 2021: Presbytery \$36.95; Synod \$4.10; General Assembly \$8.98
 - 2022: Presbytery \$36.92; Synod \$4.10; General Assembly \$8.98
 - 2023: Presbytery \$36.92; Synod \$4.10; General Assembly \$8.98
 - 2024: Presbytery \$36.10; Synod \$4.10; General Assembly \$9.80
- Our estimate for enough per capita to feed the Presbytery's mission to serve our churches in 2025 is \$60.34, all else being equal. We anticipate presenting operations budgets with a \$7 increase for each of the next three years to continue our journey.

LOOKING FORWARD TO OUR SEPTEMBER MEETING

TE Kirianne Weaver (Ithaca, Flrst) described the "Open Space Meeting" format that will be utilized at our Stated Presbytery Meeting in September.

WORSHIP AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

The Presbytery of Geneva engaged in a service of worship, led by TE Susan Joseph Rack (Trumansburg, First Ulysses). The worship service included the celebration (online and in-person) of the Lord's Supper.

LUNCH

The Presbytery VOTED to **donate** the money collected for lunch to Camp Whitman.

The Presbytery of Geneva adjourned at 12:00pm and shared a meal.

The Presbytery re-convened at 1:10pm.

COMMITTEE ON REPRESENTATION

RE Rob Anderson (Penn Yan, Flrst) presented the report.

The COR is beginning to look for new committee members for the next class, including new Synod representatives. Anyone who is interested in serving is encouraged to contact the COR.

COR presented the Anti-Harassment Policy for approval. Following several minutes of questions and discussion, the Presbytery VOTED to **refer** the Anti-Harassment Policy back to the Committee on Representation for additional edits. *It is important to note that the COR had provided this draft policy to the Presbytery for a first-read in March, and the committee had requested feedback from the Presbytery prior to the May meeting; COR noted that they did not receive any feedback. It is vital that the Presbytery commits to reading materials and providing feedback when requested*

COR presented the Anti-Racism Policy for approval. Following a brief discussion, the Presbytery VOTED to **approve** the Anti-Racism Policy.

COMMITTEE ON MISSION AND WITNESS

RE Joanne Tunison (Horseheads, First), chair of the Committee on Mission and Witness, presented the report.

- A PC(USA) Mission Co-Worker will be visiting the Presbytery of Geneva later this year (likely the last week of September). They will participate in a communion service at the First Presbyterian Church of Elmira.
- There is interest in participating in a youth trip to Puerto Rico.
- The 2024 Session Endorsed Matthew 25 Grant Application is now available for download. You can access it by visiting their committee page website here:
<https://www.presbyteryofgeneva.org/committee-on-mission-witness>.

GOOD NEWS FROM CONGREGATIONS

Members of the Presbytery shared good news and announcements from their congregations and ministries.

A WORD FROM THE PRESBYTERY LEADER

TE Marji Ackerman (VM) presented her report.

- A Small Church Network training event is planned for June 5th at Pulteney, First.
- Other Small Church gatherings are scheduled – all leaders serving small congregations are encouraged to attend.
- The Ontario Center congregation sold their building, and they continue to gather as a congregation every Sunday at different locations. God is doing a new thing!
- There are a number of workshops scheduled/planned for the Presbytery (topics listed here):
 - 2 sessions on Conflict (one for pastors and COM, another for sessions and congregations)
 - Tough Conversations
 - Futures Tools and Practices
 - Writing Church Memoirs
 - Book Study on *Generations*
- Kudos to our committees – they have hard work to do, and they *do* work hard!

RESOLUTION OF THANKS

RE Ken Allen (Canandaigua, United) offered the Resolution of Thanks.

BENEDICTION AND ADJOURNMENT

The Presbytery VOTED to **adjourn** the meeting with prayer and the benediction.

The Vice-Moderator offered prayer and benediction, and pronounced the meeting to be adjourned at 2:05pm. .

Attest: Amy Loving Austin, Stated Clerk

Additional Written Reports Provided to the Presbytery on March 19, 2024

Treasurer's report to Presbytery of Geneva
Stated meeting 05-21-24 at Camp Whitman

April 2024 financials are in the meeting documents.

The application for the Synod 2024 Presbytery Support Grant was submitted, and we have received word it was approved for \$35,000. Marji Ackerman and I did most of the application with help from some others. Thank you!

The 2023 Audit by Heveron is underway. Many thanks to Marjorie Case, Elena Delhagen, Cheryl Battaglia, Alena Ragan, Bryan Muecke, and others. Thank you *everybody!*

Per capita 2025 discussion:

This is a table with per capita amounts from a spreadsheet of all presbyteries going back to about 2003.

Year	Presbytery	Synod	General Assembly	Total
2024	36.10	4.10	9.80	50.00
2023	36.92	4.10	8.98	50.00
2022	36.92	4.10	8.98	50.00
2021	36.95	4.10	8.98	50.03
2020	36.95	4.10	8.95	50.00
2019	36.95	4.10	8.95	50.00
2018	38.17	4.10	7.73	50.00
2017	38.40	4.10	7.50	50.00
2016	32.88	4.00	7.12	44.00
2015		4.00	7.07	
2014				
2013				
2012	32.42	3.95	6.63	43.00
2011	32.55	3.95	6.50	43.00
2010	33.20	3.65	6.15	43.00
2009	33.00	3.85	6.15	43.00
2008	32.30	3.70	5.79	41.82
2007		3.76	5.79	
2006	32.23	3.70	5.79	41.82
2005	31.30	3.76	5.57	40.61
2004				
2003	28.28	3.70	5.44	37.42

(cursory review of all presbyteries shows 2022 totals run from around \$25-26 up to \$74 for San Gabriel, the bulk around \$45-49, some cluster around \$60.) Our data has holes 2013-2015, but even so some things

stand out. The Synod holds their per capita for years at a time (which given their investments is hardly a surprise). GA holds for a while, then jumps, then holds at that level for a while. We jumped between 2016 and 2017 to \$50 overall, and have stayed there as GA has increased. Since 2017 we “lost” \$2.30 per member by holding the total at \$50. For comparison, compound inflation from 2017 to 2024 is 28.8%, further eroding our ability to serve congregations.

The more significant loss comes from the decline in presbytery membership (currently 3480), but we haven’t kept up to maintain constant income, in an effort to be gentle on our already stressed congregations. For 2025, all else remaining the same, to “break even” in 2025 we would need \$60.34 *presbytery* per capita (overall \$74.24). 2023’s significant accounts receivable gap is a considerable blow and suggests that several congregations are already tapped out. Emphasizing Camp Whitman as a main mission focus, seeking grants, increasing presbytery per capita, reviewing investments, and exploring options across presbyteries would obviously be parts of a diversified strategy for our financial health.

Well before the annual budget season, this is an important conversation for how the Presbytery of Geneva continues to support our congregations as they are Christ in the Finger Lakes.

As always, have at me with questions!

W. David Ashby, Presbytery Treasurer

**GENERAL COUNCIL REPORT TO THE PRESBYTERY
May 21, 2024 – Zoom.us
[From the meetings of 04/09/2024 and 05/14/2024]**

ITEMS FOR THE PRESBYTERY’S ACTION: None

ITEMS FOR THE PRESBYTERY’S INFORMATION

(Presbytery Personnel)

The General Council VOTED to *direct* the Committee on Operations to begin addressing the possibility of renewing the contract with the Presbytery Leader in 2025.

(Council, Committee on Operations, & Treasurer)

The General Council VOTED to *approve* the Committee on Operations, Treasurer, and General Council to make a presentation at the May Presbytery meeting that outlines the budget crisis we are facing, including the history, current financial status, and future estimates.

(Committee on Operations)

The General Council VOTED to *approve* the Committee on Operations to encourage minister members of the Presbytery to pay per capita to the Presbytery every year.

(Mission and Witness)

The General Council VOTED to *approve inviting* a Peacemaker to visit the Presbytery of Geneva and *empower* the Mission and Witness Committee to complete all the necessary steps to arrange for and plan that visit.

UPCOMING PRESBYTERY MEETING DATES

<i>Tuesday</i> , September 24, 2024	10:00am	Hybrid / Marion, United
<i>Tuesday</i> , November 19, 2024	1:00pm	Hybrid / Elmira, First
<i>Saturday</i> , January 25, 2025	10:00am	Online Only

**Synod Commission
April 26-27, 2024**

Commissioners for the Synod of the Northeast gathered in Dewitt, New York last month to conduct our regular business.

We received the final report and voted in favor of dissolving the Susquehanna Valley Presbytery Administrative Commission (AC). Over the course of the last four years an AC representing the Synod has worked with leaders in Susquehanna Valley to resolve differences and chart a new course for the presbytery.

We received the Transitional Leader’s report on the state of the Synod, including the development of a roadmap for the Synod’s future, a strategic partnership with Columbia Theological Seminary to bring interns to our region, similar ongoing dialogue with Union Theological Seminary and Princeton Theological Seminary, the Discernment Team’s ongoing work, and initial efforts in evaluating candidates for the small church residency program. It was also announced that Presbytery of the Coastlands (NJ) made a \$20,000 donation the Synod’s Native American Mission Initiative.

We heard a summary of the outcomes from the Synod’s first in-person Permanent Judicial Commission trial since before the COVID pandemic.

We were reminded by the Stated Clerk that our presbyteries need to elect commissioners for the Synod Assembly taking place on October 25 & 26 in Albany, NY.

The Mission Working Group (MWG) reviewed 23 Innovation grant applications totaling nearly \$400,000 in requested funds. This round the MWG had \$95,000 to award. This was the single most competitive

application season in recent memory. The MWG also received one application for a Youth Development Grant. Two churches in Geneva Presbytery received grants: Christ the King Fellowship and FPC-Seneca Falls.

The Connectional Ministries Working Group is planning two events for the fall with Native American led Presbyterian churches within the Synod, details to follow.

Grants are awarded throughout the year for a variety of ministries. Information and applications can be found on the Synod website: www.synodne.org.

Upcoming grant application deadlines:

Emerging Gospel Communities: August 20, 2024

Campus Ministry: November 15, 2024 (for 2025 funding)

Youth Leadership: November 15, 2024 (for 2025 funding)

Presbytery Support: July 31, 2024

Emergency Migrant Ministry: ongoing and rolling basis

Respectfully submitted,

Aaron Frank (TE)

Mission Working Group Commissioner

**Presbytery of Geneva
Anti-Racism Policy**

There is no longer Jew or Greek; there is no longer slave or free; there is no longer male and female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. [Galatians 3:28]

Prologue

From the beginning of our Judeo-Christian history recorded in Genesis, the church confesses that without distinction, humanity is created in the image of God. The constitution of the PCUSA further states, “God unites persons through baptism regardless of race, ethnicity, age, sex, disability, geography, or theological conviction. There is therefore no place in the life of the Church for discrimination against any person.” [F-1.0403]

Race is a social construct whose purpose (whether intentional or unintentional) instills a hierarchy of peoples based upon physical traits such as skin color. This hierarchy has no scientific basis. It was used during the 18th and 19th centuries as white Europeans expanded (colonized) their dominance through the use of forced slavery.

“Racism is the opposite of what God intends for humanity. It is the rejection of the other, which is entirely contrary to the Word of God incarnate in Jesus Christ. It is a form of idolatry that elevates human-made hierarchies of value over divinely-given free grace. Through colonization and slavery, the United States of America helped to create and embrace a system of valuing and devaluing people based on skin color and ethnic identity. The name for this system is white supremacy. This system deliberately subjugated groups of people for the purpose of material, political, and social advantage. Racism is the continuing legacy of white supremacy. Racism is a lie about our fellow human beings, for it says that some are less than others. It is also a lie about God, for it falsely claims that God favors parts of creation over the entirety of creation.” - from *PCUSA Facing Racism*

The Presbytery of Geneva has adopted this anti-racism policy as part of its administration of mission, as described in G-3.0106 of the *Book of Order*.

G-3.0106 Administration of Mission

... All councils shall adopt and implement the following policies: a sexual misconduct policy, a harassment policy, a child and youth protection policy, and an antiracism policy. Each council's policy shall include requirements for boundary training which includes the topic of sexual misconduct, and child sexual abuse prevention training for its members at least every thirty-six months.

Prohibiting Racism

The Presbytery of Geneva acknowledges that racism is contrary to the Scriptures and to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Biblical and Theological Foundations

(See Appendix 1 for a fuller excerpt from Facing Racism.)

According to the Study Guide to *Facing Racism*:

The Bible provides a firm foundation and compelling imperative to engage in antiracist work...woven throughout the biblical witness.

The following biblical references are representative of themes found throughout Scripture:

Creation — Genesis 1:1-31 (see also Psalm 104)

We receive our existence as a gift from God. When humanity elevates one group over another, or falsely declares particular groups less good than others, we usurp God's place as creator of all that is. We deny our interrelation and proclaim our judgment more powerful than God's.

Image of God — Genesis 1:26

While humans have many differences, we are all children of God, made in the image of God, and therefore of equal worth, value, and dignity. It is therefore falsehood and deception to deny the full humanity of any group of people.

God loves diversity — Acts 10:9-23

While focusing on the image of God emphasizes how all human persons are fundamentally the same, the differences between persons are also valuable. And the grace of God does not erase differences, but rather invites unity among them.

God loves justice — Jeremiah 9:23-24

The prophets of the Hebrew Bible continually proclaim God's care for those who are oppressed and God's demand for just action. God delights in justice. Racism, as systemic inequality, is fundamentally unjust and therefore against the will of God.

With this biblical imperative to antiracism work, the Foundations of Presbyterian Polity rightly includes such essential elements as

F-1.01 GOD'S MISSION

The good news of the Gospel is that the triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—creates, redeems, sustains, rules, and transforms all things and all people. ... In Christ, the Church participates in God's mission for the transformation of creation and humanity by proclaiming to all people the good news of God's love, offering to all people the grace of God at font and table, and calling all people to discipleship in Christ.

F-1.0302 The Marks of the Church (c) (see also F-1.0404)

c. The Catholicity of the Church

Catholicity is God's gift to the Church in Jesus Christ. In the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, by the power of the Spirit, God overcomes our alienation and repairs our division.

Because in Christ the Church is catholic, it strives everywhere to testify to Christ's embrace of all people of all times, places, races, nations, ages, abilities, genders, conditions, and stations in life.

The catholicity of the Church summons the Church to a deeper faith, a larger hope, and a more complete love as it bears witness to God's grace.

F-1.0403 Unity in Diversity

Citing Galatians: 3:27–29

The unity of believers in Christ is reflected in the rich diversity of the Church's membership. In Christ, by the power of the Spirit, God unites persons through baptism regardless of race, ethnicity, age, sex, disability, geography, or theological conviction. There is therefore no place in the life of the Church for discrimination against any person.

F-1.0404 Openness

... In Christ, Church members share with all humanity the realities of creatureliness, sinfulness,

brokenness, and suffering, as well as the future toward which God is drawing them. The mission of God pertains not only to the Church but also to people everywhere and to all creation.

Particular Definitions

(Additional definitions from the Special Committee on Racism, Truth, and Reconciliation can be found in Appendix 2. Some definitions adapted from the glossary of the White Privilege Conference.)

- Antiracism is an intentional stance that opposes the sin of racism while affirming the dignity and humanity of those who may hold racist views or benefit from it. It opposes sin not the sinner.
- Race: a socially constructed concept that purports to use characteristics such as skin color, facial features, and body structure as a basis for classifying people for the purpose of installing hierarchies of oppression and benefits. It has no scientific or biological basis. It was introduced during the period of European colonial expansion.
- Racism – race-based prejudice + institutional power
- White Supremacy – a system of beliefs and attitudes that subtly or explicitly more highly esteem those racialized as White and continue to grant advantages
- Internalized White Supremacy – the acceptance of the negative societal beliefs and stereotypes about marginalized racial and ethnic populations by themselves and White persons, and the different impacts on their self-identity.
- (Micro)aggressions – (micro)aggressions are words and behaviors, intentional or unintentional, that dehumanize marginalized groups of people, often excused as innocent or well-intended. We recognize that continuous subjection of pain is trivialized by calling these harms “micro”aggressions.
- Beloved Community – God’s call to share life in freedom and justice together as a family, referenced as kin-dom of God.

Applicability

This policy applies to all members of the Presbytery, elder commissioners to the Presbytery, staff, and anyone serving on a Presbytery commission or committee.

Preventing Racism

In our life together, our behavior should reflect the theological affirmations and values held as members of the Church of Jesus Christ as prescribed in our constitutional documents. In particular, (F-1.0302, F-1.0403, F-1.0404). As members of The Presbytery of Geneva, we acknowledge that we are accountable to one another for our behavior and language.

In section G-3.0103 Participation and Representation, our Form of Government calls for presbyteries to give full expression to the rich diversity of the church's membership and shall provide for full participation and access to representation in decision-making and employment practices (F-1.0403). In fulfilling this commitment, councils shall give due consideration to both the gifts and requirements for ministry (G-2.0104) and the right of people in congregations and councils to elect their officers (F-3.0106).

Section G-3.0103 further calls for presbyteries to "develop procedures and mechanisms for promoting and reviewing that body's implementation of the church's commitment to inclusiveness and representation." That commitment is addressed in part by the work of the Committee on Representation, but is in no way exclusive to it.

To further its commitment to dismantling racism, the Presbytery of Geneva shall offer prevention measures including, but not limited to:

- Providing antiracism training¹ facilitated by qualified professionals for staff, committees and commissions, and members of the presbytery as part of the presbytery's regular training and education, but certainly not less than once every thirty-six months. Several providers of such training are found in Appendix 3. A demonstration of completion is included as part of your annual records review, with any remedial action determined by Presbytery.
- Facilitating awareness of racism's impact through the land and labor acknowledgment at every stated meeting of the presbytery, and at other presbytery gatherings as appropriate.
- Offering resources on antiracism to congregations and ministries within the bounds of the presbytery.
- Affirming the diversity of applicants and candidates for all staff and ordered ministry positions over which the presbytery has jurisdiction.
- Supporting persons and groups of underrepresented races through intentional representation, caucuses, programming such as retreats or training, and resourcing as requested.
- Adopting or amending policies, practices, standing rules, and the manual of operations to ensure they afford full and inclusive participation of all voices, and publishing them in the languages spoken by members of this presbytery.
- Attending to revelations of systemic racism past and present as perpetrated within the bounds of the presbytery, researching their cause, and offering and implementing appropriate solutions, relief, or reparations accorded by the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).
- Designating persons to speak on matters of racism as they become known within the Presbytery's bounds, communicating the sentiments of this policy.

¹ "Points of Engagement," Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Churchwide Antiracism Policy, approved by the 222nd General Assembly, 2016.

Accountability

We hold ourselves accountable for working consistently and purposefully towards racial justice and equity in our synod/presbytery/congregation:

- Taking responsibility as individuals and as communities of faith for engaging with resources and in conversations that help us to learn and grow, creating opportunities to invite people into those conversations, and recognizing that antiracism work is non-optional as Christians.
- Seeking partners and groups within the church and in ecumenical and community spaces who will help to hold us accountable as we engage antiracism resources and work.
- Establishing explicit norms within our synod/presbytery/congregation for accountable spaces that include sensitivity to how people may experience a conversation differently because of their racial identity.
(https://pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/markers_of_accountability_in_antiracism_work.pdf)
- Maintaining a commitment to self-reflective truth-telling about our experiences with and/or participation in White supremacy in church and society, including an examination of our presbytery's/congregations' history; to honesty, openness, humility, courage, and grace with one another in our conversations; and to taking responsibility when our words or actions cause harm.
- Listening to voices long silenced within church and community.
- Ensuring intentional follow-through on statements and proposed actions, so that we live fully into our stated convictions and commitments.
- Designating a respondent who will speak for the council regarding incidents involving the general public.
- Employing church discipline when appropriate.

RESPONDING PROCEDURE

Matthew 18:15-17

“If your sibling sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If you are listened to, you have regained that one. But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If that person refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church, and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a gentile and a tax collector.”

Remembering that Jesus continued to associate and eat with gentiles and tax collectors, the recommended means of response is to focus on grace rather than judgment, and education more than discipline, in all but the most intentional acts of racism.

To err on the side of grace is

- not to dismiss or diminish the offense, but to name the sin, gently rather than in anger;
- to recognize that people come into this subject matter from a variety of backgrounds and history;
- to acknowledge that, consequently, the time, length, and intensity of new understanding will vary from person to person.

This requires mutual conversation, and formal or informal courses of study, designed to equip more than reprimand or punish.

As a final resort one can turn to appropriate measures within the Constitution's *Church Discipline*. It is incumbent upon us to remember, however, that despite its title, "The power that Jesus Christ has vested in his Church, a power manifested in the exercise of church discipline, is one for building up the body of Christ, not for destroying it, for redeeming, not for punishing. It should be exercised as a dispensation of mercy and not of wrath, so that the great ends of the Church may be achieved, that all children of God may be presented faultless in the day of Christ." (D-1.01 Power Vested in Christ's Church).

We trust that, just as Jesus associated and ate with gentiles and tax collectors, so too does he in all of our contemporary failings, including intentional and unintentional demonstrations of racism.

Review

This policy should be reviewed from time to time for relevance and accordance with the Scriptures and the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Adopted by the Presbytery of Geneva

First Reading on: March 19, 2024

Second reading and approval on: May, 21, 2024

Appendix 1 Biblical and Theological Foundations

Study Guide to *Facing Racism*:

The Bible provides a firm foundation and compelling imperative to engage in antiracist work. There are at least four different biblical themes that can ground and motivate antiracism. While we will read some selected texts, it is important to recognize that these themes are not confined to isolated verses. Rather, they are woven throughout the biblical witness.

The following biblical references are representative of themes found throughout Scripture:

Creation — Genesis 1:1-31 (see also Psalm 104)

We receive our existence as a gift from God. We are all part of creation that God has made and declared good, an intricate interwoven system of life. When humanity elevates one group over another, or falsely declares particular groups less good than others, we usurp God's place as creator of all that is. We deny our interrelation and proclaim our judgment more powerful than God's.

Image of God Genesis 1:26 — While humans have many differences, we are all children of God, made in the image of God, and therefore of equal worth, value, and dignity. The 1999 PC(USA) Policy "Facing Racism" calls us to a vision of humanity without racism that is "grounded in our common origin as children of God from which we derive our inalienable worth, dignity, and sanctity." All humans are made in the image of God. It is therefore falsehood and deception to deny the full humanity of any group of people.

God loves diversity — Acts 10:9-23

While focusing on the image of God emphasizes how all human persons are fundamentally the same, the differences between persons are also valuable. The Bible portrays God as delighting in the variety in creation (see Job 38-41). Jesus spoke with and honored all those he encountered, including respectable Jewish men, women, tax collectors, prostitutes, lepers, Samaritans, and Canaanites. People do not have to all be the same in order to be loved by God. There is room in God's grace for vast differences. And the grace of God does not erase differences, but rather invites unity among them.

God loves justice — Jeremiah 9:23-24

Jeremiah says that God "delights" in justice (Jer. 9:24). The prophets of the Hebrew Bible continually proclaim God's care for those who are oppressed and God's demand for just action. In Amos, the LORD calls for the people to "establish justice in the gate" and "let justice roll down like waters" (Amos 5:15, 5:24). The prophet Micah states that what the LORD requires is "to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8). God delights in justice. Racism, as systemic inequality, is fundamentally unjust and therefore against the will of God.

Facing Racism pp 7-9 and the *Facing Racism Study Guide* pp 1-3 and *The Foundations of Presbyterian Polity, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Book of Order, 2023-2025*

Appendix 2 Definitions from the Report of the Special Committee on Racism, Truth, and Reconciliation to the 225th General Assembly (2022) Some adapted from the glossary of the White Privilege Conference.

- Antiracism is an intentional stance that opposes the sin of racism while affirming the dignity and humanity of those who may hold racist views or benefit from it. It opposes sin not the sinner.
- Race – a social construct based on skin color that operates to install hierarchies of oppression and benefits
- Racism – race-based prejudice + institutional power
- Repair/Reparative Action – an orientation towards prioritizing fixing inequities caused by persisting racism with justice and reallocation of stolen resources
- Reparations – specific acts of reparative action intended to restore intergenerational wealth taken by discrimination, often through the power of the government
- White Supremacy – a system of beliefs and attitudes that subtly or explicitly more highly esteem those racialized as White and continue to grant advantages
- Internalized White Supremacy – the acceptance of the negative societal beliefs and stereotypes about marginalized racial and ethnic populations by themselves and White persons, and the different impacts on their self-identity.
- Black/Indigenous/People of Color – there are a number of ways that people of color identify by race; we will use Black/Indigenous/People of Color in this report, recognizing language limitations, the insufficiency in recognizing the identities of others, and people’s right to self identify.
- Biracial | Multiracial – relating to persons of more than one race or ethnicity.
- White/Whiteness/People Racialized as White– those accorded certain benefits, privileges, and advantages based on the color of their skin because of undismantled White Supremacy that seeks to create social hierarchies by race. We capitalize “White” to emphasize that Whiteness is a particular phenomenon with a specific function.
- (Micro)aggressions – (micro)aggressions are words and behaviors, intentional or unintentional, that dehumanize marginalized groups of people, often excused as innocent or well-intended. We recognize that continuous subjection of pain is trivialized by calling these harms “micro”aggressions.
- Beloved Community – God’s call to share life in freedom and justice together as a family, referenced as kin-dom of God.

Appendix 3 Providers of Antiracism Training

1. Presbyterian Mission Agency's Office of Gender, Racial and Intercultural Justice [weblink](#)
 - Samantha Davis, Associate for Gender, Racial and Intercultural Justice
 - Contact training@pcusa.org for more information about workshops, trainings and other educational events.
 - Antiracism Training
 - Facing Racism Policy
 - Cultural Humility
 - Intersectional Justice
 - Unpacking Gender
 - Creating a Welcoming and Affirming Space with Our Family in the LGBTQIA Community
 - Power and Privilege
 - Reproductive Justice
 - Radical Welcome

2. The Center for Jubilee Practice jubileepractice.org

The Center for Jubilee Practice seeks to be a bridge between the exciting movements for justice related to gender, sexuality, race, climate change, immigration policies, economic globalization and cultural homogenization on the one hand, and the traditional congregations that desire to engage those justice movements and exemplify biblical justice values on the other. We seek to:

- Help church judicatories and governing bodies rethink their rules of engagement related to the appropriate sale and disposition of property and other assets in order to create intentional opportunities for reparations, healing and new life.
- Support congregations and judicatories to take direct action to accomplish healing, repair and reparations with Black and Brown communities and in direct relation to harm we have caused to creation.
- Create brave spaces of welcome in which those who have been most impacted by historic patterns of oppression can gather to support and encourage one another.

3. Crossroads crossroadsantiracism.org

Crossroads' mission is to equip institutions with shared language, frameworks, practices and tools that will assist them in:

- Diagnosing how their institutions are structured to uphold white supremacy culture and systemic racism and;
- Deploying strategies aimed at animating antiracist ways of being that result in racially equitable institutional culture and practices.

4. PCUSA's Center for the Repair of Historic Harms

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/center-for-repair/>

Director: Rev. Anthony Jermaine Ross-Allam: Jermaine.Ross.Allam@pcusa.org

The purpose of our office is to recognize, acknowledge and repair the harm caused to Indigenous peoples, African Americans and other marginalized groups. We aim to set an example by actively engaging in the work of repair within our denomination while also inspiring others worldwide to join us in this vital pursuit. In collaboration with PC(USA) sister agencies and mid councils, the Presbyterian Mission Agency hopes to initiate this denomination-wide effort to inspire repair and reconciliation both within and beyond the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).